

THE
REVELATION

NOTEBOOK



The
REVELATION
Notebook

A Notebook of the
Study Records
of the
New Albany-Louisville Ecclesia

2015
Second Edition

A Note Regarding the 2015 Revision

The Revelation notebook was originally written on a typewriter. Copies were xeroxed and bound in a 3-ring binder. Pages were printed only on one side, and certain additions or charts, consequently, were listed as “Facing Pages.” The sometimes strange page numberings have all been retained so that the indices will yet be valid.

This current revision, printed and bound, owes its existence to the loving labors of sisters in Pennsylvania who kindly volunteered to enter the entire manuscript onto computer disks. This allowed an opportunity for a number of corrections, additions, deletions, reformatting, etc. It also allows for the entire notebook to be available on computer disk as well as in printed form. Our grateful thanks go out to those sisters who made this possible. It is our prayer that their labors will make it possible for many others to profit from our humble but joyous efforts to make the mysteries of Revelation accessible to the saints.

On page 407 a new item has been added. A PRIMER FOR THE STUDY OF REVELATION is and has been available as a separate item. It seemed wise to include it as part of this book also.

(This book actually contains 492 pages — even though the last page says 433. This is due to “facing pages,” strange numberings such as pages 365 followed by 365a through e, etc., etc. Please remember that this book is an assembly of study units. It was not written as a book is usually written.)

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Some numbers below are OFFSET to help the eye discern how this notebook does not treat all chapters and verses in their numerical order.

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ANOTHER BOOK ON REVELATION**— PREFACE —**

In 1993, a weekly study on Revelation began to be held in Louisville. The pages of this notebook are the result. As each section of the study was finished, the study leader wrote a summary of the discussion. This was unedited, spontaneous writing; therefore, these pages contain evolving views, typographical errors, grammatical disasters — ALL THE WARTS! This book is the record of our struggles. It is loose-leaf* because we know it will need changes. While we were very serious about our studies, we do not wish to take ourselves too seriously. We do not believe that any one group or individual understands Revelation in its entirety with unfailing accuracy; we DO believe that the Harvest Church understands the book. It is no longer a mystery. Among the many pages written on Revelation by the harvest saints is to be found all the answers to its symbology. It has been our joy to probe into the intricacies and the heart-warming spirituality of Revelation.

The Order and Method of Study

While we have arranged our notes in a rather conventional sequence, we did not study Revelation in that sequence. We began with those portions we knew best due to the enlightened expositions of them by Pastor Charles T. Russell. We then worked from the known to the unknown. THIS IS IMPORTANT. To understand our conclusions, it is necessary to approach the subject as we did. Deductions were drawn based on previously studied material. Because of this, an "ORDER OF STUDY" listing appears immediately following this Preface.

It was not our desire or method to examine and compare what other harvest saints had written on Revelation. We preferred to study to our own conclusions when possible. It is unwise, however, to feel independent from other saints and what has been revealed through them and to them. Therefore, whenever we came to obscure passages, we certainly did not hesitate to see if we could find some enlightenment in the writings of others. Because of this, it is likely from time to time in these pages that the ideas of many others will be reflected. Listing all whose works were consulted might prove impossible, but certainly the writings or discourses of Eugene Burns, Anton Frey, Carl Hagensick, Ludlow Loomis, John Meggison, Leon Norby, David Rice, Frank Shallieu, Allen Springer, and Chester Sundbom have been helpful. We are indebted to the Lord and to these faithful students for the aid we have received.

*The 2010 Edition, hopefully, has remedied most of the problems mentioned in this paragraph. The book is no longer loose-leaf – which some may consider a deficiency.

An extremely important part of our investigative procedure has been the application of the topical-study method impressed upon us by Bro. Russell. To ignore this invaluable tool of the harvest period would, indeed, be presumptuous. One appendix, therefore, is a collection of studies on words and phrases, the clarity and consistency of which is imperative to sound interpretation. These studies, perhaps more than anything else, formed the basis for our approach. Please consult them frequently.

A Word on Copyright

It has been the general practice of harvest saints not to mention their copyright privileges feeling that ALL we have we have received and want to share. This is also our position. However, THIS IS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL; but we view our copyrights with generosity. We encourage any and all to copy what will be of benefit to their Christian growth. We DO NOT, however, grant any copying rights to any who would use the material for personal monetary gain, self-aggrandizement, or for purposes any way harmful or critical to others. We will be delighted if any of our studies inspire increased faithfulness and zeal in those who seek the Lord.

In His service,

THE NEW ALBANY-LOUISVILLE ECCLESIA

WEDNESDAY NIGHT REVELATION STUDY

Louisville, Kentucky

THE ORDER IN WHICH STUDY PROGRESSED

When we undertook the study of the Book of Revelation, we decided to study it out of order. It was felt that topical studies on words and phrases would be of great help in keeping a consistency in the use of symbols and in the interpretation procedure. We began with Chapter 12 because so much had been written on it and because it would form a basis and set a precedent for interpretation. We then studied one chapter each from the remaining two parts of Revelation (Chapters 20, and 14.) Much of our initial investigation dealt with the construction of the book. The result is that this notebook may contain slight variances in interpretation because we learned as we progressed. We recommend highly the approach we took. We feel that a study which begins at verse one and follows through to the end will have much difficulty which might be avoided by the approach we used. Following is our ORDER OF STUDY. (Some items are not listed. They are items of convenience and/or information and were not part of the in-class study discussion.)

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— Foreword —

A Neatly Constructed Work of Divine Art

After studying the Book of Revelation, the seeming oxymoron of its simple complexity is impressed on the mind of the student. How can one book contain so much history in advance, written with such clever and consistent symbolism, and still elude the cadre of denominational writers so effectively? How can it be such an elegant expression of heart and spirituality and yet be such a precise, simple, formal construction? It is such because it is what it claims to be: a Revealing of Jesus Christ handed down from THE GOD of the universe through His beloved ONLY DIRECT CREATION who had it encoded FOR HIS SAINTS.

To those of us who have studied it and recorded our studies herein, there is a wonderful awe at the magnificence of this book accompanied by an humble thankfulness that we have been allowed to see as much as we have seen, knowing that there is yet so much more to see. We have been with Jesus, our Head, through every verse. We have traced his leadings through the centuries — all with the final objective of the kingdom which he wishes to share with us. It has been a REVELATION. We have learned much of his symbolic vocabulary and have begun to have a comfortable familiarity with it. Because his faithfulness to the saints of the past has been so clearly recorded, because his mercies have sustained the most persecuted of our brethren, we can look forward to the wee bit of Revelation which remains to be fulfilled with joy and confidence — not with confidence in our understanding, but with confidence in him for whom the God of the universe has planned all — in him who sent this book for our blessing.

We were introduced to the Lord and his seven stages of the Church (1:4-20) seeing what peculiar temptations each stage must overcome (2:1-3:22). We looked at the same period of history once more as we saw how the seven seals revealed how the events of history would affect the saints (6:1 - 8:1). These seals were introduced to us in those two sublime chapters (4:1 - 5:14) which show how the Father planned to commit the work of this and the next age to His beloved Son. These two chapters explain so nobly the transfer of focus from the God of the Old Testament to His "Lamb" of the New Testament.

Then, once again, we reviewed the seven periods of the Church seeing how the angels of these Churches not only served the Churches, but also were heard as Trumpets throughout the world (8:7 - 11:19). The world's reaction, of course, was not positive, but the effects of the messages (the Trumpets) changed the courses of history. In introducing us to the Trumpets (8:2-6), the Lord favored us with the understanding that these messages were not ORIGINATED by the angels, but were SANCTIONED and SANCTIFIED by Jesus' merit. This same merit is shown to sustain the saints and enable their prayers during the events symbolized under these Trumpets. In this same passage he also gave us a clue that a final message (8:6) to the old order (the Plagues) would be needed before all was concluded — because the Trumpets had been ignored by the world.

Two more times (12:1-14:5) we were led through the age, though these times not in seven stages. We saw the development of the apostate church out of the failing Roman pagan empire, causing the true saints to live in a “wilderness” condition. We looked again to see how this apostasy united itself to civil powers and lived through the challenges from the Reformation and from the advent of a second church-state power. In this vision we saw how some would succumb and some overcome.

Thus was our five-time journey through the entire age finished. What a joy, then, to go on to find a microscopic look at the details of our own day (14:6-19:21) — the Harvest.

Chapter 14 showed us so clearly how the Harvest message began to distinguish between wheat and tares, how Babylon began its slow disintegration, and how the spirit-begotten began to receive their reward even while Babylon was having its life crushed out.

The saga of the finishing of God's Wrath (The Plagues — 15:1 - 16:21) encouraged us greatly by showing us how events of our own century have been gradually eating away at the foundations of Babylon, shortly to see its total demise.

In the 17th chapter, we were thrilled to meet Bro. Russell as "one of the angels who had the seven bowls" and to see how he led us through the prophecies to show us the truths about "Christendom" and its eventual destruction by those over whom it had reigned. Then to see in Chapter 18 Babylon's loss of power by reason of economic forces (even as the Fourth Volume had so convincingly predicted), was a special encouragement because the daily news confirms the trends.

The rejoicing over Babylon's destruction, our marriage to the Lamb, and the ensuing feast of restitution blessings (19:1-10) put a happy ending on the narrative of Chapter 18. Then, the final picture of the harvest (from the perspective of the living saints), found in 19:11-21, was such an extraordinary encapsulation of all the events of the harvest.

With Chapter 20 we began to look forward from our day seeing the promises coming to fruition with the first resurrection's having already begun and with looking forward personally to our entering with them into the great reign which will give life and destroy life's oppositions.

The incredibly intricate details of the symbolic New Jerusalem (Chapter 21) sent chills down our spines. The closing words to John (Chapter 22), first by that special angel (Bro. Russell), and then by our Lord himself, left us saying with John, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" —NOT "come" in the sense of return, but "come" in the sense of Matthew 25:10: "Close us within the door, and let the blessings go forth!"

In this notebook the New American Standard version of the Bible has been the text most used. Where deviations from it have been useful, they have usually been noted. The NAS is, perhaps, the best general working Bible available to us today. It combines readability, a high degree of accuracy, and a nearness to the familiar sounds of the King James Version. It also has available for it an exhaustive concordance numbered with the Strong's numbering system. The Greek and Hebrew dictionaries in this concordance have been vastly improved over the old Strong's Concordance. Unfortunately, in a few passages, the New American Standard is exasperatingly poor! These passages are frequently the ones of greatest doctrinal import! Ah, well; perfection is not for this age.

We trust, by the Lord's grace, that our study labors will bless you richly in your study labors and in their application toward faithfulness.

The Construction-Layout of the Book of Revelation

TEXTS:

1:1-8	INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHECY	INTRODUCTION	
1:9-20	INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES	1	5 Views of the ENTIRE GOSPEL AGE
2:1—3:22	THE SEVEN CHURCHES	2	
4:1—5:14	INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN SEALS	3	
5:1—8:1	THE SEVEN SEALS	4	
8:2-6	INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN TRUMPETS	5	
8:7—11:14	THE SEVEN TRUMPETS	6	5 Views of the HARVEST PERIOD
12:1—13:1	THE WOMAN, DRAGON, AND FALSE MICHAEL	7	
13:1—14:5	TWO BEASTS, AN IMAGE, AND THE OVERCOMERS	8	
14:6-20	HARVESTING AND THE CASTING OFF OF BABYLON FROM FAVOR	9	
15:1-8	INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES	10	
16:1-21	SEVEN PLAGUING EVENTS AGAINST BABYLON	11	5 Views of the MILLENNIAL AGE
17:1-18	POLITICAL-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS AGAINST BABYLON	12	
18:1—19:10	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS AGAINST BABYLON	13	
19:11-21	THE HARVEST FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SAINTS	14	
20:1-10	THE MILLENNIUM AND THE "DRAGON"	15	
20:11—21:1	THE THRONE OF INDIVIDUAL JUDGMENT	16	5 Views of the MILLENNIAL AGE
21:2-8	THE NEW ORDER SUMMARIZED	17	
21:9-21	THE NEW ORDER'S GOVERNMENT: THE BRIDE, THE NEW JERUSALEM	18	
21:22-22:5	FOOD, WATER, AND LIGHT FOR EVERLASTING LIFE	19	5 Views of the MILLENNIAL AGE
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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

1:1 – 1:8

MAIN DIVISIONS OF REVELATION

- PART I: Chapters 1-13; Five times through the Gospel Age and its Harvest.
- PART II: Chapters 14-19; Five looks at the details of the Harvest.
- PART III: Chapters 20-22; Five looks at the Millennial Age

SUMMARY OF PART I CHAPTERS

- Chapter 1. Introduction to the book and Introduction to the Lord and His seven Churches.
- Chapters 2 and 3. The messages to the Seven Churches.
- Chapters 4 and 5. The "Throne Scene" and Introduction to the Seven Seals.
- Chapters 6 through 8:1. The opening of the Seven Seals.
- Chapters 8:2 through 11. The sounding of the Seven Trumpets.
- Chapter 12. The history of the Gospel Age civil power versus the Gospel Age religious powers.
- Chapter 13 through 14:5. The history of the Saints versus the apostate churches.

A SUGGESTION FOR BETTER CHAPTER DIVISIONS

#4

Some may find it presumptuous to suggest that the chapter divisions be changed. However, these were not part of the sacred text. They were added only a few centuries ago, along with punctuations. This little page is merely an attempt to let the eye better see the construction of the book of Revelation. There are times when chapter divisions cause the reader unconsciously to miss an important point. If we were to reprint Revelation with the following divisions, many valuable lessons would become apparent.

PART I: THE GOSPEL AGE

<u>Suggested New Numbering</u>		<u>Existing Old Numbering</u>
Chapter 1.	Introduction to the Book	(1:1-8)
Chapter 2.	Introduction to the 7 Churches	(1:9-20)
Chapter 3.	The 7 Churches	(2 & 3)
Chapter 4.	Introduction to the 7 Seals	(4 & 5)
Chapter 5.	The 7 Seals	(6:1 - 8:1)
Chapter 6.	Introduction to the 7 Trumpets	(8:2-6)
Chapter 7.	The 7 Trumpets	(8:7 - 11:19)
Chapter 8.	The Woman, Manchild, and Dragon	(12:1-13:1 thru “And he stood on the sand of the sea.”)
Chapter 9.	Two Beasts, an Image, and the Overcomers	(13:1 from “And I saw a beast . . .” thru 14:5)

PART II: THE HARVEST

Chapter 10.	The Lord & Six Angels	(14:6 - 20)
Chapter 11.	Introduction to the 7 Plagues	(15)
Chapter 12.	The 7 Plagues	(16)
Chapter 13.	The Judgment of the Great Harlot	(17)

PART II – Continued

Chapter 14.	The Fall & Destruction of Babylon	(18)
	Rejoicing & Marriage of the Lamb	(19:1 - 10)
Chapter 15.	The Destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet	19:11 - 21)

PART III: THE MILLENNIUM AND BEYOND

Chapter 16.	The Binding & Destruction of the Dragon, and the Millennial Judgment	(20:1 - 21:1)
Chapter 17.	The New Jerusalem	(21:2 - 22:5)
Chapter 18.	Concluding Thoughts	(22:6 - 21)

PARALLEL CONSTRUCTION OF PARTS ONE AND TWO

Bro. David Rice has interestingly observed a unique parallelism between Part I of Revelation (Chapters 1-13 dealing with the whole Gospel Age) and Part II of Revelation (Chapters 14-19 dealing with the Harvest of the Gospel Age.) The component parts of each section do, indeed, have a remarkable correspondence:

GOSPEL AGE (1 - 13)

Introduction to the Age (1)

Sevens (Churches, Seals, and Trumpets) (2-11)

Woman (True) (12)

Babylon's Rise (13)

HARVEST (14 - 19)

Introduction to the Harvest (14)

Seven (Plagues) (15 - 16)

Woman (Harlot) (17)

Babylon's Fall (18 -19)

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

Revelation 1:1-3

The first three verses of Revelation contain important information pertaining to the entire book:

POINT #1. The phrase, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," is important. This book is for the very purpose of revealing Jesus. But to whom? The context shows clearly that this is not (at least not primarily) about Jesus' revealing at His second advent. It is rather about His being revealed to his servants BEGINNING AT HIS FIRST ADVENT AND CONTINUING THROUGH THE ENTIRE GOSPEL AGE. It is, among other things, to show them "things which must shortly come to pass." * It is NOT for a time then distant when he would be revealed to all flesh (1:7), but rather for the age then beginning. "The time is at hand," — the KAIROS (a specific, limited time or season; a period of specific characteristics; in this case, the GOSPEL AGE during which Jesus is revealed) is at hand, is ENGUS (imminent, accessible; in this case, it had just begun and would progress for 2000 years.)

POINT #2. The protocol of God is interesting. This information comes from God Who gives it to Jesus. It is not surprising that Jesus did not know all of these things. He said as much in Mark 13:32 as well as in Matt. 24:36 NAS. Jesus then sent the information by an angel (see also 22:16). The angel's responsibility included the work of SIGNIFYING it — putting it into SIGNS and SYMBOLS. This is of utmost importance. Revelation is here clearly stated to be a book of SYMBOLISMS, not literalisms. The angel then passes it on in its "signified" state to John who faithfully bears record on our behalf.

POINT #3. The third verse gives stress to what the entire Greek Bible gives stress — this message is for character-building, not for sensationalism, intellectualism, prophetic power, or curiosity. The reader, if he is a hearer (learner) and is obedient also, is BLESSED — made better. Curiously he is made better BECAUSE the time is at hand — because it is now the time (the Gospel Age) to grow from prophecy. (I Pet. 1:12; II Cor. 6:1-10)

POINT #4. It is interesting to note the immediate use of symbolism following the first three verses. The purpose of the book was clearly stated as being "to show unto His servants . . ." By the time this revelation was given to John, these servants were widespread in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Yet John directs his message "to the seven churches which are in Asia." Is John ignoring most of the servants and directing this revelation only to seven ecclesias closely spaced in Asia Minor? No. This, as we have been instructed, is the beginning of the use of symbols.

Seven is used both literally and symbolically. It is used symbolically to represent a complete spiritual number. In other words, John is directing this revelation to the ENTIRE CHURCH — from Jesus' day to the time of the peaceable kingdom. The number is being used literally, because God is dividing the Church's earthly history into seven actual periods of time. The Church is said to be in Asia (which means MUD) because this message is for the Church yet mired in its earthly condition. (Places, when used symbolically, represent conditions.) See Isa. 51:1; Rom. 9:21.

*See item #74k, pg.348

JOHN'S OPENING GREETING TO THE CHURCHES

(1:4-8)

1:4 — TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES: See Notes on 1:1-3 to see why this phrase represents the seven stages of the Gospel Age Church instead of the literal seven ecclesias in Asia Minor.

IN ASIA: Places in the Bible represent conditions. Asia means "muddy." If it were a noun, it would clearly refer to the Churches "in the mud" — walking through this life somewhat bogged down by the flesh's relationship to the earth. But the etymology is an adjective: muddy. This could suggest that the church's experience will be that its pure doctrine (water) will be constantly muddied by Satan and his helpers. Both applications have been corroborated by history. Even though the etymology is an adjective, Asia is a noun, and it is a place. This gives the weight to the first symbology as being the best.

GRACE BE UNTO YOU AND PEACE: (Reading the context shows that this greeting comes from Father, Holy Spirit, and Son.) GRACE is help from a superior. How much the Church will need this help and appreciate it during the age! PEACE is that which results from a knowledge of that help.

HIM WHO IS, AND WAS, AND WHO IS TO COME: This is Yahweh and is consistently used throughout the book as a description of Him. NOTE that the three verbs are NOT in chronological order. The first one is IS. This is the equivalent of the great "I AM" of Exodus 3. It is no accident that this verb is mentioned first. If the phrase said "from Him Who WAS, IS, AND IS TO COME", it would misconstrue the existence of the Father. WAS is past; but even though the Father is from everlasting, there is nothing PAST about Him. He simply IS. The next two parts of the description, then, are not to tell us about His past and future, but rather about what He has done IN THE PAST and WILL DO IN THE FUTURE for us, the seven Churches. To elaborate on the meaning of the phrase, we could say, "from Him who is the "I AM," Who prepared for us before we were here, and Who will direct the future events for us also." (CONTRAST this phrase with Jesus' description of himself in 1:18. He says that he is NOW the "living one" — one who has gained immortality; but he WAS DEAD; but this death was forever overcome.) In short, Yahweh IS; but to add to our confidence, He tells us that He has been in control BEFORE we were here, and WILL BE in control while we sleep in death and after we awaken.

FROM THE SEVEN SPIRITS: (See study on this phrase in Appendix B.) This is the Holy Spirit in its totality (7 = total) and in its breakdown into particular services toward EACH of the Churches. This will be the active agent in the lives and histories of the seven Churches. As each Church message (chapters 2 and 3) says, "Hear what the Spirit says unto the Churches," the spirit is here emphasized as a seven-fold power.

WHICH ARE BEFORE HIS THRONE: - a position of service is what this phrase symbolizes. The Holy Spirit is the immediate and unquestioning respondent to the will of God.

1:5 — AND FROM JESUS CHRIST: Jesus is the last mentioned in this series (unlike Matt. 28:19.) This is because this book is the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST — It is principally about HIM. He is mentioned last in the series so that when expansion begins ABOUT HIM it need not be broken by reference to the Holy Spirit or the Father. Jesus is the head of all the Churches, who would be with them "alway, even unto the end of the age." THAT is the point of Revelation as a book. The Gospels told us about his earthly ministry. The prophecies of the Old Testament tell us about the Millennial Kingdom (to which the end of Revelation adds some information.)

But the WORK OF JESUS WITH HIS CHURCH WHILE HE IS BEYOND THE VEIL, WHILE THE CHURCH IS YET IN THE FLESH, is the POINT of the Book of Revelation.

FAITHFUL WITNESS: This is the beginning of another 3-part list. The three parts tell of (1) his earthly ministry, (2) his exaltation, and (3) his control over the powers-that-be during the development of his Church. FAITHFUL WITNESS then, refers to his earthly walk. (Cf. 3:14) Jesus is the one who made visible before men and angels the character of his Father. Thus the grace and peace shown IN and THROUGH him can be directed and recommended to us.

THE FIRSTBORN OF THE DEAD: Jesus was the first resurrected (implying the same blessing for others to come.) (See Acts 26:23)

RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH: (Cf. 19:16, 19) Brethren seem to differ on the interpretation of this phrase. Most seem to prefer that "kings of the earth" be prophetic of the Church in glory. They seem to think that rulership over the powerful of the earth is not very flattering since those powers are to pass away. The problem with this view is that "kings of the earth" becomes an inconsistent symbol in Revelation. For instance, in 19:19 "Kings of the Earth" clearly are NOT saints! Perhaps for consistency's sake, "Kings of the Earth" (here in 1:5) should refer also to earthly powers. There is no need to think that Jesus' being ruler over them is a temporary and weak description. Instead, it is a **STRONG ASSURANCE** that all the things which the seven Churches may suffer at the hands of the "Kings of the Earth" will be **OVERRULED** by one **GREATER** than the Kings of the Earth — one who **WILL** supplant them in the time best suited to his purpose. Thus the threefold listing of verse 5 shows a chronological experience of our Head: his earthly ministry, his glorification, and his total control over the powers of the Gospel Age for the benefit and development of his beloved Church.

NOTE: Verse 5 should really end here. The next phrase begins a benediction by the Apostle John: "To him who loves us . . . be glory and dominion forever. Amen." This is no longer part of John's delivering of the greeting from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is John **RESPONDING** to the greeting with **PRAISE**.

TO HIM WHO LOVES US: After delivering the greeting from Father, Holy Spirit, and Son, John praises the last mentioned — Jesus — in terms which will be of vital importance to the saints during their walk in the narrow way. This phrase, "him who loves us," assures that all the horrors that are to follow in the descriptions of the seven Churches, Seals, and Trumpets, **MUST BE INTERPRETED** as a **PERMISSION** for **GOOD**; it all must be recognized as resulting in the fruitage which love needs and demands.

AND RELEASED US FROM OUR SINS BY HIS BLOOD: This second phrase of the benediction refers to both ransom and justification. Upon this doctrine rests all of the stability of the saints during the age. Without the sustaining assurance of our justification, we could never function under the trials of the age.

1:6 — AND HAS MADE US A KINGDOM — PRIESTS TO HIS GOD AND FATHER: This third and final phrase of the benediction states the ultimate goal for the Church's selection — the glorious work which awaits the faithful completion of the Church's earthly experience.

TO HIM BE THE GLORY AND DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN: What more can be said? It is likely that this prayer refers to dominion over the Church since the dominion over the world is, at least in one sense, restricted to the thousand years. But if the earthly dominion is, in another sense, forever and ever, surely no one will object!

1:7 — BEHOLD: This little word (somewhat similar to SELAH in the Psalms) is of extreme import as we search the Scriptures. It must never be taken lightly. It is a sign that very great meaning is at hand so long as we are willing to search deeply. Verse seven and verse eight form an important **INTERLOCKING**

unit if we look carefully. If we do not, each of these verses seems somewhat out of place in the context and even in relationship to the other. This word, Behold, is, of course, a direct quote from a prophecy in Daniel 7:13. The quote is actually very appropriate here. It is used BECAUSE it is an extension of the third point in John's benediction. It is about the establishment of the KINGDOM. The Daniel prophecy has an enormous correspondence to what is to follow in Revelation. In Daniel, the text is in response to the rule of the four beasts. Daniel 7:13 begins by referring to THE NIGHT VISIONS. Revelation is, in effect, a detailed report of the NIGHT VISIONS — prophecies of the activities of the Gospel Age. The seven Churches must go through the night of the Gospel Age; but then they will see the morning — the blessed culmination, the coming of the Son of Man. Thus, verse 7 is a response to verse 6 — the promised kingdom will UNDO the piercing and the long-predominant evils of the "tribes of the earth."

HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS: It is IMPERATIVE that we notice what Daniel said! He ADDED two very vital words: "the clouds OF HEAVEN." The TWO POWERS which will plague the Church throughout its walk are the "Kings of the Earth," (1:5) and the HEAVENS (NOT mentioned in verse 7, but REALLY THERE if we BEHOLD the prophecy in Daniel.) BOTH powers are accounted for. Jesus is RULER (controller) of the Kings of the Earth and will destroy them (Chapter 19). He also will destroy the offending heavens with TROUBLE (clouds) upon his return. THIS ACT will be the visible manifestation that the promised kingdom IS BEING SET UP. It is IN THESE CLOUDS that the church meet their Lord. (I Thess. 4:17.) To US, the clouds presage JOY!

A VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: Verse 7, on the surface, looks like it is stressing trouble on everyone. IT IS NOT. As we examine with care (as we BEHOLD) the use of prophecy here, we will see that the ONLY trouble shown in this verse is the clouds of heaven. The remainder of the verse stresses wonderful repentance on the part of Israel and the world. To prove this, we must examine Zechariah 12.

AND EVERY EYE WILL SEE HIM: The discernment of this presence will spread — eventually to all living intelligent beings. The saints see him first (in the clouds) Even those who pierced him will RETURN to "see" Him — to understand the grace of Divine wisdom which allowed this miscarriage of justice FOR THEIR OWN GOOD!

AND ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH: all of mankind. This will be the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham: In his seed will all of these be blessed!

WILL MOURN OVER HIM: The thought IS NOT to mourn (or wail) BECAUSE of him — i.e., to SUFFER because of what he will be doing. The thought is that they will have a genuine MOURNING — a repentance — a sad review of their past ignorance of him and what he meant.

Notice at this point a few of the facts of Zechariah 12:10 from which this verse is quoted. The mourning is stimulated because the spirit of grace and of supplication is poured out on Israel. Their mourning is like one who grieves because he has lost a firstborn! This is GOOD mourning or wailing. It is NOT a fear being spread because of the clouds of trouble on Babylon! THAT will be past at this time.

Thus this verse is a genuine mourning over him in the sense of saying, "O, what have we done in ignoring and persecuting the God-sent messengers, Savior, and prophets! O, what have we done for 2000 years in ignoring God and His ways!" Thus this verse is a HAPPY occasion IN RESPONSE TO VERSE 6. It is the change of the world's attitudes!

EVEN SO, AMEN: Why else would John add these words? He is not rejoicing in their suffering! He is rejoicing in their AWAKENING to the new king!

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Point 2: THE God can be Jesus or others! See John 20:28; II Cor. 4:4; Acts 14:11 as examples. However, these can be given logical explanations. John 20 may be an exclamation by Thomas toward THE God; II Cor. 4:4 refers truly to THE God OF THIS WORLD (Satan); Acts 14:11 is a statement by heathen.



1:8 — This verse is seemingly isolated from what has come before it or what follows it. But, if we BEHOLD, it is the important end of the greeting which has led up to it. John has been speaking since verse 4. Suddenly, here, a new voice speaks. It speaks one powerful interjection before John begins (in verse 9) to introduce the seven Churches. Its placement is CRITICAL, although, at first (and even subsequent) reading, it seems hopelessly out of place. It is important to understand its meaning AND the reasoning behind arriving at its meaning. Therefore, we first state, in summary, what it seems to mean, and then we show the reasoning behind the conclusion.

THE MEANING

The meaning seems best shown by re-arranging (and even slightly re-wording) the sentence:

According to the Lord, the God, the Almighty, Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come,
I (Jesus) am the Alpha and the Omega.

Thus, Jesus is speaking. He is stating that throughout this Book of Revelation (See 21:6 and 22:13 for the only other two uses) HE is the one who OWNS THIS NAME. He carefully says that he owns this name BECAUSE GOD HIMSELF SAYS SO. Jesus is basing this claim on the prophecy in Zechariah 12 which has just been quoted in verse 7. This will be detailed later.

The placement of this verse here is the height of the opening greeting. John has said that grace and peace are being sent from God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus. He then praises Jesus and summarizes what he has done for us and will do for us and for the world. Then Jesus himself interrupts and concludes the greeting by saying: I AM THE AUTHORITY BEHIND ALL OF THE WORDS WHICH FOLLOW IN THIS BOOK. I AM HEAD OF THE CHURCH. TO YOU ALL, I AM THE FIRST WORD AND THE LAST WORD (the sole authority) ON ANY SUBJECT HEREIN. I AM SO BECAUSE MY FATHER SAYS SO. What a powerful way to end the opening greeting! After all, isn't this book entitled THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST? (WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM) 1:1.

THE REASONING BEHIND THE MEANING

1. "Who is and was and is to come" has, in verse 4, already been used to describe YAHWEH in the three-part greeting which CLEARLY represents God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus. This phrase, "is, was, and is to come," IS ALWAYS USED exclusively in a description of the Father throughout the Book of Revelation.
2. In 1:8, the Greek clearly says THE Lord, THE God. It violates Bible students' traditional arguments over the years to suggest that THE God is Jesus.
3. The word ALMIGHTY (pantokrator) is used ten times in the Bible (N.T.). In EVERY other case it seems a clear reference to the Father. To make an exception here seems faulty. (See II Cor. 6:18; Rev. 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 16:14; 19:6; 19:15; 21:22.) The O.T. equivalent is EL SHADDAI. (See Exod. 6:3 as an example.) It ALWAYS applies to Yahweh.
4. Alpha and Omega, being the FIRST and LAST letters in the Greek alphabet, imply the FIRST and LAST of something. While some might claim Jesus as the first and last direct creation of Yahweh (which is true), this usage does not fit well here. Nor does it explain that Yahweh uses the SAME WORDS (first and last) for HIMSELF (Isaiah 44:6) by which He seems to say that there is none BEFORE HIM nor AFTER HIM. He is the total statement on any and every subject. His word is law. In Revelation, Yahweh gives Jesus this authority over his Church.
5. Finally, a wonderful ONE WORD PROPHECY (which just happens to be quoted in part in Rev. 1:7)

exists in Zechariah 12:10. In this little verse is HIDDEN Jesus' title of ALPHA and OMEGA! It is by a strange change of language from a first-person reference to a third-person reference that the meaning is both hidden and temptingly intriguing. Note the passage:

" . . . they will look on ME whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for HIM . . . "

This change of pronouns is linguistically galling! That is why it invites inspection. The word ME * just happens to be in Hebrew a two-letter word also. It is spelled Aleph and Tav — the FIRST and the LAST letters of the Hebrew alphabet! The fact that this prophecy is quoted in Rev. 1:7, and then, in verse 8 Jesus gets this name, seems, indisputable proof of the meaning of the passage. Jesus interrupts John and says, "I am the "ME" of the prophecy you just quoted. I am the Alpha and Omega. I am the FIRST and the LAST word on any and all subjects in this Book of Revelation. I have this authority BECAUSE THE GOD ALMIGHTY gave it to me. He gave it to me right there in Zechariah 12:10 which you just quoted." This is the first step in the REVELATION (the revealing) of Jesus to his Church. He shows his position and authority for all that is about to happen in the Gospel Age.

Thus ends the opening greeting of the Book of Revelation. The remainder of Chapter One is treated in Items #14 and #15 — The Introduction to the Seven Churches.

* See Item #74i, p. 345 for an important clarification.

PART ONE
THE GOSPEL AGE
1:9 – 14:5

INTRODUCTION TO PART I

(1:9 - 14:5)

Part I of Revelation consists of the chapters dealing with five views of the Gospel Age including its Harvest. We usually call the first three views “The Seven Churches,” “The Seven Seals,” and “The Seven Trumpets.” Each of these series of sevens is preceded by an introduction. The fourth and fifth views of the Gospel Age might well be called:

The Woman, Manchild, and Dragon
and
Two Beasts, an Image, and the Overcomers.

Because the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets seem to be simultaneous among themselves, this notebook will be arranged in this section so that the first Church, first Seal, and first Trumpet will all be placed as a unit. Thus, parts of chapters 2, 6, and 8 will all be discussed in one place. While this might seem confusing as far as easy reference is concerned, the logic of keeping these chronologically identical periods together will become apparent and will over-ride the distress caused by rearranging the chapters of Revelation for discussion.

It should also be noticed that the Harvest period is included in this section since the seventh Church, Seal and Trumpet are all chronologically in the Harvest period. Since Part II of this notebook is called THE HARVEST, it will be necessary to remember that any study of the Harvest must not only include the traditional Harvest chapters (14-19), but must also include those parts of the first 13 chapters which refer to the Harvest.

CONTENTS OF PART I

This section of the notebook layout is organized as follows:

1. GENERAL AND OVERVIEW MATERIAL ON THE SEVEN CHURCHES, SEALS, AND TRUMPETS

In these pages will be found a number of charts which GENERALIZE about the layout, history and curiosities of the seven periods. INCLUDED is a study showing the reasons for believing why each of the periods has its specified beginning and ending dates.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN SEALS

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

These three sections treat parts of chapters 1, 4, 5, and 8 which serve to introduce the long sections on the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets. These have been taken separately because they do not introduce EACH Church, Seal, and Trumpet; and since we have placed the like-numbered Churches, Seals, and Trumpets together, these introductions had no other logical place in our notebook.

3. A DETAILED LOOK AT EACH OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES, SEALS, AND TRUMPETS

Here each grouping of Church with its Seal and Trumpet is treated in great detail, often with added charts, quotations, etc., to make the explanation as clear as possible at the time of our study.

4. TWO COMPLETE VIEWS OF THE GOSPEL AGE

This section treats 12:1 through 14:5.

**GENERAL & OVERVIEW MATERIAL
ON
THE SEVEN CHURCHES, SEALS, AND TRUMPETS**

LOCATION OF THE THREE SEVENS

Number:	Church:		Seal:		Trumpet:
1.	Ephesus	2:1	White Horse	6:1	8:7
2.	Smyrna	2:8	Red Horse	6:3	8:8
3.	Pergamos	2:12	Black Horse	6:5	8:10
4.	Thyatira	2:18	Green Horse	6:7	8:12
5.	Sardis	3:1	Souls under the Altar	6:9	9:1
6.	Philadelphia	3:7	Earthquake	6:12	9:13
7.	Laodicea	3:14	Silence	8:1	11:15

**THE CHRONOLOGY
OF THE SEVEN
CHURCHES, SEALS, AND TRUMPETS**

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES, SEALS, AND TRUMPETS

PART I: POSSIBLE CHRONOLOGICAL CLUES

(See also pp. 333-326)

For reasons which become apparent when studying the seven Churches, Seals, and Trumpets, the assumption is here being made that the first Church, first Seal, and first Trumpet are all contemporary as are all in the series through number seven. There seems no compelling reason to think otherwise; and there are strong reasons to think this to be the case.

Students have had and do have varying opinions on the correct dates for the beginning and ending dates of these seven periods. The study here presented is much in accord with the prevailing thought on these periods for the reason that there are compelling arguments for most of these dates. There are, of course, reasons to question some of the specifics; but the CLUES (historical and chronological) given in most of the Church, Seal, and Trumpet expositions seem quite strong in their implications. The point of this first, and perhaps most important, part of this study is to list these clues and some of their implications. Each period will be listed below with its clues and (sometimes obvious) facts.

EPHESUS

The beginning of this Church is obvious — PENTECOST. Its end will be determined by clues relating to the beginning of Smyrna.

SMYRNA

The word means BITTER. Therefore, all clues must be coupled with the fact that the beginning and the end of this period should be marked by the beginnings of persecutions and the end of persecutions — probably from pagan Rome since the Church ALWAYS has persecutions from someone.

Matt. 13:25 suggests one possible date (c. 100) for the beginning of Smyrna. If this verse refers to the death of the Apostles, and if the Matt. 13 parables do, indeed, parallel the seven Church periods, the date of John's death would be a likely beginning for Smyrna. HOWEVER, persecutions from Rome do begin earlier leading some to date the beginning of Smyrna from Paul's death at the hands of Nero (c. 67). This has the advantage of having the Apostle John alive at the beginning of Smyrna to act as its "angel." — which he most likely is. (See Item #74e in Appendix B). We, for convenience, suggest the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) as a reasonable alternative.

Rev. 2:10 predicts the extremely severe 10 "days" of persecution which end this church (303-313). This almost certainly marks the end of Smyrna. In 313, the Edict of Milan ends Roman persecution and, thus, the "bitterness" (Smyrna.)

PERGAMOS

The name means EARTHLY ELEVATION. The historical meaning is obvious. Paul predicted (II Thess. 2:6, 7) that pagan Rome prevented the elevation of the Mystery of Iniquity. Once pagan Rome gave way to "Christian" Rome under Constantine, the obstacle which Paul recognized was out of the way, and the elevation to earthly power of the apostate church began with fury. This should be kept in mind as the clues are reviewed. Thus 313 opens Pergamos.

HISTORY and Daniel 12:7 & 7:25 point to the SETTING UP of the Abomination in 539. This clearly marks one of the many events in the elevation of the apostasy.

In 754 the Papal States were established and would last until 1870. Again, this clearly marks another step in setting up Papacy as a temporal power.

In 800 the Pope crowns Charlemagne — a clear evidence that the Papacy considers itself above the temporal ruler.

In Rev. 2:21 there is a likely reference to the complicity of church and state which had its most auspicious ceremony (800) in the crowning of Charlemagne. It is TRUE that Rev. 2:21 is part of the narrative of THYATIRA, but NOTE ITS PAST TENSE. It seems to be saying that the Lord might well have begun Thyatira earlier, but he gave the “space” (chronos = 360 years) for Jezebel to repent of her union with the state. She did not repent, and 360 years later (1160) appears Peter Waldo and his followers to begin Thyatira. (Many brethren apply this “space” to the period between Waldo and Luther (1160 through 1520). Obviously it works, and the Lord may well have intended this. But the use of the past tense in 2:21 strongly suggests the former interpretation. It is not unlike the Lord, however, to have more than one workable interpretation per prophecy.

In 926 the HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE was established. This would last until its last emperor would abdicate in 1806. Again Papacy is exalted yet higher.

In 1054 there appears to be a fly in the ointment. The Eastern Church separates from the Western Church. This would, at least on the surface, appear NOT to be an earthly elevation and, therefore, a questionable element in the Pergamos narrative. However, there was a remarkable STRENGTH given to Papacy by this division. By being cut off from the more liberal and educated eastern part of the empire, the Pope actually gained power in Europe and did not have to fight the education of the East which could well threaten his wonderful dark ages.

THYATIRA

NOTE:

Because of Rev. 2:21(which MIGHT be interpreted to mean that 360 years of Thyatira passed BEFORE its messenger came), it is possible to begin Thyatira as early as 800. But it is a little difficult to accept a church's beginning WITHOUT its angel. There is simply no messenger of stature between Arius and Waldo to warrant any other dates in between. Indeed, the seven angels which are usually accepted as the seven messengers are so very far above all other religious lights as to make their selections inevitable. It is as if the Lord made it so that there could be NO MISTAKE in each age as to which man was bringing meat in due season to the saints.

Rev. 2:21 has been mentioned. This is clearly a chronological key, BUT it seems evident that it applies to the previous (Pergamos) Church, NOT to Thyatira. When the Pope bragged about his alliance with the state by crowning Charlemagne (800), he was openly admitting the church's fornication. He didn't change; 360 years later, the Lord sent a challenger: Peter Waldo (1160).

The 1160 date for Waldo is not arbitrary. In this year a Rome synod condemned the Waldenses as heretics. Similar action was taken in England by Henry the Second who had them branded on their faces so that all would know not to listen to their heresies. History of detail in the dark ages is not always easy to come by; but 1160 does, indeed, stand out as most prominent in the history of Waldo and his followers. Add to this its being 360 yrs. (SPACE) from 800!

Rev. 2:23 seems almost a certain reference to the great black death (plague) which killed from one-half to two-thirds of Europe and is one of the great events of man's history. The two-decade (1334-54) rampage of this disease changed the face of society in Europe.

With the above evidences, it seems likely the dates of Thyatira are 1160 to the days of John Wycliffe (1371 — a date which will be explained subsequently.)

SARDIS

1371 is as obvious a date in the history of John Wycliffe as 1160 is in the history of Waldo. In late 1370 there is a Papal bull against Wycliffe ordering him to silence. He ignores the bull. Instead he comes out with a tract against the Pope. This gains him favor with the King of England who is in a running battle with Papacy against the demands for tribute money. The combination (late 1370 into 1371) of the Papal bull and the favor of the English King set Wycliffe in a position of great prominence which he took advantage of to proclaim all kinds of (temporarily) well-received truths.

Rev. 9:5&10 add to the strength of the above date. If the “five months” (150 years) be added to 1371, it carries us to 1521 — the date of Luther's excommunication. It is interesting to note that in the cases of Waldo, Wycliffe, and Luther, it is a major event IN THEIR LIVES which seems to make the beginnings of their respective Church periods. Previously, a major historic event seems to mark the date. This may simply be due to the Lord's foreknowledge that history before Waldo would be insufficient in detail to allow us to find dates by events in the life of an individual.

Rev. 6:11 is another clue from the 5th Seal regarding the length of Sardis. It requires a little BACKWARDS calculation to be meaningful. The passage seems to be a question from saints who had completed their courses inquiring of the date when the Lord would avenge their blood on them who “dwell on the earth” — a symbolism for the establishment (Papacy & its civil conspirators). We DON'T KNOW when they are asking this question — except that it is DURING the 5th Seal. But we can calculate the date since:

1. We know it is a “little season” (micro chronos) that they must yet “rest” (sleep). Why “micro” precedes “chronos” is a valid question which, to our knowledge, has not yet been answered. We are assuming that 360 years are still intended.
2. We know when the Lord intended His casting off of Babylon.(..1878)

Thus, we can begin with 1878 (the casting off of Babylon AND the resurrection of the sleeping saints) and measure BACKWARD 360 years. This will bring us to 1518 — a remarkably important date in church history when Luther nails his objections to the church door in Wittenberg. This LITTLE item is of GREAT IMPORT for us in calculating the date of the end of Sardis and the beginning of Philadelphia. Since this question occurs in the FIFTH Seal — even though it be on a date remembered for Luther — we must assume that Philadelphia had not yet begun. It would begin with Luther's excommunication at Worms in 1521, which is BOTH 150 years from Wycliffe and 360 years from Waldo.

← It is possible that “micro” (little) is added before “chromos” not as a change of time, but as a psychological comfort. While the period will, indeed, be 360 years, it will seem “little” in that the sleeping saints will not experience the passage of time. It is like a mother putting her child to sleep saying “Morning will be here in just a little while.” She is not changing time; she is imparting comfort.

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The fact that this event of the 5th Seal is at THE CLOSE of the Sardis period, and the fact that much of the 6th Seal also deals with events TOWARD THE END of Philadelphia, leads to the conclusion that the Seals represent events TOWARD THE CLOSE of each Church. This makes sense in that when the “Seal” is taken off our personal experiences (i.e., when we begin to understand what has happened to us), it is AFTER the experience is over or, at least, near its end. Hence, the Seals SEEM TO REPRESENT a looking back by brethren of a given period to realize the total meaning of their Church period. This is helpful in trying to interpret the 7th Seal which gives no clues regarding its timing. The best explanation is PROBABLY one which puts it at the end of Laodicea.

PHILADELPHIA

As explained under Sardis, this period best begins in 1521 with Luther’s excommunication.

The period of 1789-1799 is suggested by Rev. 6:12 and 11:13 which mention the symbolic earthquake of the French Revolution.

The date of 1799 is symbolized in Rev. 10:6 and 11:2-3 in conjunction with the end of Daniel’s 1260-year prophecies to which they clearly refer (539-1799).

Rev 10:9, 10 in referring to the Miller Movement, define 1829-44 as yet being a part of the Philadelphia period.

The end of Philadelphia is marked by the return of the Lord in 1874 as will be discussed under Laodicea. (See also page 110.)

LAODICEA *

The RETURN OF THE LORD (The Second Presence - Parousia) marks the beginning of Laodicea. The date is established by the Jubilees and confirmed by Daniel 12:12 and the parallel dates taught by the Jewish “double.” 1874 is the date.

The connection between the beginning of Laodicea and the Parousia is strongly shown by Rev. 3:20, 11:15, and most strongly by I Thess. 4:15, 16 which proclaim the return IN (such it is in the Greek) the “Trump of God” — the LAST trumpet of 1 Cor. 15, the seventh of the series. Thus, Laodicea cannot begin in 1878 as some suggest.

The END of Laodicea has not yet been found. It should be marked by that wonderful proclamation from Psalm 46: BE STILL! AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.

**** D 601: “It (7th Trumpet) has been symbolically sounding since 1874, and will continue.”***

PART II:
SUMMARY

Based on the above evidences, we suggest the best likely dates (and “angels”) for the seven Churches are as follows:

1. EPHESUS (Paul)
33 to c. 70
2. SMYRNA (John)
c.70 to 313
3. PERGAMOS (Arius)
313 to 1160
4. THYATIRA (Waldo)
1160 to 1371
5. SARDIS (Wycliffe)
1371 to 1521
6. PHILADELPHIA (Luther)
1521 to 1874
7. LAODICEA (Russell)
1874 to ?

PART III: HISTORIC CHART

On the following page is a chart to make visual the relative lengths of the seven Churches, Seals, and Trumpets as well as to supply a few of the relative chronological texts and historic events which occur during these periods.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE CHURCHS, SEALS, & TRUMPETS

Dates	Events	Angel	Church	Seal	Trumpet	Observations
33	Church Established					
67	Paul's Death / Nero's Persecution	Paul ?-67	I Ephesus			
70	Fall of Jerusalem					
100	Last Apostle Dies	John 2?-100?	II Smyrna			
303	Diocletian's persecution		Rev. 2:10			
313	Edict of Milan					
325	Nicean Council	Arius 252-336	III Pergamos			
539	1260 Days Begin					Dan. 7:25; 12:7
711-32	Islamic Advancement in Europe					
754	Papal States (until 1870)					
800	Charlemagne Crowned		Rev. 2:21			
962	Holy Roman Empire (-1806)					
1054	E. & W. Churches divide					
1160	Waldenses proclaimed heretics					
		Waldo ?-1179	IV Thyatira			
1334-1354	Black Death		Rev. 2:23			
1371	Bull against Wycliffe					
1378-1418	Great Schism	Wycliffe 1324-1384	V Sardis		Rev. 9:5,10	
1453	Fall of E. Rome/ Vatican built					
1492	End of Islam in Europe					
1518	95 Theses			Rev. 6:11		
1521	Diet of Worms					
1648	Peace of Westphalia	Luther 1483-1546	VI Philadelphia			
1789	French Revolution			Rev. 6:12	Rev. 11:13	
1799	End of 1260 days				Rev. 10:6	Dan. 7:25, 12:7
1874	Parousia		Rev. 3:20		Rev. 11:15	Dan. 12:12
1878	First Resurrection Rev. 14:8, 13	Russell 1852-1916	VII Laodicea			I Thess 4:16
				Rev. 8:1		
?			23			

THE SEVEN CHURCHES, SEALS, AND TRUMPETS:

A SUPERFICIAL OVERVIEW

	CHURCH	SEAL	TRUMPET
1	EPHESUS (33-70) strayed from its “first love” of ecstatic discovery of Messiah to disputation on practice and Jewish law, but did not give in to false teachers and power-grabbers. Rev. 2:1-7	Doctrine was pure (white horse) and it was convincing to those who heard (conquering). Rev. 6:1, 2	Hard truths (hail) destroyed Jewish society. Rev. 8:7
2	SMYRNA (70-313) was period of bitter physical persecution (death) and had to deal with the rise of apostasy (false Jews = tare Christians.) Rev. 2:8-11.	Doctrine (red horse) began to be stained with sinful apostate teaching and there was internal struggle (slaying one another) as well as persecution from the outside world. Rev. 6:3, 4.	Rome began to be "taken out of the way." (II Thess. 2:6, 7) — the great mount being divided by its internal struggles and ultimately actually by Constantine Rev. 8:8, 9.
3	PERGAMOS (313-1160) Satan (the great apostasy) now gains a throne — Chief Religious Ruler. He is enthroned in Rome; saints now tolerate Lordship (Nicolaitans) and church and state. They DO however, still keep an antipope position (Antipas) Rev. 2:12-17	Doctrine is now not capable of reflecting light (black horse). Beginning of the “dark ages.” Spiritual food is at a premium—weighed out with care. But work of the Spirit (oil) and of sacrifice (wine) still goes on. Rev. 6:5, 6.	The fall of Arius and his great truths from favor allows the poisoning of doctrine. Rev. 8:10,11
4	THYATIRA (1160-1371) sees the saints hampered by the false prophet, Jezebel (Roman Catholic Church — now in relatively total control of European states.) God slows her down by the plague (killing with DEATH). Saints’ persecution by the state earns them the promise of verses 26, 27. Rev. 2:18-29	Doctrine now is drained of all life (sickly—pale horse). The plague (hell) makes all else secondary for a while. The beasts (governments) are the Jezebel- ordained instruments of persecution Rev. 6:7, 8	The lack of truth darkens the understanding of Gospel (sun), Prophets (moon) and Apostles (stars). The future, however, (3 woes) portends great changes for this problem. Rev. 8:12, 13
			The last three trumpets ARE THREE WOES that really shake up those who “dwell on the earth”. Rev 8:13

**THE SEVEN CHURCHES, SEALS, AND TRUMPETS:
A SUPERFICIAL OVERVIEW CONT'D.**

	CHURCH	SEAL	TRUMPET
5	SARDIS (1371-1521) begins an upturn because the Church is at its low ebb and must be strengthened. The advent of Wycliffe starts a trend with the Bible translated into the vernacular. Rev.3:1-6	The back of the Church is nearly broken: "How long?" – How much more can it take? They are promised their faithfulness even under depressing conditions and that help WILL come. Rev. 6:9-11	Another star is cast out of religious favor. Wycliffe is hated with a vengeance. But what he starts STINGS the error for 150 years until Luther can make a successful rebellion. Rev. 9:1-12
6	PHILADELPHIA (1521-1874) opens the gate to escape the apostasy. Rome ("Satan" and "False Jews") must now acknowledge and abide the reform. Rev. 3:7-13	This period is climaxed by the great earthquake which breaks the back of religious and royal domination. The spread is controlled ("hurt not . . .") so the church can be completed in the next period. Rev. 6:12-7:4.	A complex trumpet! It includes doctrinal reform (horses), the opening of understanding of Daniel (the "little book"), the time of the end (42 months), (earthquake), etc. Rev. 9:13-11:14
7	LAODICEA (1874 - ?) is spoiled by riches and indifference but has available all the newly found truths. Jesus has returned and is serving "supper." Rev. 3:14 – 22	The new truths are SO powerful that false Christianity is for a while left speechless and without answers (even wrong ones!) Rev. 8:1 Note: See a better alternative view under 8:1 on page 152.	The announcement of Jesus invisible return and its meaning is made. The time of trouble ensues. The understanding of things in the Most Holy is gained. Rev. 11:15-19

SEVENS					
	7 Churches Rev. 2-3	7 Seals Rev. 6- 7	7 Parables Matt 13	7 Trumpets Rev. 8 – 11	7 Plagues Rev. 16
1 Early Church (Paul) 30-70	Ephesus Labored, not fainted Apostles alive	Conquer (White Horse)	Sower	Earth	Earth
2 Pagan Persecution Tares (John) 70-313	Smyrna False “Jews” / Persecution	Peace off earth by sword (Red Horse)	Tares	Sea	Sea
3 Papacy Creeds grow (Arius) 313-1160	Pergamos Eat Idol Sacri- fice; Eat hidden manna	Famine (Black Horse)	Tree grows	Rivers, Fountains	Rivers, Fountains
4 Jezebel Entrenched (Waldo) 1160-1371	Thyatira Jezebel seduc- es / her children to be killed with death (pestilence)	Death (pestilence) (Pale Horse)	Woman leavens	Sun, Moon, Stars	Sun, Moon, Stars
5 Reformation 1 (Wycliffe) 1371-1521	Sardis Repent/Worthy shall walk in white (robes)	Souls under al- tar; White robes	Treasure	Sun, air, dark- ened/ locusts. (Woe 1)	Darkness (Seat of Beast)
6 Reform II (Luther) 1521-1874	Philadelphia Open Door / Promise of recognition	French Revolu- tion (Satan’s Syna- gogue weak- ened)	Pearl	Euphrates erupts (4 angels loosed) (Woe 2)	Euphrates dried/ 3 spirits like frogs
7 2 nd Presence (Russell) 1874-?	Laodicea Anoint Eyes / Sup with Lord / Throne	Forehead sealing completed	Dragnet (harvest)	Christ-Class receives king- dom / Wrath (7 plagues) (Woe 3)	Armageddon / fierceness of wrath

PHRASES FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCHES
MIRRORED IN
THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES

- | | | |
|-----------|--|---------------------|
| 1. | 1:12, 16 mirrored in 2:1 — Seven stars and seven lampstands (See also 2:5) | EPHESUS |
| | | |
| 2. | 1:17, 18 mirrored in 2:8 — First & Last who was dead but is alive | SMYRNA |
| | | |
| 3. | 1:16 mirrored in 2:12 — Sharp two-edged sword. (See also 2:16) | PERGAMUM |
| | | |
| 4. | 1:14, 15 mirrored in 2:18 — Eyes of fire and Feet of burnished bronze. | THYATIRA |
| | | |
| 5. | 1:4, 16 mirrored in 3:1 — Seven spirits and Seven Stars. | SARDIS |
| | | |
| 6 | 1:18 mirrored in 3:7 — Key(s) | PHILADELPHIA |
| | | |
| 7. | 1:5 mirrored in 3:14 — The faithful witness | LAODICEA |

REVELATION PART ONE

Five views of the gospel age and their purposes

<u>Picture number:</u>	<u>Contents of the Picture:</u>	<u>Inclusive Verses:</u>	<u>Purpose of the Picture:</u>
1.	Introduction to and messages to <u>THE SEVEN CHURCHES</u>	1:9 - 3:22	Information for the seven stages of the Church through their respective angels showing to them the prevailing conditions and how to overcome those conditions.
2.	Introduction to and descriptions of <u>THE SEVEN SEALS</u>	4:1 - 8:1	Explanations of which major conditions of history would prevail during the seven stages of Church development and how those conditions would most affect the saints.
3.	Introduction to and descriptions of <u>THE SEVEN TRUMPETS</u>	8:2 - 11:19	Explanations of how the messages expounded by the seven "angles" to the Churches would during their respective periods affect the world. (In effect, the trumpets are the OPPOSITE of the seals.)
4.	<u>THE WOMAN, MANCHILD, AND DRAGON</u>	12:1 - 13:1	This scenario is given to show the historical development of the Papacy out of a combination of secular power and early Christianity. It also shows how true saints would be forced continually to flee from the power and influences of the Apostasy and the civil authorities.
5.	<u>TWO BEASTS, AN IMAGE, AND THE OVERCOMERS</u>	13:1 - 14:5	This scenario shows how the major apostate churches in virtual oneness with civil power would persecute the saints. It shows the relationship between the two major beasts. It shows how the overcoming saints will always live above the influences and threats of these apostates

PREFACE TO THE INTRODUCTIONS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES, SEALS, AND TRUMPETS

As a study of the seven Churches, Seals, and Trumpets is undertaken, it is very easy to lose track of the focus and force in each of these sequences. The way this notebook is arranged, the Scriptures which constitute ONLY THE INTRODUCTIONS to the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets are treated first — before the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets are actually considered. This has the advantage of coordinating the three introductions which take place, as will be seen, all at the same time — in close proximity to the first advent.

There are internal evidences galore that the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets are contemporaneous with each other. These introductions lend much credence to this position. Each introduction clearly contains elements placing the beginning of each series at the beginning of the age. This is an important reason for considering these introductions prior to a study of the three series themselves.

— SUMMARIES OF EACH SERIES —

THE SEVEN CHURCHES. This is an account of admonitions to the Church throughout the age regarding conditions, needs, and experiences in overcoming. In essence, these messages represent the concerns and teachings of each of the appointed “angels.”

THE SEVEN SEALS. This is a history laid out in advance. God had arranged (and recorded in His sealed scroll) pre-ordained changes and the circumstances or catalysts which would accomplish them. The stories of the Seals explain these changes and their effects on the consecrated. Evidence supports that the Seal is opened AT THE END of each period rather than at its beginning. Understanding comes after experiencing.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS. This series of descriptions shows the effects of dispensational truths on surrounding society. Society hears, and is somewhat disturbed, by these messages, but is not reformed by them. Consequently, the Seven Last Plagues (Chapters 15 & 16) are necessary. (It will be noticed that the plagues are poured out on the same sequence of elements as hear the trumpets. (see pg.26)

THE FOCAL POINT OF EACH SERIES’ INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCHES:

This introduction (1:9-20) stresses Jesus as the powerful, experienced, always-present advisor, director, and protector over the Churches.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SEALS:

This introduction (Chapters 4 & 5) stresses the “tools” which God will use to accomplish the events which will affect the Churches; it also stresses His delegation of power for their accomplishment to the Lion-Lamb.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRUMPETS:

This introduction (8:2-6) stresses the loudness (power) of the dispensational proclamations. It stresses that the prayers of the saints (FOR THE KINGDOM) were actually being heard and carried out by this sequence of trumpetings. Finally, it stresses the eventual dismemberment of the present society by an additional pouring out (7 plagues) which will re-focus the messages of the trumpets and thus “finish God’s wrath.” (15:1)

The details of these summaries will be found in the following considerations of the three introductions.

THE THREE INTRODUCTIONS OF PART 1 OF REVELATION

	To The 7 Churches	To the 7 Seals	To the 7 Trumpets
Found:	1:9-20	Chapters 4 and 5	8:2-6
Purpose:	To introduce Jesus and his attributes as the priest who controls the lives and the destinies of the Churches and of the 7 “angels” who will specially serve the Churches.	To show the transfer and the cooperation of authority from and between the God of the Old Testament times (Ch. 4) to and with the Lamb of the Gospel Age, and to show the elements at God’s command which will be active and important throughout the age. Each chapter ends with a rapturous summation of the conclusion of the age.	Introduces a second function for the angels of Chapters 2 and 3 — to be heard not only by the saints, but by messages so very loud that the surrounding world will also hear. Jesus is introduced again as a priest who guarantees the progress of the Church throughout the troubles of the age, who (by implication) justifies the trumpets and, who will cause the 7 plagues to accomplish what the trumpets could not accomplish.
Special Highlights:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lord’s Day • The REAL Trumpet • Holding the Stars • “As a dead man” • “Do not be afraid” • The First and the Last 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The REAL Trumpet again • “Come up here” • The Jasper and Sardius • The 24 • The Sea of Glass • The 4 Living Ones • The Lion-Lamb • The Sin— Offering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The import of the 7 angels • The justifying incense • The prayers for the Kingdom • The secondary use of the censer

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Revelation 1:9-20

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

(1:9-20)

The Churches, Seals, and Trumpets all have introductory passages. The Seals have two complete chapters (4 & 5). The Trumpets have only five verses (8:2-6). The Churches have as their introduction one half of Revelation's opening chapter in which Jesus presents himself with all of those characteristics which will both comfort and strengthen the saints during all seven periods of the Church.

1:9 — JOHN comes from the Hebrew (Yehochanan) which means Yahweh Has Been Gracious. Throughout Revelation, John serves as a stand-in for the entire Church. What he sees and hears, we see and hear. As the messages to the Seven Churches are being introduced, John's involvement becomes our involvement. True, he was the scribe of this prophecy, but symbolically WE ALSO WRITE. (See 10:4 for an example of this concept: To write is to record for learning and profit. When John is told to "write not," it is the same as telling the Church not to get involved. The seven thunders — controversies in the world — which follow 1799, are things which WE are to ignore even if they captivate the world.) Therefore, when John writes, we (the Church) are making mental notes for our spiritual development and profit.

YOUR BROTHER & FELLOW PARTAKER IN THE TRIBULATION & KINGDOM & PERSEVERANCE, WHICH ARE IN JESUS: Here John is stressing what is mentioned above. He (regardless of his SPECIAL station) is part of a body — all of whom are mentioned in this prophecy. BROTHER stresses the unity of the body. FELLOW PARTAKER IN TRIBULATION stresses that the whole Church must suffer. KINGDOM stresses the outcome of that suffering. PERSEVERANCE encourages us to suffer so that we can, indeed, reign. This is the epitome of the book of Revelation — encouragement to fellowship in sufferings and victory.

ISLAND CALLED PATMOS: This was a penal colony. If we knew the etymology (which the seminaries do not seem able to supply), we would be richer since places equal conditions in the Bible. Perhaps the Lord wishes us only to know the QUALITIES of this place. We can deduce the conditions of SEPARATENESS (island) of John (and, therefore, of us), and the conditions of REJECTION (a penal colony) which all of the Church experience at some time — "the wilderness." The blessing, of course, is that, while there, John "hears" (v. 10) something which is a great blessing. Thus OUR separateness brings revelations to us. (Some claim that in Israeli, Patmos means "mortal".)

BECAUSE OF THE WORD OF GOD AND THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS: (Compare 6:9 and notes on it.) These are consistently the two things which set the true Church apart from the apostate church.

1:10 — I WAS IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY: John's perspective for the entire book of Revelation is that of standing in OUR DAY. — the "Day of the Lord" which Peter and Paul both stress much in their writings. From this perspective he can look back and tell the story of the entire age seeing how one thing led to another. Secondarily, this can well represent that it is NOW when we (John's antitype) can look back and understand the age. (Compare 17:3) John, of course, stood in our day only IN SPIRIT (in his mind), not literally.

AND I HEARD BEHIND ME A LOUD VOICE LIKE A TRUMPET: The voice is Jesus (vs. 12, 13). It is LOUD because it is clear and authoritative. (Cf. Matt. 7:28, 29) It is BEHIND John because, from John's perspective, the whole matter is being reported from the Lord's Day as finished history. LITERALLY, what John heard HAD ALREADY BEGUN — the Gospel Age was already well in progress.

Additionally, much of what Revelation records shows the meaning and fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies — words from the past —BEHIND John. Verse 7 is a good example of this. In it both Daniel and Zechariah are quoted. (See comments on verse 7 in Item #7.)

It is LIKE a trumpet. There are only seven trumpets in Revelation. The word LIKE is important. This is NOT another trumpet. It is LIKE one because it is CLEAR; it is LIKE one because it is a MESSAGE; it is LIKE the SEVENTH trumpet (“the trump of God” — 1 Thess. 4:16) because on the “Lord’s Day” this trumpet clarifies all. It is the “end of the mystery.” (See 10:7) Thus, from the perspective of the Lord’s Day, Revelation is understood.

1:11 —WRITE IN A BOOK WHAT YOU SEE: John is commanded by Jesus to record history in advance — from the perspective of the end of the age (The Lord’s Day).

AND SEND IT TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES: These seven did, of course, literally exist in Asia Minor. But their use here is symbolic. (See comments on 1:1 and point #4 in Item #6.) They were likely chosen to symbolize the entire age BECAUSE their names so aptly fit the seven conditions through which the church would progress. (Places equal conditions in Biblical symbolism.) The fact that the seven literal Churches form a clockwise circuit along one road seems symbolic of their SUCCESSION in history. When traveling this road, one comes to each Church in the correct order. (For an explanation of the meaning of each, see the comments regarding each in chapters two and three and the summaries at the end of Appendix B.) The literal John did send us (all seven Churches) his written message.

1:12 —AND I TURNED TO SEE THE VOICE THAT WAS SPEAKING TO ME: We must alter the direction of our lives to see what Jesus is telling us. (Cf. v. 10.) In one sense, the Harvest Church can turn — look into the past — to see (understand) the message from Jesus. In the literal sense, of course, John (figuratively placed in our day) had to look back to see the vision of which he must write.

HAVING TURNED, I SAW SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS: As we look back, we clearly see the Church having gone through seven periods of historical experience. In each it gave our Divinely appointed light as due — blended light from seven epochs now constituting the whole Gospel.

1:13 — IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAMPSTANDS: thus overseeing them all (Cf. Matt. 18:20.) The following characteristics help us see why this introduction to the Churches is so important. The oversight of the Church has nothing lacking:

ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN (i.e., a human figure): This is a reference to Jesus stressing that he WAS a human being — that his experiences and sympathies are to our advantage. This obviously is NOT to suggest how Jesus actually looks, but is representative of his functions toward the Churches.

CLOTHED IN A ROBE REACHING TO HIS FEET: This seems descriptive of the clothing of Aaron, thus showing that Jesus is functioning as our High Priest. The reference to feet IS NOT to the feet members of the body. Verse 17 seems to prove this. These several verses are telling us about HIM WHO WALKS IN THE MIDST OF THE LAMPSTANDS, NOT about the Church members.

AND GIRDED ACROSS THE BREAST WITH A GOLDEN GIRDLE: A girdle represents service; golden makes it Divine service. Even in his glorified condition Jesus, BY WILL, is a servant of his Father. Most girdles are around the waist. This varying position may represent HEART SERVICE.

1:14 — HIS HEAD & HIS HAIR WERE WHITE LIKE WHITE WOOL, LIKE SNOW: (Cf. Dan. 7:9.) The head represents ways of thinking, thoughts, philosophies. Wool is from sheep. White hair represents veneration (Prov. 16:31). One reason we venerate Jesus is because of his sheep-like humility which allowed him to sacrifice on our behalf. The superior whiteness (like snow) shows the absolute purity.

AND HIS EYES LIKE A FLAME OF FIRE: Eyes are wisdom. Fire, among other things, represents

righteous judgment. Together we have the wisdom of his judgment — the discernment which burns through the dross, which understands all the contingencies of the happenings of the Gospel Age.

1:15 — FEET LIKE BURNISHED BRONZE WHEN CAUSED TO GLOW IN A FURNACE: Once again we have the strength from knowing that he walked on earth through its many trials. He trod the path as a perfect human (polished brass) and endured the fiery trials against his righteousness. (Heb. 4:15).

VOICE LIKE THE SOUND OF MANY WATERS: (Cf. 17:15.) Jesus was, through the age, NOT to speak directly to his Church, but by MANY MESSENGERS from many sectors of society. This is IMPORTANT. This is telling us plainly that the Church will be taught by MEN whom Jesus will use as instructors. These will point to the Scriptures as their authority. Romans 10:14, 15.

—THUS —

1:16 — IN HIS RIGHT HAND: The hand of activity and favor

HE HELD: protected and directed. These men would be SECURED for their functions.

SEVEN STARS: teachers, light-bearers, men who would be the prime message-givers to each of the seven stages of Church history.

OUT OF HIS MOUTH A TWO-EDGED SWORD: Out of his mouth = from his teachings, a two-edged sword: The Bible and the Holy Spirit which emanates from it to discern the heart and separate the elect from the non-elect. See Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; Psa. 149:6. The fact that it is two-edged seems to say that it is not a respecter of one side of an issue, but cuts equally in all directions.

HIS FACE LIKE THE SUN SHINES IN ITS STRENGTH: Face = favor. Jesus' favor will enlighten, warm, cheer, and cause growth in his Church like the sun in its blazing glory. The sun represents the Gospel. Jesus' favor will bless with a blazingly bright Gospel.

Note: Verses 12-17 show an enormously sobering PRESENCE. The totality of this vision brings John to the ground. Keeping the totality in mind is equally important to analyzing the pieces. Each piece strengthens us in some way. The total makes us worship.

1:17 — WHEN I SAW HIM I FELL AT HIS FEET AS A DEAD MAN: This was the literal John's appropriate response. The symbolic John Class falls (from any notions of self-import or from any self-made plans) at his feet (an act of worship) as a dead man (giving over life in full consecration, sacrificing whatever is left of human life and its rights). See 20:4.

AND HE LAID HIS RIGHT HAND ON ME: (The same hand which holds the stars., the hand of favor and action.) Our consecrations secure his favor and his power acting on our behalf.

From here through verse 18, Jesus assures
the John class of what is behind this right
hand of favor and power.

DO NOT BE AFRAID: The relationship of Jesus to his Church is not one of fear as the heathen have with their gods and as many Christians yet have for God. (Cf. Isa. 29:13.) The entire chronicle of the message to the Seven Churches MIGHT inspire fear in the uninformed reader. Therefore, Jesus' INITIAL words to the John class warn against this improper attitude.

I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST: the ABSOLUTE! — the first and final authority on doctrine and practice. With this information, the John class CANNOT FEAR that it is missing something it needs. As the child misquoted the 23rd Psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd; He is all I need."

1:18 — THE LIVING ONE: Jesus represents himself as the one IN WHOM is life — the kind of source no one can resist!

AND I WAS DEAD: Here he not only implants the hope of gaining life out of death for us, but he also includes the sublime reminder that he CAME TO DIE — to give a sacrifice for us.

BEHOLD: A word of accent. He wants us to stop and think. Not only was he dead and now alive, but THINK HOW SACRIFICIAL DEATH LEADS TO LIFE FOREVERMORE. (Romans 8:31ff.)

I HAVE THE KEYS OF DEATH (dying) & OF HADES (death): This two-word phrase relates directly to the original curse in Gen. 2:17 where the Hebrew accounts for (1) dying (death) “thou shalt” (2) “die” (hades). Jesus has the keys to release man from the dying condition and from the grave to which it has led all of the race. His victory (and the implied victory for his Church) NOT ONLY gave him personal life forevermore, but gave him the keys to let others out of the dying condition and out of the grave. What a prospect! (See I Cor. 15:29.)

1:19 — WRITE, THEREFORE: The literal John was to WRITE. The symbolic John CONSIDERS. (Contrast 10:4 - “*Write not,*” means DO NOT CONSIDER, do not get involved in.) To write symbolizes for us to consider and to publish or proclaim the results of that consideration.

The word THEREFORE is so VERY important but is, unfortunately, missing in the KJV. It has much more meaning to the John class than it did to the Apostle John. It means, of course, “BECAUSE OF THIS.” BECAUSE Jesus will walk amid the Churches; BECAUSE he will function as our priest; BECAUSE his heart is devoted to Divine service; BECAUSE he is pure and to be venerated and has all the wisdom of judgment; BECAUSE he walked the narrow way successfully; BECAUSE his voice will be heard echoing throughout the age from many sources; BECAUSE his favor is strengthening light; BECAUSE he is the totality of authority and through sacrifice has gained life which he purposes to channel to others. BECAUSE of all of this, WRITE! (Consider!) WRITE (consider) what you saw in the past (in the life of Jesus the man); WRITE the things that are (the marvelous introduction of Jesus — the Revelation of Jesus Christ); and WRITE (consider) what (Gk =) is about to happen after these things (after you have considered his life and his new station as unseen head of the Church.)

1:20 — AS FOR THE MYSTERY: Jesus is kind at the outset to show how he wants to make the obscure plain to those who seek (those who write, *consider*). This is a blessed beginning. With all of the “mystery” which is to follow, this verse brings the hope and expectation that he will EXPLAIN the mysteries. Here he makes the initial symbols plain:

SEVEN STARS = the seven messengers (angels) which will serve the seven stages of the Church.

SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS = the seven stages of the Church — the light of the world until Jesus arises like the sun with healing in his beams. (See Matt. 5:14; John 3:19; I Tim. 3:15.)

Note the two items he chooses to emphasize! Success depends upon our listening to our angel and upon knowing where we are in history.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN SEALS

REV. 4

REV. 5

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN SEALS

(Chapters 4 and 5)

—Preface to Chapters 4 and 5 —

The introduction to the Seven Seals is far larger than those to the Seven Churches or Seven Trumpets because this introduction serves to make an all-important connection between Father and Son and between Old Testament and New Testament times. Thus these two chapters provide both a general explanation of what the Seals are, and why it is the Lamb who is opening them.

THE THRONE SCENE

Chapter 4 stresses the dominance of the Father in the plan — something which the introduction to the Churches (Chapter 1) did not do. Chapter four, in essence, shows us conditions at the opening of the age in terms of Him Who had pre-planned the age. It (and part of Chapter 5) gives us a list of the forces which serve God AND which will be active entities in the unfolding of the age (God, the 24 Elders, the 7 Spirits, the Sea of Glass, the 4 Living Ones, and, finally, the Sealed Scroll — the outline for the age.) Cf. 1:1. Most of the symbols have not heretofore been mentioned in Revelation. Their presence is needed, however, in the ensuing unfolding of prophecy.

THE LAMB

Chapter 5 introduces him who is “worthy” to open the book and to reveal its meanings: The Lion-Lamb. The chapter ends with a rapturous ahead-of-time look at the glory and glorious results which follow the opening of all the Seals. Once this introduction is complete, the details of the opening of each Seal (Chapters 6-8) begin.

THE ANCHORS OF NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

It is an important and interesting fact to keep in mind that Revelation is, in a large sense, the only prophetic book of the New Testament. While the Old Testament abounds with prophetic books, the New Testament is primarily history (Gospels and Acts) and admonitions (epistles). True these books CONTAIN prophecy, but they are not primarily prophetic books. Hebrews is unique as an explanatory treatise to let us know the import of tabernacle types. Revelation, however, stands alone as the prophecy book of the New Testament. The 4th chapter stands mightily as a reminder of the God which the Old Testament elucidates. He is not to be minimized or forgotten. This chapter makes a point of that. Chapter 5 explains the shift of emphasis to the Son.

— CHAPTER 4 —

4:1 — AFTER THESE THINGS: Not that the following is to HAPPEN after these things, but John now sees a totally new vision — a second look at the age.

I LOOKED: The John Class can look several times at the history of the Gospel Age, each time with a different perspective. This is healthy from the standpoint of understanding. Looking ONLY at ecclesiastical happenings while ignoring secular things will cause us to miss much of what prophecy is saying. Prophecy (and we) acknowledge that civil and ecclesiastical things are not separable.

BEHOLD: This word is always important. Here the Lord wishes us to pay close attention. The intent of BEHOLD here is not as obvious as we might prefer. It is referring to the door? Is it referring to the symbols of Chapter 4?

A DOOR OPEN IN HEAVEN: A door is an opportunity. It may here represent the opportunity to glimpse at the forces of heaven as the age opens. It may represent the ability to interpret Revelation by understanding the symbolisms which are to be listed.

AND THE FIRST VOICE WHICH I HAD HEARD (in 1:10) LIKE THE SOUND OF A TRUMPET SPEAKING WITH ME: (See comments on 1:10) This whole phrase serves to LINK the introduction to the Churches with the introduction to the Seals. As Jesus introduced himself to the Churches, he now introduces us to the heavenly scene from which he had come. He does this as a means to show the relationship of himself and His Father to the sequence of Seals.

COME UP HERE: This is a kind and wonderful invitation for his saints to view history from the heavenly perspective — not from the natural sight of men.

I WILL SHOW YOU WHAT MUST TAKE PLACE (HEREAFTER?) The purpose of Revelation (according to 1:1) is to “show his bond-servants the things which must shortly take place.” Clearly, the vision of the Seals is in partial fulfillment of this promise. The word “hereafter” (KJV) or the words “after these things” (NAS), while possibly appropriate here, may NOT belong in this verse. (See Diaglott footnote.) It is likely that verse 2 should begin - “After these things I was immediately in the spirit.” This seems better to fit the context.

4:2 — (AFTER THESE THINGS): See preceding three sentences above.

I WAS IN THE SPIRIT: Compare 1:10. We have here another strong connection between introductions to the Churches and the Seals. “In the Spirit” represents John’s presence as being NOT literal, but rather “in mind,” (the mind of the spirit, the new creature.)

BEHOLD: Possibly a reminder of the same word in verse 1, thus suggesting that the focus of our beholding should be an effort to understand the heavenly power and plan which will be directing the whole scenario of the Seals.

A THRONE WAS SET IN HEAVEN: A throne represents an established authority of judgment. Though this authority is NOT visible to the human eye, it functions as the very foundation of all Christian hope and trust.

ONE SITTING ON THE THRONE: He is un-named; His identity is obvious. In NOT naming Him, the Giver of Revelation is spared the need of symbolizing Himself. What could possibly symbolize the Great I AM ? However, some of His QUALITIES can be symbolized:

4:3 — LIKE A JASPER STONE: (Cf. 21:11 where this stone is described as precious or costly, — brilliant, and crystal clear.) Obviously, God does not LOOK LIKE any of His descriptions. The many items used here and elsewhere to represent Him are used so that we understand things about His character or office. TWO stones are here used to represent God. The first is the DIAMOND (Jasper)

which, being “crystal clear,” shows us the clarity of His character, (Cf. Jas. 1:17) His purity, His unadulterated attributes. This clarity makes a diamond brilliant. The clarity of character gives God GLORY — a difficult word to define. It is this complex word GLORY that the Jasper seems to represent.

AND A SARDIUS IN APPEARANCE: Brethren who have studied these stones (e. g., Burns, Mann, Frey, Shallieu) suggest that LOVE is what this stone represents. This idea MAY be bolstered by a comparison of 21:20 where the Sardius is numbered as the 6th stone. Since 6 (by itself, at least) represents incompleteness, it is not unlikely that love, which must remain relatively inactive toward the race until the Church is complete, is shown here by this stone.

The Sardius (Carnelian or Cameo stone) is a warm red color with a texture capable of being carved. It is suggested that this flesh-like color and impressionable quality represents love even as the “third living one” of verse 7 (a face of a man) represents love. What do we usually have carved on a Cameo stone? The face of a man! This might suggest that the glory of the Diamond (Jasper) equates with justice, power, and wisdom — things which might seem impersonal; the love of the Cameo stone would show the compensating love. The words IN APPEARANCE suggest, perhaps, that God, though brilliant, appears approachable (warm) to those who know Him. The same phrase regarding the Emerald might suggest this interpretation. The COLOR of the stone, NOT the stone, is of import in this part of the interpretation.

A RAINBOW AROUND THE THRONE: A rainbow in Scripture represents a covenant.

LIKE AN EMERALD IN APPEARANCE: it is not that the covenant is like the STONE, but like the stone APPEARS, i. e., GREEN = everlasting. Thus the Green Rainbow tells us of the EVERLASTING COVENANT (Heb. 13:20; Psa. 104:8-10; Isa. 55:3.)

4:4 — TWENTY-FOUR THRONES: Here, in this picture representing the beginning of the Gospel Age, we see that God’s throne (His established authority of Judgment) is surrounded by satellite thrones — extensions of His judgment authority. These represent the Hebrew Scriptures — the only written authoritative judgment tool available to men before the completion of the Greek Scriptures. That the Church has its footing on these satellite thrones seems clearly pictured in 12:1.

UPON THE THRONES, TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS SITTING: (See study on the 24 Elders — Item #68; or see Item #79c for an alternative view held by many brethren.) These 24 represent the testimony of the “24 Prophecies” — the common name of the Jewish Bible. These elders become commentators from Chapter 5 forward. This is probably to draw our attention to the O.T. prophecies which the Gospel Age fulfills and upon which much of Revelation is based. (If they represented the Church’s office, it would seem likely that the symbol would have been introduced in the 7 Churches.)

CLOTHED IN WHITE GARMENTS: The prophecies are NOT the work of men (see II Pet. 1:19-21), but rather the words of God dictated through the Holy Spirit and recorded by the hands of men. This white garment phrase is the assurance of their purity.

GOLDEN CROWNS ON THEIR HEADS: The head represents the ideas, philosophies, thinking, methods, etc., etc. The symbolism here is that Divine (golden) authority (crowns) attests their testimonies (Heads).

NOTE: It is interesting and important to note the varying references to the throne in this chapter. The THRONE itself appears in verse 2; One Who is ON the Throne also occurs there. In verse 4 we see things AROUND the throne. Verse 5 tells of things FROM the throne and then (along with verse 6) BEFORE the throne. Then verse 6 has the complicated combination, IN THE MIDDLE AND AROUND the throne. The various prepositions carry various lessons:

- **THRONE** = authority of judgment
- **ON** the throne: The only One rightly possessing the authority
- **AROUND** the throne: Delegated extensions of that authority
- **FROM** the throne: Emanating powers of judgment
- **BEFORE** the throne: Servants of the One Authority
- **IN THE MIDDLE & AROUND** the throne: Totally engulfing — GOD’S attributes are what surround Him, identify Him, sanctify Him, explain Him, and endear Him to us.

4.5 — With the understanding of the prepositions preceding “throne,” we are better enabled to understand this verse and its contextual location. The fourth verse has set up the STANDARDS of judgment. Verse five now explains the TOOLS of judgment — the powers of judgment which emanate from the throne. They are three:

(a) **FLASHES OF LIGHTNING**: One tool of judgment is to see what reactions occur when sharp, bright, penetrating truths cross our paths.

(b) **VOICES**: (NAS = “sounds” = S5456 = phone; but is legitimately translated “voices” elsewhere.) This is the same word used in 1 Cor. 14:7, 8: “If the trumpet give an uncertain **SOUND**.” Thus, a second tool of judgment is a voice — a clear, studied, logical message. What will be our reaction to such?

(c) **PEALS OF THUNDER**: A third tool of judgment is to check our reactions to controversies which rage following the presentation of truths.

It is important for us to “behold” (4:1, 2) the Lord’s tools of judgment lest we be caught short by them. He clearly wants to see how all of His intelligent creatures react to truths and their results. What else could be a standard of judgment in an age of faith?

NOTE: Here there is a transition in the narrative obscured by the verse division (or lack of it). The MIDDLE of verse five begins a discussion of things BEFORE THE THRONE — things which are to SERVE God’s judgment process. The first of these are:

SEVEN LAMPS OF FIRE BURNING WHICH ARE THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD: These have already been identified (See Item #67) as the Holy Spirit — particularly in its function as distributor of the seven messages to the seven Church epochs. The first appearance of this symbol (1:4) fails to add the phrase: “Seven Lamps of Fire Burning.” The reference seems to be to the Holy of the Tabernacle with its single candlestick with seven lamps. This seems to show that the Holy Spirit working in and through the seven periods of the Church will keep God’s standards of truth perpetually present and active throughout the age as a standard of judgment (fire burning). This reference to the tabernacle is then continued in the next symbol:

4:6 — **A SEA OF GLASS LIKE CRYSTAL**: (See Item #69’s remark on SEA OF GLASS as well as on 4:6.) This is the name given to the laver in Solomon’s Temple (I Kings 7:23; II Chron. 4:2). To tie this symbol to verse 5 makes ultimate sense. Not only (4:5) does this Holy Spirit’s constant light-bearing serve God’s purpose of judgment, but the Crystal (pure, clear), flawless (like glass), body of truth (water) will always be there as a cleansing place (lavar) for those approaching God. Thus, this lavar serves God’s purpose throughout the age.

IN THE CENTER AND AROUND THE THRONE: (See note following 4:4). These “creatures” are totally engulfing BECAUSE they represent God’s attributes. We cannot look at God; we cannot comprehend Him; but by these four very basic parts of His character — the things we see as totally engulfing the Father — we “see” Him.

FOUR LIVING CREATURES: We will try past this point never to allude to these four again as “creatures,” but rather as LIVING ONES which is not only the correct translation, but a very important part of understanding what these four represent. God is NOT created. Nor are His four attributes. In this sense, the word “creature” is totally misleading. It does, certainly, improve on the KJV’S “Four Beasts!” Remember, there ARE no creatures. These are SYMBOLS representing God’s basic attributes (WISDOM, JUSTICE, POWER, and LOVE). These are VERY ALIVE attributes — attributes which function constantly and in total harmony. However, just as there are not 24 Elders as beings, there, likewise, are not four living ones as beings.

LIVING ONES. This is VERY CLOSE to the name which God, Himself, gives Himself. Yahweh, the great I AM, the Existing One, the Living One, is throughout the Bible referred to with the preface (in some form) of LIVING. A few examples: Deut. 5:26; II Kings 19:4, 16; Psalm 42:2 and 84:2; Isa. 37:4, 17; John 6:57, 69; II Cor. 3:3; Rev. 7:2; Ruth 3:13; I Sam. 14:39, 45; Jer. 4:2; 12:16; 16:15; Rev. 4:9, 10; 5:14; 10:6; 15:7; etc. HE is the ONE GREAT LIVING ONE; these FOUR LIVING ONES ARE God’s character. Four symbolizes universality. These four Living Ones symbolize the universality of God’s character as expressed in the terms of His character which we can DISCERN when we look at His works.

FULL OF EYES IN FRONT AND BEHIND: Eyes represent wisdom. While WISDOM is one of the four attributes, all of the attributes are wisdom applied. God is omniscient. The eyes in front and behind show the lack of need for change (Jas. 1:17) in God Whose former works only supply the groundwork for His coming works. (Acts 15:18 KJV)

(These attributes, though they are “in the middle and around the throne” might, by extension, also be thought of as before the throne since God’s attributes SERVE to explain Him to all who approach. This seems implied in verse 8. However, it is probably not so stated since God is not a servant of God.)

4:7 — THE FIRST LIVING ONE: It is important that these four are numbered. When the study of the first four Seals is undertaken, these are referred to only by number and can, thus, only be identified by referring back to this verse.

A LION: While brethren differ on which attributes the lion and the calf represent, the difference does not (to this scribe) seem very consequential. The most obvious symbology of the King of Beasts seems to be POWER. Thus the powerful adversary is also symbolized as a Lion.

THE SECOND LIKE A CALF: Justice seems the best reference here since the calf satisfied justice in all of the typical offerings.

THIRD HAD A FACE LIKE A MAN: God’s love was reflected toward the race (John 3:16) by the favor (face) of sending His Son to be a man to provide the ransom price. The calf could NOT (except typically) satisfy justice. Love found a way. (Compare I Cor. 15:21).

FOURTH LIKE A FLYING EAGLE: The eagle represents WISDOM because of its keen vision. Flying seems to represent searching or watching. The eagle incidentally, has wonderful eyesight, and is able to see great distances sharply, from on high. Compare Zech. 4:10.

4:8 —EACH HAVING SIX WINGS: Wings seem to refer to God's Word because we are carried aloft by it. (See 12:14.) We are also protected by it. (Psa. 91:4) Wings are always in pairs, thus teaching that God's Word would ultimately be in the two divisions of the Bible — Hebrew and Greek. However, since this picture is at the beginning of the Gospel Age, ONLY the Hebrew Scriptures exist, thus giving the EXPECTATION for more — the sealed scroll of the next chapter.

Since there are four living ones with six wings each, we have 24 wings — a probable reference to the 24 prophecies (elders) which were, at the beginning of the age, the only written embodiment of God's Word. The total symbolic picture, then, seems to say that God's attributes are the basis of, and are fully reflected in, His Word.

The six wings on any ONE of the living ones seem to draw a lesson from Isaiah 6:2 where two wings cover the face, two cover the feet, and two were used to fly.

(a) The two which cover the face CONCEAL God's FAVOR (face) from the world. If, of course, we have access to the wings, WE know what is behind them.

(b) The two, which cover the feet, conceal God's operations (walkings) among men. Again, THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES (wings), WE can discern these stately steppings.

(c) The two which are used to fly show that God's attributes SEARCH OUT those whose hearts are His (II Chron. 16:9). These are found, of course, by contact with His Word (wings).

FULL OF EYES AROUND AND WITHIN: It is not absolutely clear whether it is the living ones or their wings which are full of eyes. The latter seems more likely; but the symbolism is good in either case. If we speak of the living ones (attributes) or the wings (the Scriptures which manifest those attributes now), we see unfathomable wisdom (eyes) in each of the four. We see wisdom (eyes) AROUND — i. e., on the surface and in the results — and we see wisdom (eyes) WITHIN — i. e., if we dig deeply into the mysteries. If it be only the wings with eyes, we have, in addition to the above, the ability of the Scriptures to tell us of the wisdom of things past, as well as things future as the eyes can see both directions.

DAY AND NIGHT THEY DO NOT CEASE SAYING: "Do not cease" symbolizes the CONSTANT testimony of these attributes. There is NEVER an instant nor an example when their testimony is absent (if we search for it.) "Day and Night" may refer to Psalm 121:4. It may also be a nice way of referring to the night of sin and death and the morning of Millennial joys.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY: This threefold repetition seems the Scriptural equivalent of the most positive and absolute conclusion. It may also refer to His Holiness in the past, present, and future with which this verse concludes. Clearly, it also refers to the WHOLENESS of God's character, a wholeness represented by the perfect balance of the four attributes. This is the one and only total Monarch:

THE LORD, THE GOD, THE ALMIGHTY: So it is in the Greek. The definite article also precedes the following:

THE ONE WHO WAS, THE ONE WHO IS, AND THE ONE WHO IS TO COME: (Compare comments on 1:4 where the SEQUENCE DIFFERS.) While it IS true of Yahweh that He has existed and will exist from eternity in both directions, it never seems quite appropriate to attach a past-tense verb to Him. Thus it is quite likely that this does not refer to His PERSONAL EXISTENCE, but rather to His HOLINESS which has just been thrice stated. Look into the past; you find only His holiness. Look now; you find only His holiness. Look to the future; you will only find holiness. THAT is the testimony of these four attributes. BECAUSE of the perfect balance of Wisdom, Justice, Power, and Love, ONLY HOLINESS IS POSSIBLE!

4:9 — There is a CHANGE OF TENSE in the Greek here. It is implied in the better English translations. Verse 9 shifts to the FUTURE. This verse (along with verses 10 and 11) LOOKS FORWARD TO THE TIME WHEN THE PLAN IS COMPLETED and the testimony of the attributes and the prophecies will openly give praise to God because ALL will then understand:

AND WHEN: in that future time -

THE LIVING ONES GIVE GLORY, HONOR, AND THANKS TO HIM WHO SITS ON THE THRONE: Once the peaceable kingdom is set up, all of God's attributes will come into focus to the world who will look backwards in time to see the interlocking functions of God's character imprinted on history. THEN the testimony of these living ones will show the GLORY (the Jasper-stone brilliance, clarity, and purity), the HONOR (the understanding of the permission of evil will show that God's dealings have been honorable), and the THANKS (the praise that everything has worked together for good).

TO HIM WHO LIVES FOREVER AND EVER: This little phrase is laden full of promises to come. In essence it is saying, "What He has done UP TO THIS POINT, now manifested to show how much GLORY, HONOR, and THANKS, we owe Him, is ONLY THE BEGINNING. FOREVER AWAITS US!"

4:10 — THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS: The totality of the testimony of the prophecies *WILL FALL DOWN BEFORE HIM*: an act of worship. Once the prophecies are all fulfilled, their accuracy is a tribute, a worship, to Him Who gave them. Thus they WORSHIP HIM.

WHO LIVES FOREVER AND EVER: (see verse 9)

AND *WILL CAST THEIR CROWNS BEFORE THE THRONE*: This is a visible acknowledgment demonstrating that the authority (crowns) of prophecy was from God (II Pet. 1:19-21.) The 24 CANNOT do this UNTIL the prophecies are FULFILLED, thus the verb WILL CAST: This is part of the verses 9 - 11 context — all future. There is a kinship in this expression with Eccl. 12:7. In that text the "spirit returns to God Who gave it." When men die, the privilege of life returns to the Giver. When the prophecies die (are fulfilled), their authority to predict (crowns) also returns to the One Who gave it. Thus the symbol of casting crowns before the throne is saying, "We have finished our charge."

4:11 — SAYING: This one-verse benediction is the epitome of all of the words of the prophets. It acknowledges God as the WILL and the SOURCE of all things and the only rightful possessor of all Glory, Honor, and Power.

NOTE: It is altogether possible that this fourth chapter exists to help us keep a perspective. Revelation is about Jesus. Yahweh is very much out of sight in most of the book (even in most of the New Testament.) This chapter, however, along with Chapter 5, shows that, while Jesus is the center of focus for the entire age, it was Yahweh Who placed him in this focus. The God of the Hebrew Scriptures IS NOT out of the picture! He is still supreme. He made the plan; He possesses the attributes; He gets the credit. But now, (Chapter 5), He hands over great authority to the Son — even as was summarized in 1:8. (See comments on same.)

Chapter 5

5:1 —AND I SAW: This is one of those phrases which marks changes in the Book of Revelation. In this case it shifts emphasis to the sealed book (scroll) which is to occupy our attention up to 8:1.

UPON THE RIGHT HAND OF HIM WHO SAT ON THE THRONE: Right hand is favor, activity, and power. Since the scroll contains God's plan of action for the period of the development of the Church, it is something which has His FAVOR and represents the ACTIVITY He desires (or foresees) accomplished. It is kept in His POWER until the One is found to open it. See Eph. 3:11.

A BOOK (SCROLL) WRITTEN INSIDE AND ON THE BACK: Remember that at this time, books as we know them did not exist. All books were scrolls. This seems to be saying that God's purposes were in some part visible (understandable), and in some part obscure.

SEALED UP WITH SEVEN SEALS: The obscure part of God's plan was divided into seven parts to be revealed in sequence when due.

5:2 — AND I SAW: Here is another marker. John wants now to draw our attention away from the hand and book and toward something else.

A STRONG ANGEL: There are only three "Strong" (or "mighty") angels in Revelation. No wonder John wants to draw our attention to this angel. (The others are in 10:1 and in 18:21.) The other two strong angels appear at times of great revolutionary stress in the Divine plan. In 10:1 we are at the French Revolution — the prototype (one-tenth) of the Great Time of Trouble. In 18:21 we are at the final cataclysmic overthrow of Babylon. THIS ANGEL (5:2), therefore, seems likely also to represent a time of revolutionary change — the shift from the Judaic Law Age into the Christian Dispensation.

AN ASIDE: This "strong angel" passage is a PERFECT EXAMPLE of the strengths of TOPICAL BIBLE STUDY. An in-order study of Revelation would have us SPECULATING as to whom this mighty angel might be. It is likely we would guess wrong. But the knowledge that this term is used only thrice in the book, and the consequent ability to see HOW the term is used, allows us to keep from GUESSING. Instead we can make an intelligent application BASED ON PRECEDENT.

This "strong angel" (the troublous time of the end of the Jewish Age) represents a time when religious questioning was at an all-time high. The Jewish polity and religion were collapsing. Who, now, could deal with God's plan? Who, now, could tell what was going to happen next? THIS is the very question at the end of this verse.

PROCLAIMING WITH A LOUD VOICE: The fall of things Jewish WAS a VERY LOUD message! Since the days of Moses, the Jewish religion was the only true standard on earth. Imagine, if we can, the mental turmoil and anguish when it is all falling apart and challenged by the new Christianity!

WHO IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK AND TO BREAK ITS SEALS? This was the vital religious question as the authority of the Jewish High Priest was now gone. The end of an age and the beginning of a new one causes such momentous questions. Jesus' ministry had undermined all of the false trappings of Judaism. But he had not yet given the brethren the needed information as to what would happen next. That would not happen until Pentecost and following.

5:3 — AND NO ONE: No one before the glorified Jesus.

IN HEAVEN: No Spirit Being, no priest.

ON THE EARTH: Among men or in society's functions.

OR UNDER THE EARTH: It may seem strange to make a point that the dead (those under the earth)

could not open the book; but the thought seems to be that, in looking back at the significant great ones of the past and at their writings (Moses, Isaiah, John the Baptist, etc.), none was able to understand God's plan. No one, that is, until the glorified Jesus.

WAS ABLE TO OPEN THE BOOK: Clarify and harmonize all the details of God's plans and purposes all the way up to the kingdom time.

OR TO LOOK INTO IT: The thought here seems to be that, even if the book **HAD BEEN OPENED**, no one had been justified to understand it and pursue it. Until the benefits of the ransom would be applied at Pentecost, and until the Holy Spirit had begotten the disciples, they could not have been prepared to understand the book even if it had been opened. This is manifest in that they had not understood Jesus plain words while He was personally with them.

5:4 —AND I BEGAN TO WEEP GREATLY: It is certainly possible that the literal John had this reaction. The expectancy aroused by Chapter 4 would have him in great anticipation of the implied blessings from the scroll. It is more likely, however, that John here pictures the Church before Pentecost during which time the brethren were in great perplexity to find answers to all the questions awakened by the events of their day.

BECAUSE (up to that time.)

NO ONE WAS FOUND WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK (give understanding)

OR TO LOOK INTO IT ("be justified to understand it even if it were made plain." E. Burns.)

5:5 — AND ONE OF THE ELDERS: (Those introduced in Chapter 4. See Item #68 in Appendix B.) This verse could be very perplexing since it quotes **IDEAS** rather than actual words from the prophecies. The Elder is probably Isaiah. IF we were asked to restrict ourselves to **ONLY ONE** prophecy to explain Jesus' place in God's plan, which would we choose? Which did Philip choose when he wanted to explain Jesus to the Ethiopian? Isaiah is the answer.

SAID TO ME: The understanding of Isaiah's prophecy is particularly comforting to the saints in that Isaiah probably explains more about Jesus' place in prophecy than does any other prophet.

STOP WEEPING: We need not find these words in Isaiah. We need only know that Isaiah's assurances of Jesus' victory will, indeed, wipe away tears from all who learn them.

BEHOLD THE LION THAT IS FROM THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, THE ROOT OF DAVID: It should be noted carefully that neither of these two expressions is a direct quote of any Scripture. Some have suggested Gen. 49:9, 10 and Isaiah 11:10; but neither **REALLY** says these words. The argument **COULD BE MADE** that Moses is the Elder of this verse, but Gen. 49 does not say anything about the Root of David. Isaiah 11, however, **IMPLIES** a Lion of Judah and a Root of David.

THE LION implies the **STRONG ONE**. Isaiah 11:1-5 clearly defines one of superior strength and authority.

- **JUDAH** is, of course, Jesse's root; therefore, this **LION** is from **JUDAH**. Judah is prominently mentioned in Isaiah 11.
- **THE ROOT OF DAVID** is, of course, also the root of Jesse. Thus, Isaiah 11 fulfills this part of Rev. 5:5.

HAS OVERCOME: Jesus' overcoming was proven by his resurrection and by the resultant giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Isaiah 53 tells the John Class of these facts.

SO AS TO OPEN THE BOOK AND ITS SEVEN SEALS: This does **NOT** say he **HAS** opened the book and seals. It says he has overcome **SO AS TO** (to have the right to) open the book and seals.

5:6 — AND I SAW: For the 3rd time in this chapter our focus is changed. The first focus of this chapter (5:1) was in God's hand — the book over which He held control. The second focus (5:2) was the strong angel — the change of dispensation with its attendant confusion and questioning. Now the third focus (5:6) is on the Lamb — the answer to all the questioning.

(Literally:) **IN THE MIDDLE OF THE THRONE AND OF THE FOUR LIVING ONES AND IN THE CENTER OF THE ELDERS:** This phrase is perhaps the most effective way of saying that this lamb is the **CENTRAL CHARACTER** in the scheme of things. He is in the center of God's arrangements for judgment (throne), for manifesting God's character (4 living ones), and the central figure in the fulfillment of prophecy (the elders.)

A LAMB STANDING AS IF SLAIN: This is, of course, a strange picture. Slain lambs don't stand! The power of the expression is that it is **BECAUSE** he was sacrificially slain that he **IS** standing — in a position to take control. It is because of his faithfulness to the death of the cross that he occupies this position. This is **WHY** he is a lamb — he was **MEEK** enough to do this wonderful thing.

HAVING SEVEN HORNS AND SEVEN EYES: How free we are to see beauty when our minds are freed from grotesque imagery which such descriptions impart! This Lamb has been granted all power (7 horns) and all wisdom (7 eyes) to be head of the Church. Besides the symbolic meaning of seven (complete), the literal meaning is also evident. His power will be exercised in the seven periods of the Church's development; his wisdom will be distributed among the seven stages of Church history.

WHICH ARE THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD: (See Item #67) The Lamb's eyes (his wisdom) represents the power received from his Father's Holy Spirit.

SENT OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH: The function of the Holy Spirit is clearly shown in this quote from II Chron. 16:9. This is important. The Seals will show uncomfortable events. The knowledge of these "eyes" and "horns" on our behalf during all of these events is imperative to our faithfulness.

5:7 — HE CAME AND TOOK IT: — NOT by force or by usurpation, but because **HERE** was the **ONE** for whom God was holding the book. This little verse in its simplicity marks one of the grandest events in history — the transfer of authority to the **ONE** who will accomplish God's Will. Thus:

5:8 — LIVING ONES & 24 ELDERS FELL DOWN BEFORE THE LAMB: In acknowledgment of the magnitude of the 5:7 event, the prophecies and attributes rejoice that the time has come that the **ONE** who will manifest God's attributes and prophecies has taken control of the plan and its unfolding. Thus, eventually, will all creation respond. Phil. 2:9, 10.

HAVING EACH ONE A HARP: This probably refers only to the Elders, not the Living Ones. The harp is an instrument of harmonious music. Each prophecy has a song to sing about the Lamb.

GOLDEN BOWLS FULL OF INCENSE: Incense is what preceded the sacrifice into the Most Holy of the tabernacle. It was symbolic of the love and devotion, which prompted the sacrifice. Bowls represent vehicles of delivery and are virtually the same symbolically as CUPS. When Jesus said he would drink of the cup which His Father had poured, he was saying he would accept the experience needful to his victory. Out of experience comes lessons or development. Even the Seven Plagues (Chapter 16) arrive in bowls — divinely ordained events to force a lesson or result on Babylon. But here (in 5:8) it is the 24 Elders who have golden bowls — divinely appointed experiences for their development and for their

effective service to Him. These bowls are full of incense — that is to say, by living up to what God appointed for them, the Old Testament faithful ones manifested the love, faith, and devotion (incense) which would later be used by us as examples (Heb. 11). These Old Testament heroes are the “cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 12:1) which form the faith examples for the Church. Thus this verse is telling us that all which the prophets sacrificed was worthwhile because the object of their service (pointing forth the Lamb) was now a reality. Their harmonious testimonies (harps) and their exemplary services (golden bowls of incense) do homage to the Lamb.

WHICH ARE THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS: It is possible, as many feel, that this refers to the prayers of the Church. After all, our prayers ARE based on the promises of the prophets. (Rev. 12:1) BUT, and this is a BIG “but,” since saints merely means “holy ones” and is often used to refer to Old Testament faithful ones (e.g., Matt. 27:52), it seems more likely in this CONTEXT that this is a reference to the PROPHETS who wrote the O.T. prophecies. Does not the advent of the Lamb ANSWER the prayers and fulfill the sacrificing incense of the prophets?

5:9 — AND THEY SANG A NEW SONG: This song is new because it is no longer expectation; it is fulfillment. When prophecy begins to be understood and applied, it is NEW and fresh. What is MOST NEW, however, is seen in the song: THERE IS A BODY to Messiah; He is not just one, by MANY. This is the mystery hid from ages but now made manifest. (Col. 1:26, 27.)

Prophecy after Pentecost could now acknowledge:

WORTHY TO TAKE: because the Lamb had fulfilled the prophecies of sacrifice faithfully.

TO BREAK ITS SEALS: to reveal its obscure meanings.

FOR THOU WAS SLAIN: This is the KEY — the willing sacrifice which resulted in:

PURCHASE FOR GOD WITH THY BLOOD: Notice carefully, it is NOT purchase FROM God. This is not talking about the ransom. It is talking about the sin-offering. The FIRST application of Jesus’ blood is to BUY those who will be priests with Him — to set them free from the curse so that they can be joint-sacrificers with him. No wonder the elders are singing! No wonder it’s called a NEW song! The meaning of the Lord’s goat (Lev. 16) and other such types and prophecies are becoming clear!

FROM EVERY TRIBE AND TONGUE AND PEOPLE AND NATION: (See Item #69.) This phrase represents the class of humanity FROM WHICH the Church is selected. Also shown by this phrase is that the selection is not restricted to Israel as in Old Testament times.

5:10 — AND THOU HAST MADE THEM A KINGDOM: This is the point, the vision, the objective, the hope, the goal. Revelation is a sequential prophecy, which shows the development of the Church FOR THE KINGDOM. It is this vision of the kingdom which has kept the true Church separate all during the age.

PRIESTS TO OUR GOD: Priests are mediators between God and men. It is lovely to hear the 24 calling Him “Our God.”

AND THEY WILL REIGN UPON (OVER) THE EARTH: Thus they will supplant the imperfect powers that be. Compare 1:5.

5:11 — AND I LOOKED: For the fourth time in this chapter (5:1, 2, 6) John directs our attention elsewhere. Now he is looking forward to the time when his last sentence (5:10 — “they will reign upon the earth”) will be true. Verses 11-13 are NOT part of the scene at the beginning of the age. They refer to the peaceable kingdom. This is clearly demonstrated by verse 13 which WAS NOT TRUE as the beginning of the age. It is not even YET true. Thus, this standard phrase for re-focus (AND I LOOKED) again proves a reliable tool in interpretation.

VOICE OF MANY ANGELS: The VOICE is singular; the proclaimers are plural. Thus all are saying the same thing.

A SIDE NOTE: There are three benedictions in this chapter. (Verses 9 & 10, verse 12, and verse 13.) The first is at the beginning of the Gospel Age acknowledging the worthiness of the Lamb to open the seals throughout the age. The second benediction, the VOICE OF MANY ANGELS, is probably an announcement which will occur at the beginning of the peaceable kingdom — much like the announcement of the angels to the shepherds at the birth of Jesus. The final benediction is the RESPONSE of all creation to the announcement — a sort of fulfillment of the prophecy of Isa. 25:9.

These angels are probably the spiritual hosts — literally angels. Verse 13 takes in things on the earth.

AROUND THE THRONE: See note on 4:4. The phrase seems to represent delegated authority. Angels (as appointed MESSENGERS) are, indeed, delegates of God. In this case, their charge is to deliver the stunning news of the new King.

THE NUMBER OF THEM: The phrase in the Greek is “myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands.” In Greek, MYRIADS equals 10,000. Thus we have in excess of 100,000,000. We thus have SOME clue about the size of the heavenly host — roughly 1/2 the population of the U.S.A. Why is this generalized, non-specific number given here? Probably this is a way of saying that regardless of the multitude of spirit beings, they are ALL OF ONE MIND in agreement with the great proclamation they are making. It is saying that all the universe has awaited this glorious moment!

5:12 — SAYING WITH A LOUD VOICE: It is beyond the scope of our imaginations as to how loud a voice will in joy proclaim the ascendancy of the Lamb and his priests (5:10).

The remainder of this verse cannot be made better by commenting on it! However, a few points of analysis might prove helpful:

POWER...MIGHT: The difference between these words is somewhat subtle. This benediction and the one in the following verse use three Greek words for various kinds of power. Dunamis (from which we get dynamics, dynamo, etc.) is the “POWER” the Lamb receives. This is inherent power — something like the TALENT a person possesses which enables him to lead. Ischus is the “MIGHT” which the Lamb receives. This word means personal strength. Seemingly, it refers to the actual ability to put those talents into operation. Kratos is the “DOMINION” which the Lamb receives in verse 13. We use this word in English as a suffix — “. . . cracy” — as in AristoCRACY, DemoCRACY, etc. It is the power of rulership. Hence, DOMINION is a very good translation.

Compare this benediction with Daniel 7:14 and Psalm 2:7, 8.

5:13 — AND EVERY CREATED THING: all creation (intelligent beings)

IN HEAVEN: This must refer to the “new heavens” rather than the old since the old would never make the following benediction. These new heavens would consist of the Church, the Great Multitude, the Ancient Worthies — all the rulership parties of the new order. Cf. Isa. 2:1-4.

ON EARTH: the “new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Pet. 3:13). Like the heavens, the OLD earth would never agree to the following benediction.

ON THE SEA: The sea class is the last to pass away because it represents a class which has never had roots and which needs time to establish itself comfortably — thus becoming part of the new “earth” class. Nevertheless, BEFORE it has fully rooted itself, it can appreciate and acknowledge its comfortability with the new King. Eventually their instability will vanish, and they, as a class, will no longer exist. (20:13 and 21:1) Another interesting prophecy which sheds some light on those ON THE SEA is Isaiah 33:17-24. If we are thinking specifically about those ON the sea, rather than the sea itself, Isaiah suggests that no one will any longer be able to plunder the sea class.

AND ALL THINGS IN THEM: The best translation seems to include the word “things.” We have, at the beginning of the verse, dealt with beings (“every created thing.”) “Things” here at the end of the sentence probably represent those inanimate forces under the control of intelligent beings. That is, not only will BEINGS willingly give into the new order, but they will direct all their resources toward acknowledging that new order.

Again, the remainder of this verse is not enhanced by comment! Do note, however, that the world finally understands the part that BOTH Father AND Son play in the arrangement. (Also see the note on 5:11 on page 47.)

5:14 — THE FOUR LIVING ONES: The attributes of God which, by this time, will be seen clearly and their perfect balance and places in the order of things both acknowledged and vindicated.

KEPT SAYING AMEN: How appropriate! For the first time in history their magnificence is both understood and visibly manifested.

THE ELDERS: The totality of prophecy

FELL DOWN & WORSHIPPED: All of which they have told will have been completed or visibly in process of completion. Their combined testimony will praise God and the Lamb as their ultimate act of worship.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

Revelation 8:2-6

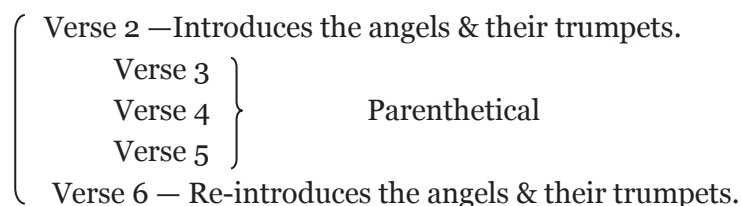
Introduction to the Seven Trumpets

(8:2-6)

(See Item #13a)

A WORD REGARDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS INTRODUCTION

For reasons which will become more apparent when verse 6 is discussed, it is likely that the Introduction to the Seven Trumpets is constructed something like this:



This kind of construction has precedent in Revelation. For an example, see Chapter 12:6 and 14. Clearly the woman does not flee twice into the wilderness! But the Lord wished to end TWO DIFFERENT NARRATIVES with the experience of the woman in the wilderness. Likewise in chapter 8. The Lord wishes to BEGIN TWO DIFFERENT NARRATIVES with the angels and their trumpets.

8:2 — AND I SAW: Here again is one of those re-focus markers which John uses so effectively. Had those who provided chapters and verses recognized this, Chapter 8 would have begun with verse 2 as it should. AND I SAW carries us back to the beginning of the age — now to introduce us to the trumpets. 4:1 did the same thing to introduce us to the Seals. In each case it was in order to help us parallel these introductions to the introduction to the 7 Churches beginning in 1:9.

THE SEVEN ANGELS WHO STAND BEFORE GOD: John clearly recognizes these. He had seen them before in 1:16 and 20. These are the same individuals who are the messengers to the Seven Churches. Note, however, instead of giving admonitions to the various Churches (as they had done in Chapters 2 and 3), they are to be supplied with instruments so that their messages will be heard beyond the flocks to which they wrote. The messages in Chapters 2 and 3 begin, “To the angel of the Church in _____, write:” In other words, those messages are to help each angel interpret to each Church its conditions, needs, and experiences. In the Trumpets, however, the angels are virtually given an amplification system so that, while they are serving the Church, they are also having an effect on society; THAT is the point of these Trumpet messages — to reveal the effects of dispensational truths on surrounding society.

AND SEVEN TRUMPETS WERE GIVEN TO THEM: Bro. Burns calls these “Proclamations of Liberty.” This well sums up what the messages COULD HAVE DONE for society. Society, of course, was not interested in the liberties offered by the words of these angels. To the contrary, the presence of these messages is an irritant to society — a virus which causes severe reactions.

These trumpets are given, of course, in succession as each angel appears on the scene. John, from his perspective “on the Lord’s day,” looks back to see that this history has filled the age.

8:3 — AND ANOTHER ANGEL: This angel is Jesus — the same one who in 1:13 is standing in the midst of the Seven Churches which these Seven Trumpets serve. There HE has a voice “LIKE a trumpet.” Clearly his voice also had repercussions far beyond the audiences to which he directed his message.

CAME AND STOOD AT THE ALTAR: Here we have several things to consider. First, we again have a connection with 1:13. There Jesus is dressed as a high priest. Here in 8:3 he clearly functions in the same capacity. Secondly, Jesus is here standing AT THE ALTAR. This is the COURT altar — the place where his humanity was sacrificed and the coals (which represent the trials which accomplished that sacrifice) are available to be put in the censer.

HOLDING A GOLDEN CENSER: This, being a golden container for coals, seems to represent the divinely-appointed experiences, the divinely-measured experiences (the censer has a specific capacity) necessary for acceptable sacrifice. Thus it shows a JUDGMENT regarding the acceptableness of the sacrifice.

MUCH INCENSE WAS GIVEN TO HIM: Incense represents the perfections of Christ’s sacrifice — the thing which makes him a viable sacrifice.

THAT HE MIGHT GIVE IT TO (or with) THE PRAYERS OF ALL THE SAINTS: Notice that this is about ALL the saints. It represents something affecting the entire age. Jesus’ sacrifice accomplished this — the making valid of the prayers of the saints so that they could sacrifice WITH HIM. This is a sin-offering text. Those who blow the Trumpets (as representatives of ALL SEVEN STAGES OF THE CHURCH) have NO RIGHT to blow unless their messages are justified. This incense from the coals of Jesus’ sacrifice makes their work valid. Jesus ADDS the incense to our prayers which makes them heard.

UPON THE GOLDEN ALTAR: This is in the holy of the tabernacle — the place where the saints dwell while yet in the flesh (although their flesh is not represented in this room.) This action of incense on the golden altar is what preceded the taking of the sin-offering bloods into the Most Holy. This particular description is NOT, however, about Jesus’ blood, but that of the saints. When Jesus’ blood went in, HIS PRAYERS went with the incense. But here, OUR PRAYERS go with it. This verse is strong in support of the Church’s part in the sin offering.

WHICH WAS BEFORE THE THRONE: represented in the MOST HOLY of the tabernacle. Throne symbolizes the authority of judgment. A good judgment is secured because our high priest has prepared the way with his sacrifice. (The Most Holy had no throne. John’s vision thus INTERPRETS a part of the anti-typical meaning of the Most Holy.)

A NOTE ON THE PARALLEL WITH CHAPTER FIVE: It is difficult to miss the striking parallel of 5:8 with this part of Chapter 8. The situation is SO similar and yet SO different. In 5, the Lamb is pronounced worthy to open the Seals; in 8, the angels are MADE worthy to blow the Trumpets. In 5, the incense is from the 24 elders; in 8 it is from Jesus. In 5, the saints are probably the Old Testament faithful; in 8 it is the saints. But in each case, the way is OPENED so that the functions may occur — Seal opening, and Trumpet blowing.

8:4 — AND THE SMOKE OF THE INCENSE: The evidence of the loving and perfect sacrifice

WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS: This is WHY we pray IN HIS NAME (John 15:16 and I John 2:1). Without the accompanying incense being ACKNOWLEDGED by us, our prayers and sacrifices would not be holy. The “prayers of the saints” are, on the whole, for the kingdom. This is an important item to remember here. All of the ensuing trumpeting is simply a sequence of events LEADING TO THE KINGDOM. This preface to the seven Trumpets is to show us that the Trumpets are a gradual 7-step breakdown of society SO THAT the kingdom may be established. Thus this introduction shows us several imperative elements necessary for the kingdom’s establishment:

1. Jesus’ Sacrifice (verse 3)
2. The justification of the co-sacrifice of the Church (verse 3)
3. The gradual breakdown of society’s thinking habits by seven successive “proclamations of liberty.” (verses 2 & 6)
4. The ULTIMATE breakdown at the end of the age (the CULMINATION of the trumpeting as in the fall of the walls in Jericho) so that the Kingdom may be fully set up (verse 5)

WENT UP BEFORE GOD: To complete the sin offering eventually

OUT OF THE ANGEL’S HAND: As High Priest, HE is the offerer of the joint-sacrifice. The matter is all in his hand. Remember (1:16 & 20) that these seven angels are in his right hand.

8:5

NOTE: Here brethren take two views of things. Many apply verse 5 to the Jewish Harvest; some apply it to the Gospel Harvest. We will give BOTH views here. This scribe prefers the second option for reasons which will be explained.

OPTION ONE:

If this verse applies to the Jewish Harvest, its message is basically this: Once Jesus offers his sacrifice on behalf of his Church, he re-directs the use of the rights He has purchased as symbolized in the censer and coals. He goes into the court (probably representing the Jewish nation) and casts down burning judgments against the people. His new message of the Gospel Age causes controversies, claims, blinding flashes of truth, and a revolution. Then, verse 6, the development of the Gospel Age Church, begins.

The weakness of this view (although it certainly has enough merit to be a viable interpretation) is that the events of verse five seem TO DUPLICATE in essence the events of the First Trumpet (verse 7.) WHY should the first Trumpet events be mentioned before verse 6 says the trumpeters begin to sound?

OPTION TWO:

If this verse applies to the Gospel Harvest, its message is basically this: Jesus’ rights gained from his sacrifice are first used for the development of his Church (verse 4). The message to the church will be heard on a wider scale because the messengers are given Trumpets (verse 2.) However, the Trumpets will not be acknowledged by society, requiring that Jesus, AT THE END OF THE AGE, re-direct the authority he had due to His sacrifice. He uses His powers of judgment in the court (representing nominal Christianity) by sending destructive elements resulting in controversies, claims, blinding flashes of truth, and revolution.

Having shown the TWO WAYS he was going to use what he gained from his sacrifice, Jesus now has John return to the subject at hand, the seven angels with Trumpets — the very subject which was introduced in verse 2 and is now being returned to so that the narrative of the Trumpets can proceed.

This option does away with the problem inherent in Option One. It has, as mentioned, its precedent set in Chapter 12, verses 6 and 14. It also sets the stage for the Seven Plagues because it shows that the Seven Trumpets WILL NOT CONVERT the world NOR destroy the old order; something else will be necessary. It also has as a corroboration (Ezek. 10:2) which speaks of the coals which would be heaped on Babylon during the Gospel Age Harvest. It is not unlikely that 8:5 is the same prophecy as Ezekiel's in slightly different terms.

This option also has a nice parallelism to the Introduction to the Seven Seals (Chapters 4 and 5). In THAT introduction also, the RESULTS of the age of seal-openings are shown (4:9-11 and 5:11-14).

8:6 — Verse 6 picks up where verse 2 ended. Verses 3 through 5 are parenthetical to teach us the lessons outlined above. Verse 6 should be read as an extension of verse 2. Reading verse 2 and then verse 6 without anything intervening makes perfect sense. We DO NEED the intervening information, however, and are glad for it. The precedent for this form was established in 12:6 and 14. Between 6 and 14 details are given; but 14 brings us back to where we were so that the story can be continued with more detail. In 14:8 and 13 we have another example of this kind of construction, although not nearly so obvious. Verse 13 RELIES on jumping back to verse 8 in order to establish a date for the word “henceforth.” Thus we know the contemporaneous nature of 14:8 and 14:13. But the intervening verses GO PAST THAT DATE. THAT seems to be the nature of 8:2-6

THE SEVEN ANGELS . . . PREPARED TO SOUND: Each in his own order and time as is manifest in the following multi-chapter narrative.

**A DETAILED LOOK
AT EACH OF THE
SEVEN CHURCHES, SEALS, AND TRUMPETS**

THE FIRST CHURCH, SEAL, AND TRUMPET
(The Certain Sound)

Revelation 2:1-7

Revelation 6:1, 2

Revelation 8:7

THE EPHESUS CHURCH

Revelation 2:1-7

2:1 — THE ANGEL of this Church is the Apostle Paul who wrote the greater part of the New Testament —ALL in the form of letters to the various churches and to the Hebrews as a group. Texts like II Cor. 11:28 and Acts 9:15 demonstrate his position. But perhaps one of the strongest texts is I Cor. 7:6-10. In this text, Paul takes two positions: one as an inspired Apostle, the other as an angel to the Church, speaking NOT from an inspired viewpoint, but as an enlightened angel to the Church. This is the position of all the “angels” to the seven stages of the church, and Paul clearly distinguishes between his two offices in the Corinthians text cited.

EPHESUS seems to have several etymologies. It apparently means desirable, first, or permission. The last definition seems difficult of application unless it be understood to mean that this is the period in which the Apostles define what is permissible for the Church to do. It was clearly a desirable period in that it had the presence of the Apostles and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, both of which were imperative in the establishment of and giving foundation to the Church. First, of course, is a fine description for Ephesus as the beginning of the series of seven.

It is important to note that this, and all subsequent messages, are specifically to the ANGELS and not to the Churches. Without hearing the angels, the several Churches could not receive the message which is meant to help them overcome. This is the import of the first phrase with which Jesus introduces Himself to Ephesus:

WHO HOLDS THE SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND. These angels are in his FAVOR (right hand) and in a position of guidance and protection. This message must have seemed of particular import to the early Church (once they received Revelation) because they needed the comfort of knowing that there was, indeed, to be some contemporaneous authority. Most were probably Jews. For centuries they had had the high priest as the authority. But Christianity had displaced the Law, and with it the high priest. IT WAS NEEDFUL that they be assured that EACH stage of the Church would have someone to point the way. The teaching of the Apostles were excellent, but those teachings, like the Jewish Law, had need of interpretation in the various experiences to come. This was the place of the angels. Thus Paul’s INSPIRED testimony on marriage in I Cor. 7, was AUGMENTED AND CLARIFIED by his ENLIGHTENED testimony as the angel to Ephesus.

ONE . . . AMONG THE 7 GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS. This, likewise, is a statement closely tied to the replacement of the Jewish order. God, Himself, was present with Israel in the Shekinah light over the mercy seat. But now there was no visible tabernacle or temple. INSTEAD, Jesus walks in the midst of the lampstands. His presence is constant with the Church in all of its stages — even though unseen (as was the Shekinah light to those dwelling in the Holy.) But the KNOWLEDGE of the presence was enough to sustain Israel. The fact that there are seven lampstands, instead of one lamp with seven branches, seems to indicate that each stage of the Church is a foundation of light during its time. The light will VARY from period to period, increasing in its brilliance or magnitude, but will always be on the golden stand — the Divine support behind each stage of the Church. (I Tim. 3:15)

2:2, 3 — I KNOW YOUR DEEDS. All seven messages begin thus. This statement is a comfort because it assures us of his presence and watching over all the affairs of our lives. (Matt. 28:20.) It is also an uncomfortable thought to any who might think they are getting away with something! The statement also shows that deeds (works) are important. Never are perfect works expected or required, but works — the attempt, the effort — are required. As James stated, “faith without works is dead.”

YOUR TOIL: Ephesus was a very BUSY Church. Much needed to be done. They were changing from the law and needed to STRUGGLE with what would replace it. They were welcoming Gentiles and STRUGGLING with how to treat them and what to tell them the REQUIREMENTS of the “New Way” are. They were evangelistic because both Jesus and the Apostles impressed upon them the need to be. They were GROWING by leaps and bounds and had all the accompanying STRUGGLES associated with such rapid growth.

YOUR PERSEVERANCE: In all of these things they were zealous. They had to put up with persecutions from the Jews and, later, from the Romans. As verse 3 states, they ENDURED and did not grow weary. The excitement of early Christianity was intense enough to keep these early brethren from wearying. That example is worthy of great emulation.

CANNOT ENDURE EVIL MEN: Evil men could not function well in this period because of two factors: (1) The Apostles were present to expose them; (2) The gifts of the spirit helped all of the saints “discern” them. (I Cor. 12:10)

PUT TO THE TEST . . . (FALSE) APOSTLES: See Acts 20:29, 30; II Thess. 2:7; Gal. 1:1; II Cor. 11:3 as hints that false apostles existed and had to be distinguished from the true. (Also Rev. 21:14; 12:1)

2:3 — This material is much covered above. It is worthy of notice, however, that their endurance was for “My name’s sake.” The close connection with Jesus was still there. The defense of his character and his purposes was the primary love of the Ephesus period. All that was done was done with Jesus and His plans in mind. Even as Paul said, he was determined to know NOTHING among them save Jesus and him crucified. (1 Cor. 2:2.) While this was the DOMINANT feeling of the period, there was a challenge to this ideal; hence we have the following “BUT. . .”

2:4, 5 — The only complaint against the Church is that there was, at least temporarily, a tendency to engage in bickering. (See I Tim. 6:20 as an example) In Gal. 1:6-9 we see how the law became a contention. Apparently many began to argue, squabble, and engage in lengthy controversies to the point of forgetting the SIMPLE love of Jesus that attracted them at first. This led to division, hatreds, heresies, etc. Jesus gently, at first, says REMEMBER the wonderment from which you have departed! RETURN to it and to the works which it stimulated. Then, not so gently, he warns that UNLESS this reverting of attitude occurs, he would “REMOVE YOUR LAMPSTAND OUT OF ITS PLACE.” It is difficult to know if this threat is to individuals who did not repent or to the whole Ephesus Church if its tendencies were not corrected. If it is aimed at individuals, it probably means something like: If you do not regain your idealism, I will move the lampstand so that you will be sitting in its shadow — Your light will grow dim. If, however, this threat is to the entire Church, it might well mean: Unless you change course, I will end the Ephesus period by bringing in the Roman persecutions which mark the beginning of the Smyrna period — the period of bitterness. Those who were arguing doctrine and liking to do so, were RELYING ON SELF (See I Cor. 10:12.) They were, like Laodicea later, thinking themselves rich in an avalanche of truths. This could only take their focus off of Jesus and onto themselves and their “superior” reasoning abilities.

2:6 —It is interesting to note that the first Church is commended for having HATE. We must learn to hate as God does. They (and Jesus) hated the DEEDS of the Nicolaitans — NOT the people, but the deeds. For this they were esteemed as HAVING something. If we are to be like Jesus, we, as he, must learn not only to love righteousness, but to hate iniquity.

NICOLAITANS, like other Biblical names has a meaning. It is the meaning rather than an individual or group going by the name in which we find the aim of Revelation. The name means Lord Over Others or Conqueror. The “mystery of iniquity” which already worked in Paul’s day was the spirit of rulership in the Church which would result ultimately in the clergy-laity concept. The early Church did not put up with this, but they also could not eliminate its existence. See. I Peter 5:3. The whole concept of Lordship over God’s heritage is a direct violation of Jesus’ own words in Matt. 23:8. The problem was not small or unnoticed. John’s entire third epistle deals only with this problem — an elder who had taken to himself too much authority.

2:7 — This is the first of the seven choruses which contain BOTH the phrase “He who has an ear . . .” and “To him who overcomes . . .” The order is reversed, however, after the first three Churches. In either case, however, this chorus seems to be in a way the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise in John 16:12-14 that the Holy Spirit would give to each as he was ready to hear. These choruses certainly apply to all periods of the Church; yet, each seems in its own way to be specifically fitted for the Church to which it is mentioned. The phrase, “hear what the Spirit says to the Churches” (plural) never changes. The phrase, “To him who overcomes. . .” does change meaningfully from Church to Church.

I WILL GRANT TO EAT OF THE TREE OF LIFE WHICH IS IN THE PARADISE OF GOD. — This promise has seemed perplexing to some in that it sounds like it belongs to the world of mankind. But, as always, Revelation uses one thing to symbolize another. This is NOT about the tree of life; nor is it about the Garden of Eden. Bro. Russell suggests, in a plausible explanation, that since the tree of the knowledge of good and evil IS A tree of life, this might mean that the overcomers will ultimately eat of this tree (figuratively) and gain life, not death from it. However, the text does NOT mention the tree of knowledge. It is possible to explain this promise in another way. There are three primary references to the tree of life: one in Eden (Gen.), this one in 2:7, and one in 22:2. The tree of life in Eden was, no doubt, a literal tree. Man was expelled from its presence so that he might not eat of it and live forever. The tree of life in 22:2 is the CHURCH which will give sustenance to the world of mankind. Where is it planted? This, of course, is a strange question, because the CHURCH IS NOT LITERALLY A TREE! It is not “planted” anywhere. But if a location must be found, it is planted in heaven — the “paradise” of God. When we examine 2:9 again, the meaning of the promise seems to be, something like: The overcomers will be granted to renew fellowship with God based on being granted eternal life in His presence. This tree and garden are not literal; they are spiritual symbols. Spirit beings will not need to eat — YET, will they not “partake anew” with Jesus beyond the veil? The thought is that ETERNAL LIFE will be regained in an IDYLIC CONDITION. *

The meaning is better understood if we realize the position of the Ephesus Church in history. Ever since the fall in Eden, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO GAIN LIFE. The Jewish Law only brought death. This FIRST promise to the overcoming Church erased four thousand years of impossibility - NOW there was a new and LIVING way — a way which would lead to life in the Garden of God — a way which, in effect, erased everything bad that had happened to the race. True, this promise goes far beyond the simple implications of this because the overcomers would receive IMMORTAL life in HEAVEN. But the CONCEPT is the thing: you will LIVE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD!

* See Rom. 11. Perhaps the olive tree symbolizes the Tree of Life. Thus all receive from the Abrahamic Promise life on SOME PLAIN —all of God’s planting, and, thus, all of His “garden” or “paradise.”

THE EPHESUS PARABLE

The 1st Parable of Matthew 13 (vs. 3-9) — THE SOWER

It has been observed with good reason that the seven parables of Matthew 13 are, in essence, a preview of Revelation Chapters 2 and 3. The uncanny parallelisms between the histories of the Seven Churches and the lessons of the seven parables seem unlikely as mere coincidences.

In the parable of the sower, we have a rather complete profile of the experiences of the Ephesus period. Unlike the 2nd parable (Wheat and Tares), we have only good seed sown here — the message of the kingdom. It is, however, received by differing “soils.” In 13:4, FOWLS eat the seed which never rooted. We know that the apostasy’s seeds were already planted in the beginning: “The mystery of Iniquity doth already work.” The Nicolaitans were there to eat up any who would follow them. Those with the Holy Spirit did not; but those who had come along for the ride were easy prey for these unclean birds. Another group did not have depth of soil. When trying conditions assailed them, they ceased to follow. Perhaps these were such as left when they heard “if any man does not eat my flesh and drink my blood he has no part with me.” Perhaps they were those who left when persecutions began. A third group were choked by thorns (the deceitfulness of riches — Matt. 13:22). Do not Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) fit the description given? The fourth group are those who remain and bring forth fruitage in different quantities and based on their abilities.

This parable, as the others, applies to the whole age for its lessons. But its special application to the early Church is clear. It is interesting to note that verse 9 is a preview of the chorus to the Churches: “He who has ears, let him hear.”

1. Ephesus**(Rev. 2:1-7)**

Name means: "First, desirable." Mingled praise and blame: the believers labored tirelessly in spreading the gospel and did not grow weary in their truth activities. They patiently endured suffering for Christ and opposed wicked men and imposters (those claiming the authority of the original apostles). They were especially commended for detesting the Nicolaitans (those promoting a clergy class, with varying degrees of honor and lordship, contrary to the divine arrangement).

Nevertheless they were charged with having lost their first love for the Lord (implying some loss of energy and zeal for the truth). They were strongly urged to repent and to recover their enthusiasm and early works (including a spirit of total dedication to the Lord). Unless repentant, they were warned that their candlestick (privilege of being light-bearers) would be removed from its place.

The overcomer was promised he would eat of the tree of life, in the midst of the paradise of God (to partake of life eternal in the glorious estate of close association with God).

Apostle Paul**(d. 64 AD)**

Brilliant converted Pharisee who became the apostle to the Gentiles, the greatest logician of the Christian faith and the mainstay of the early church. His birth as a Roman citizen, knowledge of Greek culture and training in orthodox Judaism afforded a providential background for his special ministry. He was of keen intellect, tremendous drive, lofty principle and impeccable integrity.

He fiercely persecuted the earliest Christians until miraculously converted by a glimpse of the risen Christ (Acts 9:3-7, 26, 27); then was chosen to bear the Lord's name before the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). Along with Barnabas, he became the first missionary, beginning in Cyprus and later throughout most of the Mediterranean world. He preached with boldness and energy and endured much suffering and opposition (2 Cor. 11:23-28). Employing his skills as orator and teacher with tact and insight, he won many converts to Christ.

Paul became burdened with the care of all the churches and diligently promoted their unity and welfare (Eph. 4:1-7, 11-15). He was given special visions by God (2 Cor. 12:1-7) and was recognized as functioning with divine authority (Gal. 2:6-9). He authored most of the New Testament books, setting for the basics of Christian belief and practice. He taught that salvation was by the grace of God, made possible by faith in Christ and his atoning sacrifice (Rom. 1:16; 5:1,2). His outstanding achievements firmly planted Christianity in the Greco-Roman world and furnished it with much of its essential biblical foundation.

33 AD —Pentecost: Holy Spirit descended upon believers in Jerusalem.

35 —Saul of Tarsus converted on way to Damascus.

36—Gospel first preached to Gentiles (but still spread largely among Jews).

40—Antioch Church took lead in spreading Gospel to Gentiles as well as Jews.

44— Martyrdom of James by King Herod Agrippa I.

47-49—Paul's first missionary journey. Sent out from Antioch with Barnabas to Cyprus and Asia Minor.

49—Emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome to quell disturbance arising from disputations about Jesus. Christianity gained foothold in city.

50—Jerusalem conference of Peter, Paul, James, Barnabas and others. Lifted circumcision and other requirements of Jewish Law from Gentile believers.

51-53—Paul's second journey. With Silas and later Timothy, he established churches throughout Greece: Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth.

53-56—Paul's third journey. He ministered at length in Ephesus, along with Aquila and Priscilla. City became leading center of Christian world.

58-60—Paul defended himself before Felix, governor of Judea; then again before his successor Festus and King Herod Agrippa II, while prisoner at Caesarea.

61-63—Paul imprisoned at Rome; house arrest permitted some witnessing.

64—Christians in Rome accused of setting great fire; persecuted by Nero. Martyrdom of Paul and Peter.

66—Flight of Christians from Jerusalem to Pella at start of Jewish revolt.

67—Josephus surrendered Jewish forces to Romans; he was protected and favored by Vespasian, who later became emperor.

70—Jerusalem destroyed by Romans. Temple razed, except "Wailing Wall"; priesthood and Sanhedrin abolished; Jews scattered.

—Early Gospel accounts and epistles of Paul started to circulate in Syria, Egypt and Asia Minor.

75—Early rise of sects, such as Docetists, Nicolaitans, Nazarenes and Ebionites.

93—Emperor Domitian's persecution of Christians.

Epistle of Clement, Roman presbyter, to Church of Corinth; a plea for unity and discipline.

95—Epistle of Clement, Roman presbyter, to Church of Corinth, a plea for unity and discipline

THE FIRST SEAL

Revelation 6:1, 2

6:1 — The LAMB (Jesus) breaks the First Seal. The breaking of the Seals is representative of revealing the major prophetic tendencies of each of the periods.

ONE OF THE FOUR LIVING ONES -

It seems important in the series of the first four Seals that we know WHICH “beast” or LIVING ONE is meant since they are numbered. The answer, then, should come from 4:7 where they are BOTH named and numbered:

1. LION (Power)
2. CALF (Justice)
3. MAN (Love)
4. EAGLE (Wisdom)

The opinions of brethren differ on the first two. It seems most convincing, however, that the Calf should represent justice since it was the animal that satisfied justice in the tabernacle, and that the lion should represent power even as Jesus and Satan are both represented by lions and are the two powerful antagonists of the Bible.

So: ONE of the four living ones, THE LION (power) says with A VOICE OF THUNDER

Thunder represents controversy from preceding flashes of light. The great bursts of light which Jesus brought on the scene caused all kinds of controversy, and the POWER of the truth to divide and to edify became immediately evident.

“COME”: — “and see” is not in the manuscripts. However, it is probably the thought. In each of the first four Seals, the Living one (one of God’s Attributes) is inviting us to inspect the results of the opened Seal. It seems VERY LIKELY that all Seven Seals refer to conditions near the END of the period rather than in the beginning. Therefore, the invitation to COME (and see) seems to be an invitation to look back at what happened as the result of the period once the angel had spread his message or sounded his Trumpet. Experiences are understood when they are over, not when they are being experienced.

A VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: There seem to be two very viable but different explanations for the first seal. Each has its strengths and its weaknesses. We here present both.

EXPLANATION NUMBER ONE:

6:2 — The John Class looks back and sees a WHITE HORSE — pure doctrine available to the Ephesus period of the Church. He who sat on it: Jesus and His appointed representatives, the Apostles, controlled the doctrine of the First Church. He had a BOW: Psalm 18:14 gives one example of how the arrows (stinging and sharp use of information) are used by God toward His enemies. Jesus and his Apostles, likewise, had sharp and direct retorts against the enemies of the new truths. AND A CROWN WAS GIVEN TO HIM: Jesus had the laurels of victory bestowed by God upon His resurrection — the authority granted to do many works in the name of the Father. He DID go out conquering and to conquer the hearts and affections of the faith class that were to be his disciples.

The weaknesses of this explanation are as follows: If we look at the SERIES of the first four Seals, it seems clear that the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th riders are up to no good. This would make the first rider an exception. Some would also suggest that Jesus does not set out to conquer until his second advent; nor would He be so offensive as to ride doctrine shooting others. The first argument (about the series) is the strongest.

The strength of this explanation is the CROWN. (See study on crowns in Appendix B) If this crown (stephanos) is worn by a bad character, it is THE ONLY SUCH INCIDENCE IN REVELATION.

The problem of interpretation is manifest: do we wish to be inconsistent in this series? Or do we want to be inconsistent in the use of stephanos throughout the book of Revelation?

EXPLANATION NUMBER TWO:

6:2 — The white horse is still pure doctrine, but it is being ridden by a malefactor, the Nicolaitan element in the Ephesus Church — people who use the new truths to draw disciples away after themselves. They have a bow. Psalm 64:3, 4 and Eph. 6:16 are good examples of the Adversary's use of arrows. A crown is given to the rider. Satan DOES give out crowns as implied in Matt. 4:8-10, though never directly stated. Titus 1:10 gives an example of the misuse of power in the early Church. These men did go out conquering the idolization of the misled, and it was their intent to do so.

The weakness of this explanation is as follows: These men did not really control doctrine. They DID attempt to use its appeal to draw others to themselves. But with the Apostles' being alive, there was no way that doctrinal control fell into the hands of the Nicolaitans. A very strong weakness is the crown (stephanos) which is said to be given to them. They were not victors (as stephanos implies). The use of stephanos here would be unique in all of Revelation.

The strength of this explanation is that all four riders in the first four Seals would be apostate; and it is clear from the Ephesus explanation (Rev. 2) and from many New Testament passages that the Nicolaitans element was present and active.

WHICH IS BEST? This scribe prefers the first explanation based mainly on the use of crown.

SOME OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. There is another parallel in the first four Seals (which also may lend strength to the second explanation.) It can be argued that all four attributes are COMPLAINING about how they are being violated. Explanation number one would not fit this parallel, because power does not seem to be violated when Jesus is seen to control doctrine.

2. Concerning the thunder: New Truths always cause a commotion. It seems that in the early Church many brethren LIKED arguing over the Law and other controversies and thus were taken away from the spirit of their "first love." Therefore, there was a POWER GRAB BEGINNING (see 2:2, 6). THIS might account for the violation of the attribute of power — hidden in the one word "*thunder*." This would, then give strength to explanation number one. I John 2:18, 19 would be a statement about those who went apostate because of thunderings.

THE FIRST TRUMPET

(Revelation 8:7)

The series of Trumpets seems to show the effects of the messages of the angels on the false church and, frequently, on the world. It is clear from Church history that the angels were not acknowledged by any except the true Church. If they were heard at all by others, they were misunderstood, misinterpreted, and condemned. Nevertheless, their messages DID have effects which are recorded under the symbols of these sounding Trumpets.

8:7 — The FIRST is Paul. Much of Paul's message had the effect of destroying the wisdom of the Jewish leaders. This was not Paul's AIM. He wanted to preach the truth and to show how Jesus' teachings FULFILLED the Law. But the effect on the unbeliever was to DESTROY the Law. Hence Paul was less than popular among the Jewish leaders.

HAIL = hard, distressing truths.

FIRE = righteous destructive judgments and the fear of the fast-spreading tendencies.

MIXED WITH BLOOD symbolizes that the truths and judgments took life. JUDAISM was to lose its vitality — actually its life in all but an insignificant way. It would no longer offer even TYPICAL justification to its adherents.

THROWN TO THE EARTH: These new Christian truths were dumped on the existing Jewish society at a time when it was already very weak from Roman occupation.

THIRD OF THE EARTH: Society at the time of the early Church was divided into three major religious components: The Jews, The Pagan Romans, and The new Christians. This was well symbolized by the three languages which Pilate had placed on the cross: Latin (the language of Rome), Hebrew (the language of Judaism), and Greek (the language of the emerging Church.) The new truths BUILT Christianity; they did not destroy it. For the time being, they had little effect on the Roman empire. But for Judaism they were fatal. This third of the earth was BURNED UP. Judaism became a functionless religion; the Jewish polity was destroyed; the Jewish people were dispersed over all of Europe.

THIRD OF THE TREES: The trees are the stalwarts of the society — the teachers and the authorities. The Jewish stalwarts had no answers. Their positions vanished. They were BURNED UP.

All of the GREEN GRASS: The key word here is GREEN. Isaiah tells us that all flesh is as the grass. But GREEN implies life - justification. The typical justification of the Law was now invalid. The Jewish people lost their greenness. ALL of the grass was not burned up, but all of the GREEN grass was burned up — Jewish justification.

SUMMARY: The result of the activities of the trumpeting of the first period of the Church was the destruction of Israel and Judaism. When we open the first seal and look back, we see Jewish devastation.

THE SECOND CHURCH, SEAL, AND TRUMPET
(ALONE AND PERSECUTED)

REVELATION 2:8-11

REVELATION 6:3, 4

REVELATION 8:8, 9

THE SMYRNA CHURCH (Revelation 2: 8-11)

An Important Preface to the Smyrna Period

Brethren are not all historians, and the histories of the periods which cover the Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis Churches, Seals, and Trumpets are particularly not well known except to historians who have made a point of studying them. A knowledge of this history is, however, imperative to an understanding of the symbols used in Revelation to describe these Churches. Therefore, we give as a preface to each of these four a brief but important synopsis of its history.

Smyrna covers the period roughly from the fall of Jerusalem until the days of the emperor Constantine the Great. Highlights of his period include the following:

- The lack of authoritative influence of the Apostles gave immediate opportunity for the rise of power-grabbing leaders.
- The end of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (and particularly the gift of discerning spirits) gave the opportunity for the “enemy” to plant pseudo-Christians (tares) in the midst of the flock.
- Persecutions from Rome were varyingly severe – sometimes relatively mild, sometimes horrid (during which the Church was forced to be underground – even literally) – culminating in the deadliest decade under Diocletian (303-313 A.D.). The usual test to escape the persecutor was whether or not a person was willing to admit the deity of the emperor. The apostates worked diligently to compromise with Roman authorities. It was a period of great injustices – sometimes Christians betraying Christians to escape persecution or to win Roman favor.
- Despite persecutions, Christianity (true and false) was flourishing dramatically. The new religion provided answers not available in Paganism. It provided importance to formerly unimportant people; and it provided an acceptance into a family such as was not previously known to pagans. Unfortunately, it also provided a new commercial outlet for those who wanted to take advantage of the Christian community. Since it provided something for nearly everyone, its growth was impossible to stop – even by persecutions. By the time of Constantine, it was a majority religion. Constantine’s so-called “conversion” was the last step in guaranteeing the elimination of pagan religion which had dominated the scene as the second century began.
- The entry of pagans into the Christian religion RAPIDLY diluted its ideals and its doctrine. Gnosticism was rampant in this era. Pagan priests became Christian ministers. Individual power-struggles resulted in a dramatic use of excommunication of one bishop by another. There was, as yet, no central religious authority to excommunicate officially, but unofficial excommunications were popular tools of lordship in the growing apostate church.
- This period saw the compiling of the New Testament. Revelation was frequently NOT accepted as part of the official canon of Scripture.
- It is probable that many converts were sincere and, thus, spirit-begotten. This is important to remember as it is easy to focus on the planting of tares during this period. The tares, of course, were a great test on the truly consecrated which many likely failed.

2:8 – THE ANGEL: It is difficult to find a shining light during this period. When the Church was forced underground, it would have been difficult for a messenger to spread his influence to all the churches. Most significant bishops of the era seem to have genuine flaws in their understanding. This seems so strange for a period so closely linked to the Apostles by those living who had studied under them. Yet, we in the 20th century have seen how fast a movement can depart from the ideals and doctrine of one of the “angels.” Thus, most students have settled on the Apostle John as the messenger to Smyrna. IF Matthew 13’s parables represent the seven Church periods (which they probably do), Smyrna might well begin with the DEATH of John (Matt. 13:25) as represented by the phrase “while men (the Apostles) slept . . .” If, however, this phrase means sleep in the sense of I Thess. 5:6, 7, then it is quite possible that this phase of the Church began earlier than John’s death. Since Nero was, in essence, the beginner of bringing “bitterness” (persecutions) for the Church, the argument could well be made that this Church begins about Nero’s time or, at least, shortly thereafter when John would have been the last remaining Apostle. However, if it does begin with John’s death, it would not negate his being the angel to Smyrna. He yet lived through his writings and the memory of his life. Since the main doctrinal error of his period was Gnosticism, it could well be argued that John gave the message necessary to combat the main doctrinal problem of Smyrna. His writings helped the Church combat these heresies. He obviously could see in his day the beginnings of this movement because the way he writes seems as if specifically AIMED against Gnosticism. Also, while Revelation was not readily accepted by many during the Smyrna period, it was accepted by many who, no doubt, gained great comfort from its prophecies regarding persecutions.

SMYRNA: The word means bitter. It is most appropriate in light of the persecutions which characterized the era. This Church has no condemnation mentioned. The Lord apparently did not want to put upon them any weight other than what they had to carry from the Romans and from the tares now planted in their midst.

Jesus introduces himself to this Church as

THE FIRST AND THE LAST: This reflects much of what John writes in his Gospel, 1:1, 3, 10. Among other meanings, it surely reflects Jesus as the ONLY direct creation of Jehovah God; it also represents Him as the FIRST and LAST word on the subject. This was important to a Church which was constantly being pressed to acknowledge the deity of Caesar as a test. Jesus also presents himself as he who

WAS DEAD AND HAS COME TO LIFE: John (the likely angel to this Church) was the only one of the Apostles to witness both events, Jesus’ dying and Jesus’ living again. (John 19:34, 35.)

(It is interesting as a sidelight that the literal city of Smyrna was destroyed in 550 B.C., but came back three centuries later to splendor under both Greek and Roman rule.)

This last introduction of Jesus to Smyrna is obvious in its comforting power for this persecuted band of saints.

2:9 – I KNOW YOUR . . . : It is interesting to note that all other stages of the Church complete this phrase with the word DEEDS. But this message does not. Surely they HAD deeds worthy of mention. But persecutions SO OUTWEIGHED everything else, that the Lord does not place upon them the burden of deeds examination.

YOUR TRIBULATION: There was general tribulation for the entire period, and the specially severe tribulation of the final 10 years. Christianity challenged everything Rome stood for: it didn’t acknowledge the religious authority of the emperor; it refused to participate in the military. It is no wonder that it brought upon itself the hatred of the old order.

YOUR POVERTY: During times of necessary underground existence, to be a Christian necessitated

the giving up of much in this world's goods and in the normalcy of life – if not life itself. From a worldly standpoint, these brethren were, indeed, poor – even though among them there was a class of parasites developing who were gaining worldly advantage by taking advantage of the faithful. But the Lord comments:

BUT YOU ARE RICH: rich in faith towards God – the ONLY riches that count.

He also knows

THE BLASPHEMY BY THOSE WHO SAY THEY ARE JEWS AND ARE NOT: Blasphemy (Strong's 988) means slander. Jews in Revelation are Christians. These are tares. Not only did this Church have to bear the persecutions of Rome, but the slanders of false brethren. The tares were coming in for personal advantage. This class of people always exalt self by denigrating others. This is a demonstration of the historical fact that, though there were severe persecutions, there were more than compensating reasons for false brethren to become "Christians."

SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN: It had not escaped the eye of the adversary that Christianity was going to grow at the expense of Pagan Rome. He began to build his own "synagogue" (church) as he saw the power of Rome slipping away. Satan, representing civil power, now has a synagogue. This is a hint of Rome's desire to incorporate church with state. (12:4)

2:10 – DO NOT FEAR: This is certainly a needed admonition for a church destined for the most severe of physical persecutions. The brethren of this period followed the admonition to the extent that history records the remarkable bravery, courage, and composure under persecutions.

DEVIL: the Roman state as in Chapter 12. In Chapter 20 also, the devil represents a civil authority primarily.

PRISON: most likely death.

THAT YOU MAY BE TESTED: the test of faith under extreme adversity (I Pet. 4:12, 13.)

TRIBULATION: the worst time of trouble of a period of troubles.

TEN DAYS: 10 years (303-313) – the infamous period which featured the sick mind of Diocletian working its ills.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH: both to a life of dying and to the extent of death (THE death, sacrificial death, in Christ)).

CROWN OF LIFE: Crown is *stephanos* – the laurel wreath of victory which will be life within self. What a beautiful reassurance to a church which was dying.

2:11 – The CHORUS giving to each church.

OVERCOMES . . . NOT . . . SECOND DEATH: Once this is over, there will never again be a death liability. An obviously appropriate promise for Smyrna.

THE SMYRNA PARABLE

The 2nd Parable of Matthew 13 (vs. 24-30, 36-43) – THE WHEAT & TARES

While this parable goes beyond the Smyrna period in order to show the outcome of the plantings, its historical power is to show the nature of things in the Smyrna Church. The tares are the Synagogue of Satan – the growing apostasy which sprang up when the Apostles fell asleep (vs. 25.) In the previous parable (The Sower) the good seed was a MESSAGE. In this parable, the good and bad seed are PEOPLE. Satan had no good message to sow – not even a bad one! He's not a good originator! But he is a master counterfeiter. He sowed "Jews" which were NOT "Jews." This factor would become the single-most important ingredient for strife in the Church from this point until the end of the age. 13:26 tells the story: TWO factors from here on. Daniel calls it the HOST and the SANCTUARY. The 2nd Seal (6:4) calls it men slaying each other. Jesus simply called it wheat and tares.

2. SMYRNA

(Rev.2-8)

“Bitter.”

Highly praised without any reproof whatever: the believers suffered much tribulation, some were imprisoned, all were persecuted for “ten days” (ten years of especially bitter persecution under Emperor Diocletian.) Though severely tried and tested, they provided some of the most illustrious examples of Christian faithfulness and endurance of any period of church history.

They were also slandered by false brethren of “the synagogue of Satan” (those ensnared by the defiling spirit of the Adversary.) Through it all, they were counseled not to fear but to “be faithful into death” (holding fast the conviction of their faith in full submission to the will of God to the very end.); and thereby they were ultimately to receive “the crown of life” (life on the highest plane, immortality, the highest reward held out in the universe.)

The overcomer was promised further that he would not be hurt of the second death (be punished by everlasting destruction from which there is no resurrection—the final disposition of the incorrigible and willfully disobedient.)

APOSTLE JOHN
(d. 100 A.D.)

One of the original twelve apostles who, with his brother James and Peter, composed the inner circle closest to Jesus. A fisherman with impulsive temperament, he was surnamed “Son of Thunder”. His early rash and selfish behavior (he and his brother desired chief places in the Kingdom) gave way to gentleness and kindly love.

John is depicted in the Gospels as greatly loved by Jesus and present on many significant occasions: the Transfiguration scene, at our Lord’s Great Prophecy, at his side at the final Passover and in Gethsemane. Although he fled with others when Jesus was arrested, he regained courage to attend the trial and stood near Jesus at the cross. He and Peter were among the first at the empty tomb and are prominent in post-resurrection scenes. They later actively spread the faith despite strong opposition.(Acts 4)

John is referred to by Paul as a pillar of the early church (Gal.2:9). He remained loyal and zealous in defense of truth and endured much suffering as the last apostle (Rev.1:2,9). During his exile on Patmos, he received in vision the Book of Revelation. He also wrote four other books of the New Testament: his gospel, depicting the closeness of the Father and the Son (John chapters 1,5, and 17) and the vital role of Jesus as the source of life (John 3;14-17; chap.60; and his three letters emphasizing righteousness, love, and walking in the light (1John 1:5-9; 4:7-12).

John’s life and writings were a source of great strength and encouragement to the believers during periods of intense pagan persecution.

96A.D.— Book of Revelation completed by John.

100— Death of John, last of the twelve apostles.

1st century— Truth held in purity and simplicity; conflicts with Jewish beliefs and false teachers; “faith spread zealously into Mediterranean world and Roman Empire; periodic persecutions by Roman emperors began.

67-110—Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch. Wrote letters to churches detailing early beliefs and exhorting to faith. Emphasized role of bishop as district leader of church, worthy of respect and obedience. Martyred in arena at Rome by Emperor Trajan.

69-156—Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, pupil of John. Resisted efforts of Roman bishop Anicetus to change observance of Eucharist from 14th day. Martyred at age 86.

100-167—Justin Martyr. Brilliant orator, writer and defender of early Christianity against pagan philosophies. Emphasized moral teachings of Jesus. Slain at Rome.

180—Celsus, powerful early opponent of Christianity. Criticized its pacifism and lack of support for Empire.

130-200—Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons. Defended apostolic tradition. Countered inroads of Gnostics and Greeks. The first to systematize beliefs. Restrained Roman bishop Victor I from enforcing Easter date on Christians at Antioch, citing validity of ancient custom.

2nd century—Faith spread mostly among non-Jews in cities; doctrinal errors began to arise; Christians began to attract public notice as they deserted temples, rejected pagan festivals and demonstrated strict moral code; led to bitter persecution and ostracism.

160-220—Tertullian. Converted lawyer became outstanding theologian and defender of faith. Rejected all philosophy as heresy. Looked for imminent Second Coming of Christ, refuted power of priests to forgive sins and preached fasting and prayer.

185-254—Origen. Most learned man of early church. Quoted two-thirds of New Testament in vast writings. Defended pacifism. Died after torture.

250—Emperor Decius’ widespread persecutions. Attempted to restore religious customs of ancient Rome.

3rd century—Rapid growth of Christianity rivaled that of Empire but beliefs were corrupted; clergy gained titles and prestige; ceremonies took on pomp and splendor; sporadic persecutions continued.

303-313—Emperor Diocletian’s intense ten-year persecution of Christians. Final attempt to revive the old religion and strengthen the Empire.

From C.F. Redeker’s, **THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION.**
1989

THE SECOND SEAL

(Revelation 6:3, 4)

6:3 – SECOND LIVING ONE: (So numbered in 4:7.) This is a calf representing JUSTICE which, during this period, would have been greatly offended by Christian's "slaying one another" (vs. 4).

COME and (implied) SEE WHY:

6:4 – A RED HORSE WENT OUT: Notice the difference from the first Seal. The white horse didn't GO OUT. The Greek word APOSTASY means to go out from. (Not that this word is in the text itself, but that it is brought to mind by this horse's GOING OUT.) The Smyrna period was, indeed, of all the periods, the period of apostasy. The horse (doctrine) is RED –sinful doctrine – heresies.

TO HIM WHO SAT ON IT: This is clearly a malefactor. The apostate Christians (the "Jews" who are not Jews – the Synagogue of Satan) now were able to control doctrine, able to distort it at will, because the Apostolic authorities were gone and the gift of discerning of spirits had died.

GRANTED TO TAKE PEACE FROM THE EARTH: This happened in more than one way. Within the Church the contentions for power created constant stress – something which was to last the remainder of the age. Outside the Church there was also peace being taken away. As paganism was threatened, there was "war" in heaven (12:7). The Roman "earth" (which for a long time had been famous for a kind of peace – the Pax Romana) was thrown into turmoil for two centuries by the struggles and persecutions occasioned by the rising new religion. The apostate element, more than the true saints, were much responsible for causing the troubles which drew the wrath of the empire.

GRANTED . . . THAT MEN SHOULD SLAY ONE ANOTHER: Men often represent Christians. It is uncomfortably possible that this means that consecrated saints were at war with one another. While the tare element is prominent and important, it is important to remember that many who had received the Lord and the Holy Spirit probably lost their lives by giving in to apostate practices. Slaying one another here probably represents the "blasphemies" of 2:9 – slanders. These culminated in "excommunications" which were popular among bishops.

AND A GREAT SWORD WAS GIVEN TO HIM: Even as the Apostolic writings were misused in the first Church (II Pet. 3:16), the Bible, now completed, was a tool of terror in the hands of those without the spirit. Creeds did not yet exist as such. "Scriptural" arguments were constantly in use to beat fellow servants.

Such is the horrible history of the Smyrna period as we look back at this encapsulation of events. This ugly period set the tone for many centuries to come. How interesting that in the message to the Church itself (2:8-11) is NO CONDEMNATION! This is so because it was not the true saints who were evil; it was the synagogue of Satan which was the adversary. This second Seal is condemnation enough for them.

THE SECOND TRUMPET

(Revelation 8:8, 9)

There were two trends working in the Smyrna Trumpet's period: (1) There was terrible persecution because Christianity threatened paganism, and (2), Apostate Christians were working feverishly to gain favor by compromises. Remembering these trends helps to understand the Trumpet.

8:8 – 2nd ANGEL: John, who provided Revelation and provided anti-Gnostic reasonings in his epistles.

A GREAT MOUNTAIN BURNING: The great mountain is pagan Rome which met its demise by the time this period ends. Rome itself is not destroyed – only pagan Rome. The difference is important and is probably implied in the wording: “something like a great mountain . . .” (NAS). This is the equivalent of 12:7 and 8 when pagan Rome loses its place in heaven. It is also the fulfillment of II Thess. 2:7, 8 where it was foretold that he who restrains (= pagan Rome) the mystery of lawlessness (the incipient Roman Church), will continue to restrain its development until he is taken out of the way. The burning of the great mountain takes it away.

BURNING WITH FIRE: Jer. 51:24-26 (speaking of Babylon) shows the meaning of a burning mountain.

WAS THROWN INTO THE SEA: The restless masses of Roman humanity were the cause of the downfall of pagan Rome and the establishment of the apostate church. 13:1 makes it clear that the beast which represents the Roman Church comes up out of this sea into which its predecessor falls. The people's taking hold of “Christianity” in such large numbers eventually helped to persuade Constantine to convert and make Christianity the religion of the empire; if you can't fight it, join it.

A THIRD OF THE SEA BECAME BLOOD: The sea (which is the origin of the “beast” – see 13:1 – and the origin of the true saints – see 5:9 and study on tribes, tongues, peoples and nations in Appendix B) which represents the restless pagan masses of Rome, BECAME BLOOD – it died. One of the three groups which constituted the existing religious forces of the day, DISAPPEARS. Clearly, the apostate church does not disappear; neither does the true Church. But the THIRD part, paganism, does disappear.

8:9 – AND A THIRD OF THE CREATURES WHICH WERE IN THE SEA AND HAD LIFE DIED: The KEY to understanding this phrase are the two words “HAD LIFE.” Clearly, paganism never had life in the Lord's eyes. It was destroyed in the preceding sentence anyway. Only three groups in the sea (the symbol of Christians was the FISH) HAD LIFE (justification):

(1) The true saints: (2) The Great Company; (3) The second-death class – those who lose their lives by apostasy. It is a sad tale, but apparently many lives were lost in Smyrna – they lost their justification and, hence their eternal existence.

AND A THIRD OF THE SHIPS WERE DESTROYED: Ships represent commerce. Again, it is not too difficult to find the three channels of commerce of the day. Chapter 18 shows us that some ships served Babylon. Commerce with the emerging apostate church power had its beginnings here in Smyrna. This commerce lasts until the age ends. (The true Church was never a source for the profit of commerce and is not here pictured.) The empire (civil Rome) did not have its commerce interrupted or threatened by the events of the Smyrna period. So, the THIRD of the ships which were destroyed represents those who profited from commerce with the pagan religion of Rome. THEIR ships sank (Gk., Concordant Version, = DECAY).

Thus the events are portrayed in the world once the second angel sounds. They are accurate to a fault even though they happened after the angel sounded.

THE THIRD CHURCH, SEAL, AND TRUMPET

(The Rapid Rise of the Apostasy)

Revelation 2:12-17

Revelation 6:5, 6

Revelation 8:10, 11

THE PERGAMOS CHURCH **(Revelation 2:12-17)**

An Important Preface to the Pergamos Period

The history of this longest of the Church periods is extremely significant in understanding the symbolisms of the third Church, Seal, and Trumpet. Smyrna (bitterness) ends because the Edict of Milan proclaims religious “liberty” for all. Pagan Rome is gone. But worse than pagan Rome is the antichrist system which develops by leaps and bounds in Pergamos. The Nicean Council officially establishes error. The Trinity is exalted to official status. The first UNIVERSAL CREED (The Nicean Creed) comes into existence, thus sealing errors in stone. The period is full of the twisting of doctrine to make things fit the new passion for unity between the church and state. The Bible is in its final form. Constantine arranges to have many copies made so that its preservation is guaranteed. (What a pity its contents were ignored!) One of Constantine’s copies was found in the 1800’s in a monastery in the Sinai desert by Dr. Tischendorf. We commonly refer to it as the Sinaitic Manuscript. Unfortunately, the Nicean Creed has lasted just as long but is better known!

This period sees the beginning of the 1260 days which Daniel prophesied. It sees the development of Islam and its incursions into Europe. It sees the elevation of the apostasy in a step-by-step progression of events: The Emperor gives the Bishop of Rome the title of Pontifex Maximus (Chief Religious Ruler); The Papal states are formed; The Pope crowns Charlemagne in a ceremony marking the superiority of Pope over Emperor; The Holy Roman Empire is formed and will last until 1806.

The empire was divided into East and West by Constantine opening the way for the need for a powerful leader in the West — the Pope. Seven-hundred years later, the church itself divides into Eastern and Western branches. This might seem like a blow to the apostasy, but, quite to the contrary, it leaves the Bishop of Rome with more power and authority in the West than he would otherwise have had. The Dark Ages do extend beyond Pergamos, but in a very real sense Pergamos is the darkest of the dark. It sets the stage and entrenches the power which will rule Europe with an iron rod for centuries.

2:12 — ANGEL = Arius. Arius was a presbyter of Alexandria. When He was offered the job of Bishop he turned it down because the office was becoming a symbol of LORDSHIP in the church which Arius could not abide. He was highly respected even by his enemies for his blameless life and his learning. At the Nicean Council he disputed with Athanasius in the famous exchange which corrupted doctrine for the remainder of the age. The still-in-use Nicean Creed is the most visible reminder of this council. Constantine had called the bishops of the church (of which there were about 1,000). Three-hundred-

Eighty-four came — about one-third. See Rev. 12:4. Arius was banished, and history (written by the apostasy) tends to call him the greatest heretic of all time. The Lord calls him the third angel!

PERGAMOS — The word means EARTHLY ELEVATION, a most appropriate name for the age in which “Christianity” is exalted throughout the empire to the point where the “Christian” leader gains powers greater than the emperor. What a change from the persecutions of Smyrna! — a change which apostate Christians intended to keep at ANY cost. The first Pope is likely Leo I, c. 440. Justinian gives the PONTIFIX MAXIMUS title to the Roman Bishop in 534. In 800, Leo III crowns Charlemagne. Meanwhile (in 476) western Rome had fallen to its invaders paving the way for the Papacy’s 1260 year reign.

It is interesting to note another possible etymology for Pergamos: “Although a Marriage.” If this be a viable etymology, how appropriate it is to the church-state marriage (actually fornication) of this period.

SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD — Jesus’ introductions of himself to each Church are so very appropriate. This is the period of the first UNIVERSAL CREED. It is as if Jesus is stating, “Which authority do you want, the Nicean Creed, or the two-edged sword, the Bible?” (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12)

Verses 13-16: Verse 12 has opened the description by introducing the hero of truth (Arius), the nature of the period (exultation of earthly glory), and the source of all truth (the sword). In 13-16 we find that the reality of the period is doctrinal controversy.

2:13 — I KNOW WHERE YOU DWELL: “Where” is a PLACE. Places in scripture represent conditions. The condition in which the brethren of this period dwelled was that of a growing hierarchy in the church mixing itself with the state. Therefore, Jesus describes the “Where” as:

WHERE SATAN’S THRONE IS. Satan is a symbol of Rome and, of course, of the literal devil behind the scenes. The brethren dwelt in the midst of the fornication between church and state — where church and Rome become one THRONE — one rulership or authority. From this they had to flee to another condition, the wilderness (separation from the accepted way of doing things.) IT IS MOST INTERESTING to trace the growth from 2:9 to 2:13. In Smyrna, there is only the “synagogue of Satan.” The apostate brethren had formed within Christianity their own “Synagogue” — their own Church Organization. But now in Pergamos they are ELEVATED: the Synagogue has become a THRONE.

YOU HOLD FAST MY NAME. This may be subtle, but it is lovely. Arius did all he could to hold fast the identity and character of Jesus until he was murdered by his enemies. Likewise did his followers. A Trinitarian, of course, could NOT hold fast this name.

DID NOT DENY MY FAITH. While councils were REPLACING the faith of the Scriptures with creeds, these brethren held fast to the Scriptural teaching which usually resulted in their excommunication.

EVEN IN THE DAYS OF ANTIPAS. Antipas means Against the Father. Arius and his followers were rabidly opposed to the rise of the fatherhood of the Bishop of Rome, and to the calling of the priests (later in the period) by the title of “Father.” All of this, of course, is part of the hateful doctrine of the Nicolaitans which the Lord HATES. As an option, Antipas might well mean that Arius taught against Jesus’ being equated with the Father.

MY WITNESS, MY FAITHFUL ONE. This phrase is much like 3:14 except that 3:14 applies to Jesus while it here applies to Arius. It is interesting to note that these two verses apply to the TWO times in church history when the Trinity doctrine is under attack. This might lead us to think that “MY WITNESS” means specially a witness to WHOM Jesus really is, and that faithfulness in either of these two periods relies on doing this.

KILLED WHERE SATAN DWELLS. Arius was “killed” (excommunicated) not just as others were, but by Constantine’s own direction. What an honor!

2:14 —AGAINST YOU. This phrase and the “REPENT” of verse 16 suggest that the brethren of the time might have been falling into a defensive posture rather than an offensive one. They may have not openly criticized the growing apostasy with sufficient vigor. The true saints were, in this period, without question outnumbered and out-powered. It would have been easy and natural to begin a retreat. But the Lord was not pleased to see this in his saints.

“BALAAM . . . BALAK . . . STUMBLING BLOCK . . . ISRAEL” — A reading of Numbers 22-25 and 31:13-16 will be helpful in understanding this lesson. While the “doctrine of Balaam” usually refers to catering to the flesh with material rewards of pleasure, it is important to dig a little deeper here. Balaam proposed to Balak a non-sanctioned marriage of Moabite daughters to Jews which, among other things, resulted in adultery and idolatry. Thus, the type here of a marriage of the Lord’s people to subjects of a gentile king has its antitype in the attempt to marry Christians to the state. This was a real stumbling-block for Christians who might be tempted to do so as they remembered the terrible persecutions of the previous period when church and state were enemies. The “sons of Israel” in the type are the “Jews” of Revelation which represent Christians.

EAT THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS. What was the proposed idolatry? It was the union of church and state. What was being SACRIFICED to accomplish this? The truth of the Scriptures which forbade such a union. The saints were being asked to eat (swallow) the twisting (sacrificing) of Scripture in order to live under the new idolatrous order of things and, thereby, to

COMMIT IMMORALITY (FORNICATION). THIS was the point of the religious rulers from the beginning of the Pergamos period. They wanted Christians to give in to the church-state union arrangement.

2:15 — THUS . . . NICOLAITANS. Several lessons appear in this verse. The word THUS is important. It links this verse to the previous verse. NICOLAITANS is a Greek equivalent of BALAAMITES. Jesus is INTERPRETING verse 14. He is telling us that the struggle for power and influence shown by Balaam in his desire for cooperation between Israel and Balak IS THE SAME as the Church “rulers” who want cooperation between church and state. This verse says “THUS” you also have SOME . . .” SOME is not YOU; it is THEM. We now have a very clear division between what Daniel calls the HOST and the SANCTUARY. This division first occurred in 2:9 but is here more obvious. With the clergy system now firmly entrenched, the doctrine of LORDSHIP (Nicolaitans) is a permanent feature of Christian life.

2:16 — REPENT. (See 2:14) The Lord does not wish the brethren to give up and give in to the clergy entrenchment. He does not want them to abide these teachings in their midst. To overcome, these doctrines must not be tolerated even though non-toleration will probably result in their excommunication and being driven into the wilderness.

OR ELSE I AM COMING. This phrase often occurs and is NOT meant to be a threat that the Lord will return early. It is an idiom meaning that he will COME AGAINST — act against.

MAKE WAR WITH SWORD OF MOUTH. Mouth represents a message. Sword is a Scriptural message. (cf. 19:15)

Pergamos apparently had a famous sword factory. The Lord seems to draw on these symbols of the actual city to build his case. This seems to be saying that, if the brethren did not speak the truth against the Papacy and Nicolaitan practices, the Lord would be sure to force to their attention that it is wrong. One of the primary reasons for the separation of the Eastern church from Rome was its REFUSAL to ACCEPT the supremacy of the Pope. The Eastern church (even though as apostate as the Western one) DID see from the SWORD that this vicarious Christ (called the Pope) was illegitimate. It is interesting to note in this regard that in the Numbers 22:23-26, 31 account, an angel uses a SWORD to slow Balaam's progress. This is what Balaam fails to see. His donkey sees it, however! Perhaps the Eastern church is the antitypical donkey!

2:17 — THE CHORUS. It is plain to see that the lessons of Pergamos apply to the rest of us even though they had a pointed special application to the brethren of those many years.

TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES: The meaning of the symbols of victory here have special significance for the Pergamos brethren when we understand the history of the age:

THE HIDDEN MANNA — The food these brethren were asked to swallow (v. 14) was corrupted food offered to idols. The victors, however, are offered LIFE-SUSTAINING food, an eternal meal which will not let them hunger — even as these brethren had to go into the wilderness and be faithfully fed of ravens. The hidden manna was, of course, INCORRUPTIBLE. The meaning of this to those who lived in an age characterized by corruption should be clear. The word HIDDEN also has much meaning for Pergamos. The VISIBLE church during this period was the dominant apostate one. The true Church was hidden and fed in the wilderness — less and less visible as Pergamos progressed.

GIVE A WHITE STONE. This traditional mark of perpetual friendship and aid is also something which would specially appeal to the Pergamos brethren. Pergamos was an age of BETRAYAL. Friends and relatives would forsake each other over the doctrinal splitting. With this white stone, the victor is promised eternal friendship and aid without the possibility of betrayal.

NEW NAME WHICH NO ONE KNOWS. This represents both the new character developed here on earth but transplanted beyond, AND the personal relationships between the saint and his God which no natural man can discern. (Cf. 19:12) It is this friendship, this sonship, which makes the white stone promise so valid. The new apostate church with its emphasis on hierarchy became very CORPORATE in its mentality. The personal concerns were unimportant. But the overcomer is promised that HE is the important element, not the corporation. The Lord was looking out for the individual saint in the wilderness during his earthly journey. (Cf. Gen. 31:46-49). The Victor would have this personal love assured for eternity.

THE PERGAMOS PARABLE

The 3rd Parable of Matthew 13 (vs. 31-32)

THE MUSTARD SEED

Pergamos is the period of rapid growth of "Christianity." Out of the original faith seed (see Matt. 17:20) which Jesus planted, it grew an IMMENSE structure (Cf. 12:5, 6). This structure was, of course, apostate. It attracted all of the opportunists (birds) which could profit from its size and shade (protection.) (Cf. 18:2, 3.) Such was the state of "the Kingdom of Heaven" during the Pergamos age.

Church Name & Characteristics

3. Pergamos

(Rev. 2:12-17)

“Earthly elevation.”

Mingled praise and blame: the believers were zealous in their good works and held firmly to Jesus’ name; they did not renounce their faith even in the face of mounting persecution. They opposed the rise of apostasy, for which they were commended under the symbol of “my faithful martyr Antipas: (meaning “against the fathers” or popes), even as the church grew in worldly prestige.

But some succumbed to the doctrine of Balaam, enticing them to eat food sacrificed to idols (to accept pagan distortions of the truth in the creeds), to spiritual immorality (improper relation of church to state) and to the teachings of the Nicolaitanes (lordship in the church). For allowing these conditions to develop they were urged to repent, lest the Lord himself come unto them wielding the sword of his mouth (the sharp cutting edge of doctrinal truth) against the corrupters of the faith.

The overcomer was promised he would eat of the hidden manna (be rewarded with immortality) and receive a white stone with a new name on it (a special token of the Lord’s intimate favor).

Messenger Arius

(c.250-336 AD)

Presbyter of Alexandria, Egypt, widely acclaimed for his scholarly, ascetic and morally exemplary life. He was educated in the renowned theological school of Antioch under the scholar Lucian. Opposed to lordship in the church, he humbly declined the offer of becoming bishop of Alexandria.

Arius became chief spokesman for the early church view of the pre-eminence of the Heavenly Father above all other beings. He resisted the efforts of churchmen such as Alexander and Athanasius to equate Jesus with God. He believed the Bible taught that Jesus was to be highly esteemed above men and angels and worshipped as the son of God, but entirely separate from God the Father. He considered the Son to be the direct creation of God, not co-eternal, co-equal or identical in substance: “There was a time when the Son was not; he was made, like all creatures, of a substance that had not previously existed.”

Arius attracted a large following through his teaching but managed to antagonize opposing clerics. His principal work, *Thalia* (“The Banquet”), set out his doctrine in prose and poetry. He also wrote verse and hymns that popularized his views among the common people.

In 321 he was excommunicated by a synod convened by Alexander, the ruling patriarch. Yet his views were endorsed by many in the church, including Eusebius of Nicomedia, the most influential bishop of the East. As the dispute escalated to threaten the unity of the Empire, the Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicea in 325 to settle the matter. At the Council, the emperor himself took a leading role, although it is doubtful that he could have comprehended the theological points at issue. Essentially a politician, he concluded that the Alexandrian view was the most expedient. He therefore forced its adoption upon the Council and threatened loss of position to any who disagreed.

The Council decreed that Christ was “begotten, not made,” and “of one essence with the Father.” “Begotten” was understood to mean that Christ possessed the very nature and substance of the Father, and not that he had been created by God from nothing. Only Arius and two bishops refused to sign the Creed; all three were banished.

Undaunted, Arius composed a rival creed to that of Nicea which so impressed Constantine that he was recalled. But on the very day of his installation ceremony in Constantinople, Arius died suddenly under suspicious circumstances, leading his friends to suspect he had been poisoned.

The Arian controversy is considered to be the most fundamental dispute in the history of the church. It was not officially resolved until more than 50 years after Arius’ death, when the Trinity view finally emerged as the orthodox position. But his teachings lingered. Particularly in the Germanic tribes that later invaded the Empire. Subsequently, they continued to find expression in minority groups of the church and have survived to our day.

Historical Events

312 AD— Arius, presbyter of Alexandria, Egypt, defended early church view of Christ as created Son of God, not coequal or co-eternal with the Father.

313 AD—Edict of Milan: decreed religious toleration for all; restored confiscated property to Christians

Historical Events (cont.)

321 AD—Constantine forbade work on the Sabbath day which he endorsed as being Sunday.

325 AD—Council of Nicea: convened by Constantine to resolve “Arian controversy. Under pressure from emperor, it concluded that Christ and God were equal. Arius was condemned and banished.

264-340 AD—Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea. Father of church history. Prolific writer. Catalogued New Testament books. Steered middle course at Nicea.

(?)-342—Eusebius of Nicomedia. Strong supporter of Arius. Headed Arian party of 20 bishops at Nicea Council. Became Patriarch of Constantinople

334AD—Capital of Empire moved from Rome to Constantinople. Enhanced prestige of Roman bishop who became protector of people in place of emperor.

375AD—Veneration of angels and dead saints introduced.

380AD—Theodosius decreed Christianity compulsory and destroyed pagan temples. Magnificent churches built.

394AD—The Mass as a daily celebration introduced.

4th century—Widespread doctrinal controversies. Adoption of Christianity as state religion opened floodgates of corruption.

340-420AD—St. Jerome. Learned Catholic scholar. Author of Vulgate translation of Bible from original tongues into Latin; omitted Apocryphal books.

354-430AD—St. Augustine, distinguished bishop of N.Africa. Single most influential theologian who molded doctrines of church. His “City of God” treatise encouraged rise of hierarchy under papal control.

431AD—Council of Ephesus. Termed Mary “the Mother of God.” Deposed Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople.

440-461AD—Reign of Pope Leo (the Great.) Founder of medieval papacy who forged it into a respected power. Regarded heresy as “crime against society” punishable by death.

445AD—Emperor Valentinian III recognized the Roman Bishop as head of Western Church.

476AD—Fall of Rome ended the Western Empire (first horn of Daniel 7:8).\

5th century—political events combined to enhance prestige of Bishop of Rome.

500—Catholic priests began to wear distinctive garb.

533—Emperor Justinian acknowledged the Roman bishop as head of all churches.

539—Ostrogoths (third horn of Daniel 7:8) defeated at Ravenna. A hollow victory for the emperor since he could not effectively rule Italy from Constantinople. Left power vacuum for papacy to fill—the rise of “little horn” of Dan.7:8 Start of 1260,1290,and 1335 days of Daniel 12.

554—Pope’s temporal authority confirmed by Justinian.

590-604—Reign of Gregory I (the Great). Considered first real pope, controlled all of western churches and consolidated power of papacy in Europe. Systematized its theology and perfected its liturgy; introduced doctrine of purgatory.

6th century—Events continued to favor rise of papal power in secular and religious areas.

732—Battle of Tours, France. Moslems defeated decisively; Europe saved from Mohammedanism.

754—Pepin, King of Franks, conquered Lombards. By giving their lands (much of Italy) to the pope, he elevated the pontiff to an earthly king with “Papal States.” **786**—Worship of images and the cross authorized.

800—Charlemagne crowned “Roman Emperor” by Pope Leo III. His reign over Roman and Frank realms blessed in return for his recognition of “Papal States.” The emperor’s strong rule and mutual ties raised papacy to world power and began “Papal Millennium.”

858—Boastful reign of Pope Nicholas I. Claimed rulership over civil governments as well as the church.

870-1050—“Midnight of Dark Ages.” Bribery, corruption, immorality and bloodshed made it darkest period of papal degradation.

1000—The millennium from supposed birthdate of Christ. Raised fear of judgment and end of world throughout Christian lands.

1054—Split of Eastern and Western Churches over issue of headship. Patriarch of Constantinople refuted claims of pope in Rome.

1073—Reign of Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand). Viewed pope as absolute sovereign of world with all classes subject to him. Attempted reform of clergy, especially regarding immorality and simony (purchasing of office). Decreed celibacy of priesthood.

1090—Rosary (praying with beads) introduced.

THE THIRD SEAL

(Revelation 6:5, 6)

This Seal deals with the scarcity of good spiritual food due to the apostasy's having gained control of dictating how much doctrine is appropriate and "correct." This is the period which begins the Dark Ages and in which the collective "church" (apostate) is more important than the individual and his relationship to God — a vital relationship which is not to be stressed again until the Church of "brotherly love."

6:5 — THE THIRD LIVING ONE = Love (face like that of a man). Love is particularly offended during Pergamos. The rising apostasy does not favor an attitude of love for the individual, but rather for the organization, thus defying this great attribute. (Cf. 12:11 where the ascendant man of sin attributes glory to martyrs because BY THEIR MARTYRDOM the apostate system had its victory over Rome.)

BLACK HORSE: Black absorbs rather than reflects light. This is the period which selfishly uses Scripture, history, or anything else to support its power play. This horse is black because the doctrine was supplanted by the Nicene Creed. Creeds and church traditions and the "apostolic" dictates from the powerful bishops have all supplanted the authority of the Scriptures. Thus there is lack of light; thus it is called the Dark Ages. (See also Lam. 5:10 KJV.)

HE WHO SAT ON IT: The controller of doctrine was the apostasy evolving quickly into what would become the Papacy.

PAIR OF SCALES IN HIS HAND: It was imperative to the development of the apostate power that it control (hand) what people would be fed — weigh out the victuals. Information management is one of the first objectives of any would-be dictator. During Pergamos the period begins in which the Scriptures are clothed in sackcloth (11:3). It is during this period that the famine for the hearing of the Word of the Lord begins (Amos 8:11, 12).

Scales used in conjunction with food items symbolize scarcity. See Lev. 16:26; Ezek. 4:16.

6:6 — VOICE IN MIDST OF FOUR LIVING ONES: This voice is almost certainly God Himself. (Cf. Ezek. 1:24, 25.) It is a VERY COMFORTING VOICE. This is the period during which the Church is forced into the wilderness to be fed there by God. This VOICE is the reassurance that, though a great famine is being FORCED on the world by the apostates, GOD HIMSELF is dictating the MINIMUM food available. He will not allow the horseman to decide how much is available. As He did with the troubles of Job, He now does for His Church: He says:

THIS MUCH famine you can enforce, NO MORE!

SOME DEFINITIONS:

A denarius (a penny) as in the Lord's parable symbolizes the pay for a day's labor.

A quart (a measure - KJV) symbolizes the MINIMUM amount needed to live on. Three quarts (or measures) represents comfortable eating.

Wheat (or the bread made from it) symbolizes the Church AND their food. See Psalms 104:15; Amos 8:11, 12; Matt. 3:12; Matt 13:30; Psalms 81:13, 16; Psalms 147:11, 14.

Barley symbolizes commonly known truths, such as Jesus' Resurrection, his ability to forgive sin, etc., etc. Note for instance that when Jesus feeds the MULTITUDES (as opposed to his disciples) He uses BARLEY LOAVES (John 6:9, 13).

Oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

Wine (I Cor. 10:16) symbolizes (among other things) the ability to partake in the Sin-Offering with Jesus.

With these definitions, the remaining words of the third Seal are easy of interpretation:

God dictates the minimums:

A QUART OF WHEAT FOR A DENARIUS: The deeper truths which are necessary to sustain spiritual life will be hard to find — laboring all day will be needed; but that labor WILL result in no less than the needed amount of sustenance.

THREE QUARTS OF BARLEY FOR A DENARIUS: The basic truths which will attract people to Christianity and to tentative justification will be available in good amounts if the labor to find them be expended. (The apostasy not only DID NOT HIDE basic truths, but they PROMOTED them. Even the service of the Mass promotes God's mercies, some correct creedal statements, praise toward God, and Jesus as the Lamb which takes away the sin of the world.)

DO NOT HARM THE OIL AND WINE: The statement is clear that the development of the Church will progress even in these dark times. The apostasy was told plainly it could not harm the work of the Holy Spirit - the spirit of consecration of true saints; nor could they harm (hinder in any way) the wine — the opportunity for those true saints to make their callings and elections sure as participators in the sin-offering wine.

THE THIRD TRUMPET

(Revelation 8:10, 11)

Note: Brethren have come up with a number of seemingly viable explanations for the symbols in this Trumpet. It is altogether possible that more than one explanation works and is correct. When measuring the tabernacle with the standard 18 inch cubit, one set of excellent truths is discovered; when measuring it with the pyramid (25-inch) cubit, another set of excellent data results. It is hardly beyond God to have a number of correct and meaningful interpretations possible in any prophecy. To restrict ourselves would be a mistake. Here, however, we present the explanation which seems best to meet most of the facts of history.

8:10 — THIRD ANGEL = Arius.

A GREAT STAR: This is most likely Arius also. 1:20 points out that each of the Church angels was a star. Arius was, in every sense, a GREAT star — great enough that the false church tends to record him as the greatest heretic of all time.

FELL FROM HEAVEN: He is the first messenger to the Church to suffer outright rejection from the majority of professing Christians. His influence was so very strong that he had to be forcibly evicted from the “heaven” of his day. This he had peculiarly in common with the fifth messenger (Wycliffe) who shares a common description in this prophecy — see 9:1. He was out of favor in the new dominantly apostate heaven mainly because his views were antagonistic to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans: he couldn’t tolerate lordship in the Church. But how could the new apostasy grow without lordship? It is altogether possible that his anti-trinitarian views would not have been so heretical had he been in favor of a Church hierarchy.

BURNING LIKE A TORCH: Arius shown brightly as he defended God’s Word — the LAMP unto our feet. He was a great light in the Christian community until his “disgrace” at Nicea. While the meanings are opposite, there is an interesting parallel of this text in Luke 10:18.

*FELL ON A THIRD OF THE RIVERS AND THE SPRINGS OF WATERS: Rivers are both sources of water (truth) and the people who support those truths. (Cf. 16:12 and 22:1) Springs of water are the sources from which the water (truths) emanates. (John 4:14) We are again faced with the necessity of defining which three sources exist. Two seem obvious: (1) There was the newly empowered apostate source as symbolized in the Nicene Creed: (2) There was the scriptural source as represented in the arguments of Arius and his followers. By this time, however, there had returned an OLD SOURCE. (3) Judaism had been nearly out of the picture since the fall of Jerusalem. But the Diaspora was now showing up in European centers. Communities of Jews who had been driven out of Israel were now becoming recognizable (though not accepted) parts of European cities. The THIRD source of religious truth and authority is probably Judaism.

On which third does the star fall? THIS IS AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

8:11 — The answer to the above question is found in the statement of this verse. Let us reason on the symbols:

*Note on 8:10 “FELL ON” The star falling on a third of the rivers seems to indicate that these waters were affected by the fall of the star. There is no implication that it is a good or bad effect. That seems to be determined by point of view. The fall of Arius from favor had a direct effect on the way his teachings were accepted in the eyes of many. It turned his teachings (waters) into Wormwood (bitterness.) – Not that it spoiled them, but that it made them distasteful to those who might otherwise have drunk them.

WORMWOOD has the characteristic of BITTERNESS. Since the STAR is named Wormwood, it is logical to assume that the name is given to the star by the apostasy, not by the followers of the star. Therefore, for consistency, it is also logical to assume that the waters becoming wormwood is IN THE SIGHT OF THE APOSTATE CHURCH, not in the sight of those who believed and drank these waters. Thus, the third of the waters named seems to be the TRUE WATERS — the doctrines expounded by Arius and his followers; the waters even possibly INCLUDE the followers who, in the sight of the “orthodox” were contaminated with heresies. MEN represent Christians. DEATH represents the end of a condition. The interpretation then seems to be:

THE NAME OF THE STAR IS CALLED WORMWOOD: Notice, it does not say that the name of the star IS Wormwood, but that it is CALLED Wormwood. God did not name His messenger BITTERNESS — someone else decided it was a good title! As before mentioned, Arius went down in history as the chief among history’s heretics! The newly powerful apostate element of Christianity succeeded in branding Arius as an untouchable.

AND A THIRD OF THE WATERS BECAME WORMWOOD: This third is the TRUE third — the doctrine emanating from Arius and his followers. They DID BECOME bitter — undrinkable — BECAUSE the emperor and bishops so pronounced them. All of the evil things said about Arius and his doctrine made Christians beware of the message.

AND MANY MEN DIED FROM THE WATERS BECAUSE THEY WERE MADE BITTER: Men are Christians. They lost their spiritual lives. But note carefully: they did not lose them BECAUSE THEY DRANK the water. No, they lost them BECAUSE THEY DID NOT DRINK THE WATER. They were convinced that they should NOT LISTEN to the voice of the Pergamos Angel.

An alternate interpretation is quite possible: If Christians DID follow Arius; (DID drink of the water from this source), they may yet have fallen from grace when the persecutions against Arians tested their sincerity. Thus the bitterness (the proclaimed heresy qualities) of the water would have eventually made faithfulness against the majority “host” not possible for them.

The first interpretation seems better. The stigma against Arian doctrine made it less and less possible for men to consider drinking of it. This is why the apostasy was so successful during this period. It successfully heaped calumnies upon its opponents until the abomination was “set up.” Its fornication with the powers of the state made it a nearly-impregnable fortress — thus its name, PERGAMOS, *Earthly Elevation*.

THE FOURTH CHURCH, SEAL, AND TRUMPET
(THE DARKEST OF TIMES)

Revelation 2:18-29

Revelation 6: 7, 8

Revelation 8:12, 13

THE THYATIRA CHURCH

(Revelation 2:18-29)

An Important Preface to the Thyatira Period

This period of Church history is marked by several strange occurrences. Peter Waldo has the Bible translated into French — the first vernacular translation since the Latin Vulgate Bible of the 300's. Since Latin had died out as a functional language, the Bible had not been available to any who could not read Latin. Waldo changed all this, and this change was a terrible threat to the established Papal authority. Waldo and his followers (usually called Waldenses) were forced to operate mostly in secret. They, for the most part, physically left the cities and formed little enclaves in the mountains of Europe. From these locations they travelled as merchants spreading the Gospel as they gained access to the presence and the confidence of their customers.

This period also sees what Papacy calls “The Babylonian Captivity” of the Papacy. Through political moves, the Papacy relocated to Avignon in France for about 70 years beginning in 1309. While this physical relocation might not seem important, the political and spiritual ramifications were very important. It ultimately leads to the Great Schism of the Sardis period in which as many as three popes are trying to function at once!

The Hundred Years War begins in 1337. This is primarily a land squabble between England and France, but it takes many French lives and ruins the French economy. It also, with the plague, helps in the institution of the Peasant Wars — the first real challenge to those in power (the church and the nobility). The Hundred Years War is really a series of wars which end in 1443 — thus lasting more than the name implies.

The great Black Death (1334-54) was one of mankind's most disastrous events. The most conservative estimates state that one-third of the European population died. The most liberal estimates say it was two-thirds. Philosophically, it resulted in two extremes: live it up because we'll soon die, or reform because the wrath of God will destroy us. The beginning of the Renaissance period was probably delayed by this latter state of mind.

The Papacy was greatly weakened by all of these events which set it up for the final three Trumpets (8:13) which were, consequently, capable of inflicting WOE to the “inhabitants of the earth.”

2:18 — ANGEL: The fourth messenger is Peter Waldo, a rich merchant of Lyons who learned from the Scriptures the terrible errors of the Papacy. He used his riches to translate the Bible, to train disciples, and to spread the Gospel as widely as he could. He had a reputation for an extremely reverent life. He died in Bohemia in 1217, but left behind a movement, which (though now greatly changed) still exists in Italy. Among other things, he preached that there was no dependence on the priesthood for any of the needed functions of the Church.

THYATIRA: The name means Sweet Perfume of Sacrifice. Despite Papacy's own problems, she did not lose in any way her zeal to persecute. (See Vol. II pg. 334ff for some ugly examples.) This is the era of "St." Dominic, the "Father of the Inquisition." The brethren of this period suffered greatly. As much as possible they operated in secret to avoid the persecutions; but there is only so much which faithfulness can avoid. The Lord appreciates sacrifice under duress — which this name implies. It is interesting to note again that the literal city of Thyatira possessed characteristics prophetic of the symbolic city. It was known for its production of red and purple dyes. Compare this to Rev. 17:4.

SON OF GOD: Jesus probably introduces himself to this Church in these terms because this Church is dominated by the Papacy which calls itself the Vicarious Son of God. Jesus is comparing the false with the true. The comparison takes on added significance when Dan. 7:8 is consulted wherein the Papacy also is characterized by its eyes — the very next symbol which Jesus uses of Himself.

EYES LIKE A FLAME OF FIRE: Eyes represent wisdom and discernment and watch-care. This is the first period during the totality of which the Church is in the wilderness — needing the wisdom and watch-care of her Lord. This is similar to 12:14 where the eagle (also known for its keen sight and as a symbol of wisdom) feeds the Church in the wilderness. The flame of fire seems to represent the judgment accompanying the oversight. Jesus is telling this Church that he is constantly aware of their needs and of their persecutions, and that the persecutions are not escaping his judgment though they might not yet see that fact.

FEET LIKE BURNISHED BRONZE: This might have two significances. (1) If the feet represent the Church in the flesh, Jesus' representatives on earth, He is reminding them that they are justified (polished copper, brass, or bronze — depending on translations). (2) If the reference is to him (which is most likely), it is a reminder to the Church that Jesus walked the earth without losing his perfect standing before God. He will help them so that they, likewise, will not lose this justification even in the midst of great persecutions.

2:19 — It seems best to translate the beginning of this verse:

I know your deeds, **EVEN** your love and faith and service, and perseverance.

Waldo, himself, exemplified all of these qualities to the brethren of his day. He sold all he had (Cf. Luke 18:22) in order to help those to see who could not.

KNOW YOUR DEEDS: Again Jesus reminds his Church that he sees all. While this Church had to hide from Jezebel, their deeds were never hidden from his appreciative eyes.

LOVE: Their love for God and the poor was shown by their willingness to suffer on their behalf, but they were not respecters of persons; they shared the Gospel with the wealthy with just as much zeal.

FAITH: While they actively **HID** from Jezebel, they did retain their faith against her errors.

SERVICE: These brethren were itinerant preachers — the first since Ephesus. They were, in a sense, the first colporteurs. Theirs was a **PLANNED** ministry, a calculated witness effort to cover all of Europe.

PERSEVERANCE: The extreme persecutions begun in Pergamos were only intensified in Thyatira. While it **DID** send saints into the mountains, it did not discourage their labors. It seems best to translate the end of this verse:

and that your last deeds are greater than the first.
(The Greek implies that both last and first are **THEIR** works - this is important as some have thought this to be a contrast with the works of the first Church, Ephesus.)

The first question regarding these words is:

Do they refer to TIME: earlier works versus later works?

Or do they refer to the list: love and faith versus service and perseverance?

It is most certainly the latter since the history of the period DOES NOT fit the description of better works toward its end. It is interesting to compare 2:19 with 2:13. Both are dealing with very similar material. Indeed, Thyatira is, in a sense, simply an extension of Pergamos; it differs mainly in that a new messenger comes along. Verses 13 and 19 are both about dealing with the Roman Church. But verse 13 commends their FAITH whereas verse 19 commends “the last deeds” — i. e., service and perseverance. When Pergamos opened, love and faith were more the issues; the Papacy did not yet exist. When Thyatira opens, love and faith ARE issues, but they pale as compared to the real strengths of these brethren: service and perseverance.

2:20 — BUT I HAVE THIS AGAINST YOU: This almost comes as a shock. These brethren have just been commended for love, faith, service, and perseverance. What else can there be? There was apparently a character weakness. It almost certainly applies to the fact that the Waldenses were SECRETIVE in their witnessing. They did not offer an OPEN challenge to Papacy. STRANGELY, however, the Lord does NOT INSIST on their correcting this weakness. Compare 2:4, 5 and 2:14, 16 where the “AGAINST YOU” phrase is followed by REPENT. But not so here. Instead he says “hold fast what you have.” (verse 25)

This verse obviously brings to mind the Old Testament type of the Roman Church and her paramour. Jezebel (who protected the priests of Baal) persecuted Elijah through the power of her husband, Ahab, so that Elijah had to dwell in the wilderness for 3 ½ years. So here, the Roman Church (who protects the apostate priests) persecutes the true Church through the power of her illicit “husband” — the civil power — so that the true Church must dwell in a wilderness condition for 1260 “days.” Therefore, the following symbols:

JEZEBEL: The Papal church in league with the states.

CALLS HERSELF A PROPHETESS: She claimed to be the Lord’s mouthpiece.

TEACHES AND LEADS MY BONDSERVANTS ASTRAY: Actively tried to make all Christians conform to her errors.

SO THAT THEY COMMIT FORNICATION: They are seduced to accepting the church-state authority.

AND TO EAT THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS: Truth was twisted (sacrificed) so that the idol of church-state authority could be swallowed by believers. They were supposed to accept (eat, appropriate) the idea that this was Christ’s Kingdom on earth!

2:21 — Many apply these words to a future from Thyatira, but the tense is PAST:

AND I GAVE HER TIME (*CHRONOS*) TO REPENT. This verse LINKS to the previous verse. Verse 20 dealt with the idol of fornication with the state. That is STILL the subject in 2:21.

WHEN was the first obvious public recognition of this marriage? Was it not in 800 when the Pope crowned Charlemagne? History certainly suggests so. 800 plus a “time” (*chronos*) of 360 years brings us to 1160. Can this be mere coincidence? It seems clearly to state that from the open celebration of fornication, God allowed 360 years for a change before he sent the fourth angel to start the process of undermining Jezebel’s influence. The tense then changes: SHE DOES NOT WANT TO REPENT OF HER FORNICATION — Present tense, 1160.

The question can justly be asked: How did she know to repent since no messenger told her to do so? This is a difficult question. Perhaps the assumption must be made that the SCRIPTURES themselves warn against being in league with the world. If the “church” had been consulting her own handbook, she would KNOW she was wrong and would repent. Perhaps the translation into the vernacular by

Waldo was saying, "I know you can read it in Latin, but just in case, I'll give it to you in French too!" At that time, the Pope was in France!

2:22 — BEHOLD: This verse begins a three-pronged attack against Jezebel and those who commit adultery with her. (1) She will be cast into a bed of sickness. (2) They will be cast into a great tribulation (unless they repent of HER deeds). (3) Her children will be killed with death (vs. 23)

HER BED: It is quite possible that her bed of sickness is the period which the Catholic historians now call the BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY — the time of the Pope in Avignon. This was a political mistake which would plague Papacy right through the next (Sardis) period of church history.

GREAT TRIBULATION: This is possibly the Hundred Years War. This ongoing instability between England and France (the Pope's new home) greatly weakened the Papacy's supporters. KILL HER CHILDREN WITH DEATH: Because "kill" can symbolize a number of things in Revelation (excommunication, loss of faith, change of status, etc.), it seems the Lord carefully chose the expression KILL WITH DEATH to make the point that DEATH is meant. The great BLACK DEATH fulfills this prophecy well. It could not possibly be ignored in any prophecy of this period since it was one of history's great tragedies. To claim that this phrase DOES NOT symbolize the Black Death puts the responsibility on the claimant to tell why. There is, however, a very important question attached to this thesis. Does the Black Death not also kill those who were not followers of Jezebel? First, the prophecy does not state that no one else would be killed. (By the way, officially the Roman Church is its clergy, not its people. Its people are considered children of the church.) However, since the plague was carried by fleas infesting rats, the plague was most powerful in highly populated areas. There was some plague in the countryside; there was very little in the mountains. Because the Waldenses had hidden themselves in remote mountain villages, it is likely that the plague was not a great factor in their experience.

2:23 — The first sentence of this verse is covered above. The remaining part of this verse presents a problem in interpretation. Because of it, some have felt that verse 22 is a prophecy of the great tribulation at the end of the Gospel Age. There seems no reason, however, to make this such a long-range prophecy when more contemporary events seem so well to fulfill its requirements. Here is the problem:

"and all the churches will know . . ."

Does this mean that all the stages of the Church YET COMING will know?

Does it mean all of the periods of the Church past and future will know?

Does it mean that ecclesias (rather than periods of the Church) will know?

It seems far-fetched to think of this as all of the periods of the Church knowing. To have this happen, we would have to wait until all the Churches are glorified. At that time, the information that Jesus is he who searches minds and hearts has no meaning.

It MAY mean that future Churches can look back to see that Jesus can take retribution at any time during the age. It MAY also mean that the event will sober up the Churches when they tend toward excesses when they remember the devastations which the Lord allowed during the Black Death.

MINDS AND HEARTS (lit. Kidneys and hearts); The kidneys are PURIFYING organs. They seem to represent the ability of the individual to separate the spirit from the flesh. Thus the kidney represents the successful ability to be motivated properly, to have the proper intent or prompting power. It takes the poison (flesh) out of the blood (life). The heart, on the other hand, seems to represent the seat of emotions and, therefore, shows the ZEAL displayed in accomplishing what the kidneys intend. Thus the expression: He has no heart in it. Thus Jesus here says, I SEARCH the intent and zeal of those who claim to serve me. Thus: I WILL GIVE TO EACH OF YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR DEEDS: This statement, when compared with the next verse is extremely revealing. It appears that the Lord recognized that a body of his people were yet IN the Church of Rome. Some had come out (the Waldenses) and fled to the mountains. Jesus treats them differently. Notice the first group. In verse 20 they are His bondservants WHO HAVE BEEN LED ASTRAY. They have committed acts of immorality. We find them again in verse 22 — They will have tribulation UNLESS they repent of HER deeds. Thus in verse 23, Jesus says to this group, "I will give to EACH ONE OF YOU according to YOUR deeds" — their amount of culpability. This sounds very much like Luke 12:48 — a text which is about the part of the great company class who don't know the truth. Verse 24, on the other hand, is about the Waldenses.

A Second Look at Verses 20 - 23

It is good to step aside from all the detail to be certain that the overall view is not missed. There is a wonderful harmony of direction and symbolism in these verses.

- (1) Jezebel tries to confuse the issue so that it is difficult for the Christian to separate spiritual things from worldly things, hence fornication.
- (2) Jesus gives time for her to change her course in this matter. She doesn't.
- (3) Therefore, he now sends troubles on her and on those who participate in this fornication — inability to separate spiritual from worldly.
- (4) **THUS** the special import of (depending on the translation) **KIDNEYS**, **REINS**, or **MINDS**. The kidneys **FUNCTION** as separators. Jesus is seeing if his followers can, indeed, make the separation,, or if they will follow the fornication taught by Jezebel — **AND**, he will thus give according to the success in so doing (according to deeds).

2:24: — Some have never agreed with, nor given in to, Jezebel's teachings on fornication or eating things offered to idols. They actually **LEFT** (physically) the areas most influenced by Jezebel. They were both literally and symbolically in the wilderness. These Waldenses are the ones here spoken of as **THE REST WHO ARE IN THYATIRA WHO DO NOT HOLD THIS TEACHING** and **WHO HAVE NOT KNOWN THE "DEEP THINGS OF SATAN" (AS THEY CALL THEM)** — The apostate church was much into "mysteries" about this time. Since the Waldenses were separate, they were not privy to these things — things which the church (Satan) called "deep things."

I PLACE NO OTHER BURDEN ON YOU: The burden of the Waldenses **MAY** be that they, not being privy to the mysteries, were considered heretics and, therefore, subject to the persecutions of the inquisition. Their burden was, in the sight of the apostates, that they **"DO NOT HOLD THIS TEACHING"** — fornication and eating things offered to idols. Not holding these things was an invitation for persecution. This is enough burden.

2:25: — **WHAT YOU HAVE, HOLD FAST UNTIL I COME:** What they had seems summarized in verse 19. Faithfulness would require holding on to these things. Jesus, of course, was **NOT** coming then. Perhaps this is part of the expression stated to **ALL THE CHURCHES:** " . . . hear what the Spirit says to the Church**ES**." Thus, until the Lord's second advent, **THIS** admonition is upon all. The Thyatira brethren needed only to hold on to it until their individual courses were over.

2:26: — Here, again, is the chorus. **THIS TIME**, however, it is reversed. First now comes the promises to the overcomers, **THEN** the "He who has an ear, let him hear. . ." The new format continues through Laodicea. The reason for this change is not clear. **THERE IS ANOTHER** difference in this Thyatira chorus — exclusive to this period. In all other cases, the promises are made **TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH**. Here, however, they are made **To Him Who Overcomes AND Who Keeps My Deeds Until the End** — an **ECHO** of verse 25. The reason for this addition is not clear. It does **CONTRAST** Jesus' works (v. 26) with Jezebel's works (v. 22). This may be a way of warning a Church that "tolerated" Jezebel (v. 20) that that toleration could cost them their prize.

I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS: What more appropriate promise could be made to this Church? The nations were the active agents in their persecution. Having authority over them would be a just and wonderful reward. During Thyatira, Jezebel had authority over the nations. The overcoming saints were thus being promised that they would **SUPPLANT** the Roman Church.

2:27: — **RULE THEM . . . BROKEN TO PIECES:** The Man of Sin now had rule of iron (12:5). The overcomers would also supplant the Roman Church in this honor.

AS I ALSO RECEIVED FROM MY FATHER: Jesus (Psa. 2:8, 9) was given the rule over the nations to dash them to pieces. He here **SHARES** this inheritance with his overcomers.

2:28 — I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR: Jesus is the Morning Star (22:16). Jesus is, of course, many things. To those dwelling in the dark ages, however, his offering himself to them as the bridegroom by THIS TERM would have special meaning. He is LIGHT in the MIDST OF DARKNESS. He is the PROMISE OF MORNING. The Roman Church CLAIMED to be the morning — the kingdom on earth. But the overcomers are offered the REAL morning when they with their bridegroom could destroy these pretenders to the throne.

2:29 — HE WHO HAS AN EAR — This refrain keeps us soberly checking ourselves regardless of the period in which we live. We can learn from the experiences, warnings, strengths, weaknesses, and overcomings of ALL the Churches.

THE THYATIRA PARABLE

The Fourth Parable of Matthew 13 (vs. 33) — THE LEAVENED MEAL

Here the embryo kingdom experiences contamination. Leaven (Matt. 16:12) is the sinful doctrine which a woman (the Jezebel of Thyatira) HIDES in THREE measures of meal until ALL is full of her sinful doctrine. The three measures of meal has been defined for us in the THIRD SEAL (Rev. 6:6). That Seal explains that barley, the COMMON TRUTHS were not at a premium. Jezebel did not suppress them. In the Thyatira period (4th stage), she continues not to suppress these common truths. If she would have, she could not have claimed to be Christian. But to support her devious ends, she HIDES POISON in the barley, knowing that everyone would eat it. The poison keeps her children in a sufficient stupor that they continue to follow her in her nefarious schemes. Her poisoned basic doctrines guarantee that EVERYTHING is tainted — ALL IS LEAVENED. Thus, when we study the Fourth Seal, we find that the horse is “SICKLY GREEN” — it’s DEAD, beyond revival, incapable of giving living truth to anyone. The horse is green, just as all corpses are, BECAUSE there is NO BLOOD (life) in it. Thus this very little parable summarizes the famine for the hearing of the Word of the Lord during this period of gross darkness.

REGARDING THE FOLLOWERS OF PETER WALDO

Many of Waldo's followers were wealthy merchants, thus being able to enter the presence of the most wealthy and aristocratic patrons and to present to them (when appropriate) the riches of the Gospel. The following quote from Froom's *THE PROPHETIC FAITH OF OUR FATHERS* includes a portion of a poem from John Greenleaf Whittier who sings the praises of these noble disciples.

Later they went forth, concealing their real mission under the guise of merchants, artisans, physicians, or peddlers of rare articles obtainable only at distant marts, such as silk or jewels. Thus they had opportunity to vend without money or price the Word of God, always carrying with them portions of the Scriptures, usually their own transcriptions. The well-known story of distributing the Bible among the higher classes, in the guise of peddlers of jewels, comes to us from the *Passau Inquisitor*.^{*} The coarse woolen garments and naked feet of the peddler were in sharp contrast to the priestly purple and fine linen.

Whittier has beautifully pictured the scene:

O lady fair, these silks of mine are beautiful and rare, —
The richest web of the Indian loom, which beauty's queen might wear;
And my pearls are pure as thy own fair neck, with whose radiant light they vie:
I have brought them with me a weary way, — will my gentle lady buy?

O lady fair, I have yet a gem which a purer lustre flings,
Than the diamond flash of the jewelled crown on the lofty brow of kings;
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose virtue shall not decay,
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee and a blessing on thy way!

^{*} Referencing the "PASSAU INQUISITOR" on the internet will reveal that the term represents the written testimony of a Roman Catholic Inquisitor in the Austrian city of Passau (about A.D.1260) regarding Waldensian heresies.

Church Name and Characteristics

4. Thyatira

Rev.2:18-29

“Sweet perfume of sacrifice”

Mingled praise and blame: the believers were loving, faithful, active and patient in their service. They were especially commended for their patient endurance in their abundant works, “the last more than the first” (a seeming reference to their loyalty and endurance under the severe stresses of the reign of the apostate church). They were further encouraged to “hold fast to what you have until I come.”

But some tolerated Jezebel and her false and immoral teachings, likened to “the depths of Satan” (the false church at the height of its power and corruption). Especially condemned were encouraging fornication (worldly affiliations) and “eating food sacrificed to idols” (inculcating pagan concepts introduced into the church). They were warned that Jezebel (the corrupt mother church), her lovers (kingdoms of this world) and her children (off-shoot churches) all would be condemned unless repentant.

The overcomer was promised power to rule over the nations “with a rod of iron” and to receive “the morning star” (be intimately associated with Christ in glory).

Messenger

Peter Waldo

(d. 1217)

Rich merchant of Lyons, France, who devoted his life to advancing true piety and Christian knowledge, In 1160 he had portions of the Bible translated into the common tongue, then zealously began to preach the newfound truths. In 1173 he began methodically distributing his wealth to the poor.

Noting discrepancies with the Roman church and excesses of its clergy, he openly criticized them at the peril of his life. He rejected all non-biblical elements of worship, such as purgatory, adoration of saints, images, indulgences and prayers for the dead. He opposed the entire sacerdotal system on the grounds that priestly functions were not derived from ordination but from individual faithfulness.

Waldo advocated a simple life-style, unencumbered with church organization or hierarchy. In 1179 he formed a lay order of evangelists composed of propertyless and celibate men, known as “The Poor Men of Lyons.” These traveled in pairs and preached openly from the Scriptures. They were opposed by the local archbishop, censured by the Third Lateran Council (1179), and condemned by Pope Innocent III and the Verona Council (1184).

The Waldensians fled into Italy and the Alps and eventually spread their faith throughout Europe, determined “to obey God rather than men.” They were the first to make widely effective use of the vernacular Bible in preaching, shining out as a beacon on a mountain top during a very dark age. Despite intense persecution, some of Waldo’s followers survived to the time of the Reformation.

Historical Events

1096-1291 AD—Crusades. Forceful efforts to free Holy Land from ruthless Islamic rule. All classes of society conscripted by Pope Urban II to join movement. Successful at first, but could not permanently stem tide of Mohammedanism that swept over Asia Minor.

1122—Concordat of Worms. Worked out compromise of power between papacy and civil rulers.

1157—Early beginning of Waldensian movement (France). Called for return to simple life of the Gospels. Criticized church pomp and wealth and all non-biblical practices; later opposed entire priestly system.

1160—Waldo produced first translation of Bible in modern language (French)

1163—Council of Tours. Decreed that heretics were to be tracked down, imprisoned and their property confiscated.

1179—Third Lateran Council. Pronounced Anathema against Albigensian heretics; censured Waldo for sending out lay preachers.

1184—Council of Verona. Decreed that both heretics and those protecting them were to be condemned, exiled and their property confiscated.

1198-1216—Reign of Innocent III, most powerful of all popes. Claimed title “Vicar of Christ” and right to depose kings. Outranked all civil rulers of his day. Defended church dogmas and forbade reading of Bible in common tongue. Father of Inquisition—church court for detection and punishment of heretics. Ordered mass extermination of Albigenses.

1229—Council of Toulouse. Commissioned papal Inquisition. Sanctioned terrorism against Protestants and required Catholics to vigorously persecute heretics. Gave authority to destroy meeting places, accept anonymous accusations, use torture to secure confessions, confiscate goods and slay with sword or fire. Banned possession of Bible by laymen.

1231—Pope Gregory IX decreed that heretics were to be handed over to the secular power for “the punishment they deserved”—death at the stake; repentant heretics to be imprisoned for life.

1305—Pope Clement V gave Inquisition powers to King Philip IV of France which he used to inflict torture and destruction on the Knights Templar.

—Dante, shocked by what he found in a visit to Rome, termed the Vatican a “sewer of corruption” and assigned popes of his day to lowest parts of hell.

THE FOURTH SEAL

(Revelation 6:7, 8)

6:7 — This is the last in the series of Seals using the four Living Ones and the four horses. This is appropriate since the first four Churches, Seals, and Trumpets show the deterioration of matters spiritual. After Thyatira, things begin remarkably to improve so that (8:13) at the end of the fourth Trumpet it can be said that the establishment will receive WOES during the next three periods of the Church.

THE FOURTH LIVING ONE is the flying eagle (4:7). It represents wisdom in its far-seeing ability and its ability to provide, therefore, for the peculiarities of the future. It should be noted that this symbol (and its companion symbol, “eyes”) are found throughout the contexts of the fourth Church, Seal, and Trumpet. In the Church, (2:18), Jesus stresses his eyes; in the Seal (6:7), we have the eagle; in the Trumpet (8:12-13), we have the eagle again. Since Thyatira is the darkest period of the Church, it would have been essential that the brethren know that wisdom foreknew their problems and made provision for them — that they realize that this permission of evil was not a FLAW in the Divine Plan, but an integral part of it. The wisdom of foresight had prophesied the exultation of Papacy (II Thess. 2.) It is needed that the words of the Psalmist (76:10) be understood by all when we are in distress from outside sources. Divine Wisdom would have every reason to be distressed over the happenings in the fourth Church EXCEPT that it knew the outcome!

6:8 — AN ASHEN HORSE. Translators struggle with this one. Some say SICKLY PALE. Phillips says SICKLY GREEN. The Greek is CHLOROS (as in chlorophyll). Had the translators all realized the symbolism of the horse, they would probably have had no trouble. The color of this horse (doctrine) is the color of a corpse — green. It is this color because the blood is no longer circulating. Blood, of course, represents LIFE. ALL LIFE — all possibility of getting spiritual life from this horse — IS GONE. As in the parable (Matt. 13:33), the sinful doctrine has metastasized to everything. All of the meal (barley) is poisoned. If this horse is anemic, it is pernicious anemia.

HE WHO SAT ON IT: those controlling or using this doctrine, i. e., the Papacy with Satan himself behind the whole matter.

NAME: a name is a characteristic. This rider has the characteristic of DEATH about him — it is part of his nature. This is the first time the rider is given a name — perhaps because it is the first time in history when his control is so easy to characterize in one name.

DEATH: His name is death because he so rides doctrine, so CONTROLS it, as to be sure that it provides absolutely no possibility of life.

AN IMPORTANT CAVEAT: If we remember the Matt. 13:33 parable and the barley meal of the third Seal, we will remember that the meal which was leavened was not representative of ALL TRUTH; the leaven was hidden in the THREE MEASURES of meal (just in the barley). The Waldenses had WHEAT. IT was not leavened. Therefore, we MUST NOT jump to the conclusion that spiritual life was not possible. It was merely not possible if one was attempting to survive on the three measures of barley, the equivalent of the green horse.

HADES WAS FOLLOWING WITH HIM: This is not a co-rider. It is the RESULT of the activity of the horse and rider. Thus, if one attempted to follow this horse, to eat the leavened three measures of barley, one would have the RESULT of spiritual oblivion.

AUTHORITY WAS GIVEN THEM OVER A FOURTH OF THE EARTH: This seems the first time we have to deal with THIS fraction. It has been a THIRD up until now. The reason for the change seems to be that the Lord wishes to stress something different. He doesn't wish simply to show the classes over whom Jezebel had authority, but, rather, the **PROPHETICALLY DELINEATED** scope of her reign. Recall that **FOUR** is a symbol of **UNIVERSALITY**. Therefore, one-fourth is a section of something **UNIVERSAL**. The reference seems clearly to be to the prophecies of **DANIEL**: The four metals of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2) or the four beasts of Daniel's dream (Dan. 7). The Rider and Horse represents the **FOURTH** empire in Dan. 7:7, 8, 19-25. This is the Rome which had evolved into the "Holy Rome." This is the empire which was the most malicious. This is the empire which Satan himself probably directed. Here, then, is the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. This fourth beast, now the fourth Church, has authority over the fourth part of Daniel's dream. It is the beast which was to rule the world during the Times of the Gentiles.

TO KILL: To take away true spiritual life from all it could by ANY means; either by:

SWORD: the MIS-use of the sword of the spirit, the Bible. During the inquisition, it was not rare for the inquisitors to engage men in spiritual discussions **IN ORDER TO TRAP THEM** into revealing their heresies.

FAMINE: (Amos 8:11.) Kill by withholding truth, spiritual sustenance. Thus we have a green horse. Among other things, the church was terribly distraught over the distribution of Waldo's vernacular translation of the Bible.

DEATH: As in 2:23, this symbolism seems to refer to literal death. Papacy was killing the Lord's children with death; the Lord killed papacy's children with death also!

WILD BEASTS OF THE EARTH: The governments which readily cooperated with Papacy in the horrors of the inquisition. Compare 12:12, 13. This fornication — cooperation between church and state — is one of the major indictments which the Lord holds against Babylon.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET (8:12, 13)

8:12 — THE FOURTH ANGEL: Peter Waldo. He sounded quite loudly. The descriptions of the fourth Trumpet show the reactions of his teachings.

THIRD OF SUN, MOON, & STARS: The SUN represents the Gospel Age teachings of the New Testament. The MOON represents the Jewish Law and Prophets of the Old Testament writings. The STARS represent the Apostles; perhaps here, it most specifically represents the Apostolic teachings regarding Church organization. Since ONE THIRD is being singled out to be SMITTEN, that third must be identified. The primary question to ask in determining which third is meant is to ask WHICH THREE ENTITIES ARE USING (or claim to be using) the Bible? This seems fairly easy to answer. Since 1054, two “orthodox” churches are functioning: Rome and the Eastern Orthodox branch. The only other recognizable unit using the Bible is Waldo and his followers. Clearly, then, Waldo’s THIRD is the one which will be smitten. Jezebel could not endure Waldo’s teachings or his constant spreading around of his vernacular translation of the Bible. She would actively smite his influence.

SMITTEN SO THAT A THIRD OF THEM MIGHT BE DARKENED: The REASON for smiting is clear. The apostate church wished the new light offered by Waldo to APPEAR to be darkness.

THE DAY MIGHT NOT SHINE FOR A THIRD OF IT & THE NIGHT IN THE SAME WAY: DAY probably represents truths about the kingdom (I Thess. 5:1-8) NIGHT probably represents truths about the current age — the permission of evil, the nighttime of sin. The Roman church CLAIMED she was the Kingdom of God on earth. By her reckoning, it was day! Waldo knew better; it was the depths of night. So, Waldo’s THIRD of Scripture usage needed to be suppressed. It was mandatory that Waldo’s truths about the kingdom and the current evil be suppressed. If his DAY and NIGHT truths would SHINE, the lies of the Roman church would be evident.

(There seems not to be a need to try to apply a chronological interpretation to a third of the day. First, it doesn’t work. Second, the “third” symbolism seems well used consistently throughout the verse to mean Waldo’s third of the message.)

8:13 — This verse seems not to be an integral part of the fourth Trumpet. It takes its chronological position at the end of the fourth Trumpet, and it serves as a bridge to the final three Trumpets. It is also linked to the fourth part of the Church by the use of the symbol of the eagle.

I LOOKED AND I HEARD; The John Class (the saints) observe a change.

EAGLE: (Literally ONE eagle.) The eagle certainly represents wisdom; but it also represents the Scriptures as the physical embodiment of that wisdom. Waldo had let the eagle out of the cage! By making a vernacular translation of the Bible, he set the eagle free to soar! Now it appears in mid-heaven (available to anyone in “heaven” — not restricted to one part of heaven).

WOE, WOE, WOE. . . : The RESULT of a readable Bible spells trouble (woe) to the establishment (those who dwell on the earth). The RESULT of the beginning of the freeing of Scripture is here stated to be the soon-to-be continual threat to those who would hide truth. The remaining Trumpets (5-7) WILL cause trouble to Jezebel and all who use her ways.

THE FIFTH CHURCH, SEAL, AND TRUMPET

(The Turning Point)

Rev. 3:1-6

Rev. 6:9-11

Rev. 9:1-12

From William Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, number XVII:

Once more the Church is seized with sudden fear,
And at her call is Wicliffe disinhumed:
Yea, his dry bones to ashes are consumed
And flung into the brook that travels near;
Forthwith, that ancient Voice which streams can hear
Thus speaks (that voice which walks upon the wind,
Though seldom heard by busy human kind) —
“As thou those ashes, little Brook! (*) wilt bear
Into the Avon, Avon to the tide
Of Severn, Severn to the narrow seas,
Into main Ocean they, this deed accurst
An emblem yields to friends and enemies
How the bold teacher's Doctrine, sanctified
By truth, shall spread, throughout the world dispersed.”

* The Brook in the 8th line of the sonnet is named “**The Swift.**”

THE SARDIS CHURCH (3:1-6)

An Important Preface to the Sardis Period

This Church is relatively short in duration (150 yrs.). It is a NOT, however, lacking in events. As we enter the period, Europe is just recovering from the great Black Death which has made its population either very pious or very devil-may-care. The Avignon “captivity” of the Papacy is nearing its conclusion, but its results will be harder yet on Papacy. The Great Schism of 1378-1418 will find a minimum of TWO popes vying for power (and sometimes THREE!) The 100 Years War is in progress which makes England hate France with a passion and makes England despise the Pope who has taken up residence in France. For a brief moment, the DOOR IS OPEN for an overt challenge of Papacy. Wycliffe steps through that door, and history blesses his efforts. Of course, it would be too much to expect Papacy to give up without a battle. Once the Italian Pope regains ascendancy, the persecutions are rekindled and reach terrible proportions with many public burnings and with the famous atrocities of the Spanish Inquisition which begins in 1492 as Columbus sets sail for the New World.

This period will also see the beginning of the Renaissance, the invention of printing with moveable type, the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire to the Islamic Turks, the end of Islam in Europe (courtesy of the Spanish Inquisition), the building of the Vatican and St. Peter’s in Rome, and the arrival on the scene of one priest by the name of Luther as the age closes.

As the Thyatira Period had given the world the Bible in French, now, by the hand of Wycliffe, the Sardis Period gives the world the Bible in English.

It is also significant to know that at the time of the beginning of Sardis, Biblical students were in expectation of the Lord’s return. They were aware of Daniel’s 1335 “day” prophecy and had concluded that 1335 years from the crucifixion brought them to 1368. This expectation is important in understanding some of the symbolisms of this Church, Seal, and Trumpet.

Remember too that this period is the first WOE predicted because of the voice of the final three Trumpets. When we read the Revelation 3 account of Sardis, it sounds like the bottom of the barrel of the Church’s experiences. But this is not so. It is easiest to understand the matter if we relate it to the seasonal change into winter. December 21st is the beginning of winter which many dread. Indeed, some of the worst weather is in January and February. BUT, and this is a very important BUT, in actuality, the DAYS ARE GETTING LONGER from December 21st onward. Thus, while the worst is yet to come weather-wise, the amount of daylight is ACTUALLY INCREASING. So it is with Sardis. It is, in one sense, the dark, dark, night of the Dark Ages; but it is at the same moment the dawning of the Reformation. Thus is Wycliffe called in history, “THE MORNING STAR OF THE REFORMATION.” The light is dramatically increasing; the groundwork for Philadelphia is being strongly prepared. Sardis is THE TURNING POINT.

3:1 — THE ANGEL: This angel is John Wycliffe, an extraordinarily talented man of great zeal and learning. He was a student at Oxford during the great plague years. One half of England died. Two-thirds of the Oxford students died: but the Lord had important reasons to spare this man. When he became a professor, he wielded great influence. He first became of note when he issued a challenge against “mendicant friars” (begging friars) — ecclesiastics who made their living (often wealth) by

begging from the populace. Wycliffe organized the “poor priests” whom he sent out to remote villages to show the people the proper attitude of ecclesiastics. Wycliffe became so popular in his simple teaching of the people that it was said at one time that “every other man in England” was a follower. This did not last once Papacy became able again to enforce its powers. But the Lord had so arranged history that Wycliffe was able to get away with much never before thought possible while England was fighting France, the seat of the Pope at that time. Wycliffe’s followers were called Lollards — probably because of their soft singing, the root of the word being akin to lullaby. Papists, of course, equated the name with “lollia” — the word meaning TARES! Wycliffe preached the Bible as the ONLY authority for truth. He wrote an immense number of tracts and other works, much of which was in support of the ransom and against transubstantiation. While the Pope couldn’t successfully touch Wycliffe while he was alive, he did have Wycliffe exhumed, burned, and cast into the river Swift. As Wordsworth’s Sonnet (which precedes this article) attests, this was in reality only a symbol of Papacy’s mistake. Like his ashes, which floated over the world, Wycliffe’s teachings were scattered all over Europe and plagued the Papacy from then on.

SARDIS: Brethren seem to agree somewhat universally that this word means **THAT WHICH REMAINS**. However, no one offers the source of this etymology. It **WOULD** be good to be able to confirm it. The thought that the saints who enter this period are a remnant seems substantiated by Dan. 7:25. It was clearly prophesied that Papacy would **WEAR OUT** the saints, the implications strongly being that only a few would survive the ordeal. As we arrive at the period just prior to the great Reformation, it is only natural to expect that only a weak remnant is carrying on.

HE WHO HAS THE 7 SPIRITS . . . AND 7 STARS: Again, the **WAY** in which Jesus introduces himself has a particular meaning for those who lived at the period. Since many expected the Lord’s return in the late 1300’s, it is only appropriate that Jesus should remind them that there must be seven stages of the church — **SEVEN** times when the **SPIRIT** says “hear.” It is also appropriate that they be comforted by knowing that the Lord is **STILL SUPPLYING** the promised stars so that all who hear their teachings can be overcomers regardless of the prevailing conditions of the age.

I KNOW YOUR DEEDS: This is not a new refrain. It is common to the various Churches. It is a comfort because it shows watchcare and concern. It is a discomfort because it stings when those deeds are less than they ought to be. We will see in verse 2 that the Sardis deeds are **INCOMPLETE**. This sounds very much as though the Great Multitude population might be high during this age. Verse 4 will strengthen this conclusion as it implies that most have soiled their garments.

YOU HAVE A NAME THAT YOU ARE ALIVE: Name usually symbolizes character. It can also symbolize reputation — that which comes out of character, or, at least, out of profession. As Sardis opens, it has a **GREAT REPUTATION** for being alive! It is **AN OPEN MOVEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO PAPAL DOCTRINE**. If one-half of all Englishmen were followers of Wycliffe, they made a **GREAT REPUTATION** for being alive.

BUT YOU ARE DEAD: How unfortunate, however, that when the crunch came, when the persecutions resumed, all of these followers of Wycliffe suddenly disappeared! They were alive in name only. They soiled their garments quickly when asked to stand up for what they believed. It is small wonder, then, that verse 2 says they have **NOT COMPLETED** their deeds. They **BEGAN** with vigor. They wilted on the vine.

3:2 — WAKE UP: The Lord requests their conversion. Sardis is, in many respects, much like Laodicea. It begins with a major infusion of light; then it turns lukewarm; the follow-through is not there.

STRENGTHEN THE THINGS THAT REMAIN: Clearly, some things from Wycliffe's movement remained. Actually, some things from Waldo's movement remained. But these things needed support. Their expectations regarding the Lord's return were not realized. The great liberties which Wycliffe's preaching awakened were being squashed. Those who had begun honest consecrations were not finishing their commitments. To help correct this was the measure of whether or not someone was worthy of walking in white (verse 4) with the Lord.

WHICH WERE ABOUT TO DIE: If any statement shows how much support of our brethren is a necessity, it is this statement. Surely we all know that the Lord, Himself, supports us; yet, it is here clearly shown that he uses as the **HAND OF SUPPORT** the encouragement of those walking the same narrow way.

FOR I HAVE NOT FOUND YOUR DEEDS COMPLETE IN THE SIGHT OF MY GOD: The word "for" links this phrase to the previous phrase. Is it not saying that they were about to die because their own consecrations, their own commitments to serving the Lord, were **NOT COMPLETE**; they were faltering. The Lollards began well, but they lost steam. **BECAUSE** of this loss of steam, the spiritual lives of their companions were at stake.

3:3 — REMEMBER THEREFORE HOW YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND HEARD: This is an imperative to all the Churches. The **ONLY** way to strengthen others, the **ONLY** way to **COMPLETE** our consecration commitments is to **KEEP IN MIND** both how we received and how we heard. We received from the Word of the Lord, the Holy Bible — the only source of spiritual food. We heard because the spirit gave us an ear to be receptive to the angel who delivered the timely intelligence from those Scriptures. Wycliffe **STRESSED** the Bible as the only source of truth. None from his period would ever complete his consecration without retaining that source; **THUS**:

AND KEEP IT AND REPENT: They must **HOLD ON** to the Scriptural authority and **CHANGE** their courses back to the zeal they felt in the days of their angel. Those who recanted and cooperated with Jezebel forgot the stinging argument of Wycliffe's words: "How can a priest, who is but a man, make his Maker?" But **FORGETTING** how they had learned and heard was made most convenient by the common death punishment of the Inquisition and by Henry V's new law for forfeiture of estates of any cooperating with the Lollards. Anyone who remained a Lollard became an underground Church. But, also, there are histories of many who, having gone back under Papal influence, **DID REPENT** of having done so. They had recanted their Lollardism under pressure but went on to ignore their recanting and to continue the work until burned at the stake.

IF NOT . . . I WILL COME . . . UPON YOU: Obviously, the Lord was not trying to say that his Second Advent would be early! "Come" is used several times idiomatically to mean come against — i.e., punish. This is one of those instances. The same threat was made to Ephesus (2:5) and resulted in a similar punishment. Neither Ephesus nor Sardis apparently heeded the warning. Both of them suffered the onslaught of persecution — something which very effectively brings a Church back to its senses. Ephesus ended with severe persecution leading to the "removal of its candlestick" — i.e., Ephesus **ENDED** as the persecutions of Smyrna began. In Sardis, likewise, the period of relative favor for truth promulgation came to a halt as the Inquisition kicked back into full swing once the Great Schism ended. The brethren were, no doubt, shocked at the unfortunate change of circumstances. But, as Jesus warned, it came thief-like — at a time not expected. Who knows how history would have read had the majority **AWAKENED** and strengthened that which remained (verse 2) and supported each other in faithfulness? Jesus' words in Luke 12:47 have an ominous echo here. Those who **KNOW MUCH** and still do not obey suffer much. Under Wycliffe's tutelage, this Church **DID** know much; but they slept.

3:4 — BUT YOU DO HAVE A FEW NAMES IN SARDIS WHO HAVE NOT SOILED THEIR GARMENTS: The verse strongly suggests the Great Multitude to be the majority of the saints of the period. — only a FEW singled out because of their unsoiled garments. The fact that the explanation does NOT say a few PEOPLE, but, rather, a few NAMES, suggests that the Lord may be referring to some of the groups (names = reputations) that were persistent in following and serving truth. It was likely that the white-robed wearers were among these groups. The Lollards were certainly one of these groups. The Waldenses were still active. The Hussites and Moravians were upholding some of Wycliffe's teachings in Eastern Europe. But, clearly and sadly, most of this period were wearing the soiled garments of the Great Multitude (7:14).

THEY WILL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE FOR THEY ARE WORTHY: The Lord knew (and appreciated FROM EXPERIENCE) the difficulties and horrors of persecution. He KNEW their worthiness first hand. Thus he promises that they will retain their pure white justification as they walk with him through these troubles. Since white robes are mentioned TWICE in this Church and once in its Seal, it seems the Lord may be focusing on Wycliffe's anti-mass teaching — against justification by the clergy's sacraments. Since the corresponding parable of Matt. 13:44 also seems to focus on the ransom, it seems clear that this was Wycliffe's single most important contribution as the fifth angel.

This might be the place to interject a note on what may seem a subtle difference between the messages of Wycliffe and Luther. Both deal with the concept of ransom and justification, but Wycliffe's message seems more to focus on the ransom as fact. Luther seems more to focus on the faith application of the ransom PERSONALLY as something that sets you free as an INDIVIDUAL CONSECRATED CHRISTIAN. Even the two parables of Matt. 13 which correspond to these two Churches seem so very similar in their intent. Yet, subtle differences exist. It seems that Wycliffe drew attention to the truth of the ransom; Luther drew attention to the way to apply this truth in ones personal consecration.

3:5 — HE WHO OVERCOMES SHALL THUS BE CLOTHED IN WHITE GARMENTS: This THUS is important. It says that overcoming was dependent upon not giving in to Jezebel. It was dependent upon waking up and upon remembering HOW they received and heard. This may be one of the strongest statements in the seven Church descriptions of the need for HEARING THE ANGEL in order to make ones calling and election sure. THUS walking in white in the flesh, they are promised to be clothed in white beyond the veil — permanent justification as their reward. This promise may have had additional meaning for the brethren of the time. Many burnings were preceded by hideously dressing the victims to make them look foolish before the spectators. Thus the promise of pure clothing would say, Worry not how they dress you. They mocked me also before my crucifixion by dressing me up to scorn me. But I will dress you in white, and you shall be satisfied.

Huss was apparently subjected to this kind of humiliation before his burning. Strangely, the Lord seems to have used him to utter a prophecy as a result. Huss means GOOSE. Just before dying he said, "You are now going to burn a goose, but in a century you will have a swan which you can neither roast nor boil." Luther's family coat of arms had a swan on it!

I WILL NOT ERASE HIS NAME FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE: Again the promise is appropriate for the experiences of the brethren of the time. The faithful were having their names REMOVED from the Roman Church roles (excommunication) and were having their LIVES removed by burnings. The promise comforts that they are in the only book that counts; their eternal lives were secure.

I WILL CONFESS HIS NAME BEFORE MY FATHER & BEFORE HIS ANGELS: Several points in this phrase are worthy of note. It doesn't say confess him, but rather, confess his name. Certainly the individual will be confessed, but the use of the word NAME here implies that perhaps it is the CHARACTER, the developed new creature, which is confessed. Each saint will be a biography —

a story to be told from which others will benefit. Another point of note is the meaning that this promise would have for the Sardis saints. Their names during their natural lives were anathema. But here Jesus tells them that, on the contrary with him, their names are blessed and worthy of being confessed before the Father and the angels (possibly the other members of the true Church). Compare Luke 9:26.

3:6 — Again the chorus continues as with each other Church: ALL PERIODS OF THE CHURCH can learn from the experiences of other periods. We can certainly see from the above how much we in Laodicea can profit from the message to Sardis.

THE SARDIS PARABLE

The Fifth Parable of Matthew 13 (vs. 44)

THE TREASURE IN THE FIELD

The points to consider in this parable are the treasure (the saints), the word “hidden” (the fact that they are not only inconspicuous, but, in the case of Sardis, RARE), the field (the world of mankind), the man (Jesus), the selling and buying (the ransom).

A point of interest: In Rev. 8:13 it is warned that those on EARTH will begin to experience a WOE due to this fourth Trumpet’s sounding. In Matt. 13, whatever the meaning might be, Jesus is in a boat (13:2) during the first four parables. But for the fifth parable He was apparently now on shore, on EARTH (13:36).

The strong implication of the Sardis message is that only a FEW (3:4) had not defiled their garments. This seems implied in the parable with the word “hidden.” Those few were hidden among the multitudes of the apostasy and among those with defiled garments. Sardis means remnant or small amount. While the parable has many implications beyond the Sardis Church, it clearly pictures events in Sardis. The man (Jesus) is aware of the small number whom he considers worthy to walk with him in white —his treasure. He is also aware of the vast numbers of tares among whom the treasure is hidden. These tares constitute, in part, the field (the world). Yet, he is willing to give the ransom NOT ONLY for the treasure which he has hidden away in his heart, but for the WHOLE FIELD. Thus this ransom parable is the very essence of Wycliffe’s message — focus on the ransom and against transubstantiation. Until the whole world is ready to be corrected and restored, he hides his treasure under the WHITE ROBE — a symbol mentioned three times in the Church and Seal descriptions of Sardis.

Church Name & Characteristics

5. Sardis

(Rev. 3: 1-6)

Messenger John Wycliffe (1320-1384)

Historical Events

“Remnant, that which remains”. Strongly condemned: only a few believers were worthy and deserving, with undefiled garments. The majority had fallen asleep spiritually, or died: their works were not found fulfilled before God.

They were urged to arouse themselves, to be watchful, repentant and to strengthen “the things which remain, that are ready to die.” Otherwise the Lord would come upon them “as a thief” (by surprise). They were counseled to recall what they had learned, receive the lessons onto obedient hearts, and to “hold fast.”

The overcomer was promised to be clothed in white raiment (symbol of purity and righteousness) and to walk with Jesus (as an intimate companion). His name would be confessed (commended) before the Father and the angels, and not be blotted out of the book of life (the record of the elect whose names are written in heaven).

Brilliant English scholar, Oxford professor and statesman. In 1366 his early concerns with the practical abuses of papacy, such as its unjust taxation policies and interference in secular affairs, brought him into public view. Later, in discovering the Bible to be the sole guide for Christian faith, he was brought into open conflict with papacy along a broad front.

By 1378 he evolved a system of doctrine that undermined the whole structure of the church. In pamphlets and lectures he attacked historical papal claims in both religious and secular spheres. He opposed church hierarchy, the system of priesthood, indulgences, confession, penance, veneration of images and transubstantiation. His teachings raised the wrath of the clergy but found popular support across all classes. He became one of the greatest and boldest of the reformers, highly admired at home and abroad. Wycliffe was exemplary in his purity of life, his zeal for biblical truth and his courage in defending it. His continual reference to the Scriptures earned him the honorary title of “the evangelical doctor.” His translation of the complete Bible into English is of special note, as it was the only such version available for 150 years. As an early herald of Reformation, he was widely recognized for his impact on medieval society, but too far ahead of his time to break the power of Rome. His followers (Lollards) were cruelly and methodically persecuted almost to extinction, but miraculously he escaped a martyr’s death. Later (in 1428) his bones were exhumed and burned by decree of the Council of Constance.

1366 AD- Wycliffe publicly acclaimed for condemning abuses of papacy and its interference in secular affairs of state.

1377-Wycliffe charged with heresy by Pope Gregory XI after years of relentless attacks upon the entire Roman system by tracts and lectures at Oxford. He was later admiringly called “the morning star of the Reformation.”

1378-Start of “Great Schism” that divided Catholic Church for 39 years. Two rival popes, Urban VI and Clement VII, were elected and each claimed supreme authority.

1388-Wycliffe’s translation of Bible finished by John Purcey; first complete Bible in English.

1401-England passed its first law against heresy, principally against Lollardy.

1408-John Huss (Bohemia). Openly preached against indulgences and priestly abuses. Denounced by church, stripped of authority to preach, but defended by populace.

1409-Pope Alexander V ordered destruction of all Wycliffe’s writings. Archbishop of Bohemia publicly burned 200 of them.

1415-Council of Constance. Condemned Wycliffe (more than 30 years after his death). Consigned John Huss to be burned at the stake.

1450-Pope Nicholas V authorized the Portuguese to “attack, subject, and reduce to perpetual slavery the Saracens, pagans, and other enemies of Christ”.

1453-Fall of Constantinople to Turks. Ended Eastern Roman Empire and left Roman pope without any serious rival. Europe’s second threat of Moslem control not settled until the Battle of Vienna in 1683.

1456-The Bible published at Mainz by John Gutenberg. One of earliest books printed in Europe.

1476-Pope Sixtus IV gave Inquisition powers to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Tomas de Torquemada, a Dominican monk, carried on the work with zeal and cruelty; named Grand Inquisitor by Pope Innocent VIII in 1487.

1491-Savanarola, friar and statesman of Florence, criticized corruption of clergy. In 1497 he attacked crimes of Pope Alexander VI and spurned offer of cardinal’s hat. In 1498 he was burned at the stake.

From C.F. Redeker, THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION

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THE FIFTH SEAL

(6:9-11)

6:9 — I SAW: This picture, as we shall see, takes place at the END of Sardis. The John class can look back and see the results of the age. They can see that many faithful saints have finished their courses and can, figuratively, be heard from the grave asking if the persecutions will ever end. What they ARE promised (and WERE promised before their deaths) is that they will receive the eternal justification of the white robe, but that retribution against their persecutors must wait until all seven stages of the Church have happened. That is the gist of this Seal. Thus its symbols are as follows:

UNDERNEATH THE ALTAR: When a sacrifice is ON the altar, it is not yet consumed. When it IS consumed, it has turned to ashes and fallen through the altar's grating and is, consequently UNDER the altar — the symbol for faithfully completed sacrifice.

THE SOULS: In Revelation, "souls" is a consistent symbol for saints who are YET ASLEEP, but who have been faithful, have gained the ASSURANCE of their rewards, but who must AWAIT the coming of the first resurrection (1878).

WHO HAD BEEN SLAIN: figurative slaying = being ostracized, persecuted, cut off from the "accepted" fellowship, excommunicated, or considered DEAD as far as the "orthodox" church was concerned.

BECAUSE OF THE WORD OF GOD: In each case, the Biblical message was the standard which divided the true from the apostate.

BECAUSE OF THE TESTIMONY WHICH THEY HAD MAINTAINED: This phrase indicates consistency in the consecrated faithful. They MAINTAINED their testimony. In the message to Sardis (3:2) we see that one of the problems with many of the saints who fell short was that their "deeds (were not) completed in the sight of My God." This is another way of saying, "Be faithful unto death" — apparently not a strong characteristic of many saints in Sardis.

6:10 — CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE: This is a DIRECT parallel to Hebrews 11:4 where Abel yet speaks from the dead. The parallel is strengthened when we consider that Abel's death was due to a difference in sacrifice with his brother. The apostate church slays the true BECAUSE of a difference in sacrifice. The dead ones "call out" from the grave asking if this crime will ever find retribution. This cry is said to be a LOUD VOICE. Again (as we shall see) since this picture takes place at the end of Sardis, it takes place at a time when the accumulated voices of Waldo and Wycliffe have awakened the minds and longings of all who have been suffering under Papal domination. As soon as Luther sounds his trumpet, the repressed accumulations of many years of frustrations will be heard. Because this very verse most likely refers to the year 1518, the sounding of the Loud Voice seems a most apt illustration of events. 1518 is the year in which Luther nails his objections to the church door.

HOW LONG, O LORD, HOLY AND TRUE: First let it be noticed that there is NO LOSS of faith. By addressing the "holy and true," these voices are stipulating that they TRUST. It is much like when Jesus asked of the Father but added, not My will but Thine. The HOW LONG part of this question is significant. This period had recognized the day-for-a-year concept and felt confident that they were at the end of the age. The 1335 days of Daniel added to the date of the crucifixion (33) arrives at the year 1368 — just when Sardis was beginning. Many felt the time for the return had come. The way Jesus introduces himself to Sardis (3:1) was, no doubt, in part to counteract this error of prophetic interpretation. When he said he held the SEVEN STARS and SEVEN SPIRITS, he was clearly reminding them that TWO MORE periods of the Church must intervene before it is over. So, HOW LONG is, indeed, answered in the message of Sardis — until the seventh period of the Church. The voices from the altar were much like the Elijah complex, but Jesus answers, "I have yet two stages of the Church who will not bow to Jezebel."

The entire section of Revelation 6:9-11 requires some deductive reasoning. On the surface these verses might well seem to imply that those under the altar must rest UNTIL the completion of the suffering of all the members of the Church. But this conclusion is absurd to all who have studied prophecy and who realize that the beginnings of judgement and pay-back to Babylon DO NOT AWAIT the completion of the Church. But how can we explain away what seems such a plain statement as these verses present?

1. The question asked by these faithful saints is clearly a rhetorical question for the sake of prophecy. When they are asleep, they ask no questions. But the content of the question is important: When will the Lord judge and avenge their lives on “those who dwell on the earth?”
2. If, as according to the context, they must rest (either in the grave, or, later, in a glorified state) until all the Church has completed its sufferings, then, we must conclude that the judgment of Babylon has not yet begun – an untenable position when considering the bulk of prophetic testimony.
3. Three texts ANSWER the question which these “souls” have asked:
 1. Rev. 19:11-15 shows Jesus JUDGING and MAKING WAR on Babylon; his saints (armies on both sides and robed in white) are doing this WITH HIM. This prophecy dates from the 1870’s.
 2. Rev. 14:13 (which also dates from the 1870’s as shown by backing up to verse 8) shows that those who die are WORKING, not resting in the grave; and those who preceded them in death have, on the authority of I Thess. 4:15, also preceded them in being raised.
 3. Rev. 3:10 shows that the trial of “those who dwell on the earth” occurs DURING, not after the Laodicean period of the Church.
 4. Because of this, 6:9-11 cannot possibly mean what it says on the surface.
 5. What 6:9-11 DOES mean can be deduced from a few reasonings:

Note that two things were “said to them”. Again, nothing can be said to dead “souls”. But before their death they were aware that there were SEVEN stages of the Church, seven Seals, and seven Trumpets. Thus, they KNEW that they must “rest awhile” before the answer to their question would come upon “those who dwell upon the earth.” Thus they KNEW that there was a FULFILMENT time for the completion of the Church – NOT a date, but a TIME when the Church would be being completed. Thus this verse is saying TWO things to them: (a) I will avenge you when the fulfillment time for the completion of your body (your brethren) has come, i.e., in Laodicea; and, just as Paul told you (in I Thess. 4-15), you must rest in the grave until the time comes for those who sleep to precede those who are alive and remain. You may not now be able to calculate it, but it is a little season, 360 years. Since the date of 1878 is not yet known to you, it will help others later to know that 1878 minus 360 is 1518 and that, therefore, you who are asking are pictured at the very close of the FIFTH SEAL, just before the sixth Church begins in 1521. Therefore, all you who have been faithful up through the Fifth Church, rest until I awaken you while I am in the process of judging your detractors. You will participate in this as will all yet left in the flesh and all who, one by one, join you in glory.

WILT THOU REFRAIN FROM JUDGING AND AVENGING OUR BLOOD ON THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH?: Hebrews 12:24 again makes reference to Abel (Cf. 11:4 of Heb.). Avenging the blood is promised and is important; but the greater importance is the “blood of sprinkling” — the work of the sin offering. Jesus finds it more important to complete the sin offering than to punish Jezebel. So, the bloods of Abel and of those under the altar must WAIT until the blood of the sin offering is complete. The avenging will be against those who dwell on the earth (See Appendix B article on this phrase). This phrase represents those who hold onto this order because it is where their roots are. The Church does not come from this class. Those who persecute the Church, however, come from this class — the civil power directed by Jezebel was the persecutor. Against these will the Avenger act. Many brethren were turned into the Inquisition by “brethren” who recanted and betrayed the saints. It was Cain’s slaying Abel (*brother slaying brother*) all over again.

6:11 —GIVEN TO EACH A WHITE ROBE: This is a repeated (and thus important) symbol in Sardis. (See notes on 3:4, 5). These white robes were promised to the overcomers of Sardis and are here shown on these dead “souls” in fulfillment of this promise. These are the victors, the “souls” of 20:4 who have a throne to sit upon even before they “come to life.” THEY WERE TOLD: The brethren of Sardis were told this in a subtle way. When Jesus introduced Himself as the One with the SEVEN stars and spirits, the saints were thus told that two stages of the Church remained. When their expectations regarding the ending of the 1335 days failed, they were thus told (through failure) that their chronology was incorrect.

THAT THEY SHOULD REST FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER: The Greek possibly reads, “It was said to them in order that they should rest . . .” This puts a slightly different meaning to the verse. It suggests that the information was given SO THAT they could rest (mentally). But the reading in most translations seems perfectly adequate.

This rest is for a little while — A MICROCHRONOS.* Some manuscripts omit “little,” but its validity does not seem to be questioned seriously. Were the term CHRONOS used, interpretation would be easier. To the best of our knowledge, the MICRO (little) part of the word has not been explained. (Perhaps the Lord is simply indicating that, because of lack of consciousness of those dead, the time will SEEM “little” — or short.) In symbolic time a CHRONOS is 360 years. Perhaps MICRO is to suggest that this IS NOT a chronological word. But IT FITS SO WELL that the temptation to make it chronological is irresistible. Reasoning on it, we come to the following conclusions:

How long must those “souls” under the altar rest (stay under the altar?) The answer to most Bible Students is until 1878 — the beginning of the first resurrection. That seems clear enough. Therefore, if we subtract ONE CHRONOS (360 years) from 1878, we should arrive at the date when this seal was opened: 1518 would be the year — about as late in Sardis as we can get. Philadelphia probably begins with Luther’s excommunication at the Diet of Worms (1521). 1518 is, of course, very significant. At its beginning (Hebrew time — the preceding autumn), Luther nailed his famous objections on the church door (Oct. 31, 1517). How appropriate is this date for this statement from the grave! The WORST persecutions were ending; more truths were being propagated; there seems to be an opportunity to get back at Jezebel. BUT, says the Lord, HOLD ON; it’s NOT yet over. I will not cast off Babylon until another 360 years have gone by. DON’T settle into one of the new Protestant denominations as they arise. If you COMFORTABLY do so, it will be a sign to you that something is WRONG. The saints must continue TO BE KILLED EVEN AS their predecessors.

UNTIL THEIR FELLOW SERVANTS AND THEIR BRETHERN WHO WERE TO BE KILLED EVEN AS THEY HAD BEEN, SHOULD BE COMPLETED ALSO: This phrase COULD cause problems for the chronological explanation above. But it need not do so. This COULD imply that the 1878 date is incorrect because BY THAT TIME all of the sacrificing WOULD NOT BE COMPLETED. The thought, however, seems to be that at that date the PERIOD of JUDGING AND AVENGING would begin AND would NOT END until BOTH fellow servants AND brethren (Church and Great Company?) were completed.

* See Facing Page 20.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET

(9:1-12)

In short, the Fifth Trumpet details how the truths brought forth by Wycliffe and his followers successfully caused commotion in the world of Papal teachings. The result was that many WANTED to be free from Papal domination but could not accomplish that freedom yet. It had to wait for the days of Luther.

9:1 — ANGEL: The fifth angel was Wycliffe. A most distinguished man of religious letters, he wrote over 200 hundred works in addition to his part in the translation of the Bible into English. (Part of the translation work he committed to others). Most of his writings were either directly or indirectly in defense of the ransom. It is easy to see why 8:13 warned that this BLAST OF THE TRUMPET would cause WOE to those who dwelt on the earth — those who tried to retain the status quo.

STAR FROM HEAVEN WHICH HAD FALLEN TO THE EARTH: While Wycliffe, for a while, was bright in the religious heavens, the controllers of those heavens (Papacy) were angered with his actions and words. Wycliffe, who had a doctorate in theology, was soon removed from his university teaching post; two failed attempts were made to convict him as an heretic. Because of his immense appeal among the people and his temporary favor with the crown, however, he retained much influence. Again, STAR is used to represent one of the seven Church messengers. It is fallen to earth because the Papal heavens cast him out; but the earth, the people, received him. Compare 8:10 where very much the same symbolism is used for Arius.

KEY OF PIT GIVEN TO HIM: The pit here symbolizes the condition of powerlessness. The same word is used elsewhere, but frequently translated differently. In Rom. 10:7 it is the condition from which Jesus was resurrected. In Luke 8:31 it is the powerless condition of demons when they cannot possess a material body. In Revelation it is used for the same symbolism of powerlessness in 11:7, and 17:8. Likewise, it is the powerless condition of Satan during the Millennium in 20:3. Wycliffe was given ACCESS to this condition in order to release something from it — something which had been for a long time rendered quite powerless: DISPENSATIONAL TRUTHS.

9:2 — OPENED THE PIT: Wycliffe released long-lost truths both by his writing and his preaching; additionally, by making the Bible available in English, he gave access to many others to find what had been captive in the pit.

SMOKE WENT UP OUT OF THE PIT: Smoke was NOT what had been captive; but, by opening the pit and giving access to its contents, the RESULT is that smoke comes out. Smoke symbolizes both obscurity and evidence of judgment (fire) having occurred. In the following context, it seems to have both meanings. Smoke (obscurity) comes out of the pit BECAUSE the emerging truths cause confusion about the current doctrines of Papacy. But, additionally, this smoke is LIKE something:

LIKE THE SMOKE OF A GREAT FURNACE: The PURPOSE of furnaces was REFINING, i.e., testing and purifying metals. Therefore, this smoke (obscurity and confusion) which comes out of the pit is LINKED to what is happening: Something (Papal doctrine and practice) is, by the emerging truths, being TRIED to ASCERTAIN ITS PURITY — which, of course, it doesn't have! Truth is measuring Papal lies. The result is confusion and obscurity.

SUN AND AIR DARKENED BY SMOKE: Recall that the first woe (8:13) is ACTUALLY a plague. Then use this information to compare Exod. 10:23. The Egyptians (Papacy) were in darkness; the Israelites

were in light. This corresponds to Rev. 9:4: ONLY those without the seal are hurt by these affairs. A quote from Ludlow Loomis is so appropriate here: “How darkness increases when those in error come in contact with the truth!” THIS explains WHICH sun and which air were darkened by the smoke of the pit: the Gospel (sun) of the apostates and the Spiritual things (air) of the apostates are darkened by the resulting questions brought forth through the spread of long-lost truths. This opens the way for:

9:3—LOCUST UPON THE EARTH: Here again we can learn through a comparison with the Egyptian plagues. See Exod. 10:12-15. We see what locusts DO. They eat leaves (professions). But, remember, THESE locusts are RESTRICTED in 9:4. They CANNOT eat ALL leaves — they can devour ONLY those on the people WITHOUT the seal. These locusts are said to have come OUT OF THE SMOKE. The wonderful confusion, which Wycliffe was allowed to create, OPENED THE DOOR for an army of his followers to go out preaching the newly discovered truths. The locusts, then, seem to symbolize the followers of Wycliffe — the Lollards, etc. OUT OF THE SMOKE he created comes an irresistible crowd of preachers which will be able to STING (scorpion-like) those without the seal. They are said to come forth “into the earth” (NAS Margin). That is, they come invading the world of established religion.

POWER WAS GIVEN THEM, AS THE SCORPIONS OF THE EARTH HAVE POWER: The scorpions of the earth (see Luke 10:19) are the power of the Adversary. What kind of power does the Adversary have? He has power to HURT, but not to DESTROY (Job 2:6). THIS is precisely the power given to the followers of Wycliffe. They could sting relentlessly, but they could not cause a reformation — a breaking away of the leaders and masses from Papacy. This would have to wait until the sounding of the sixth trumpet. (Compare 9:18) THEN doctrines WOULD kill. This limitation is clearly stated in verse 5.

9:4 —The saints (who were, in fact, the locusts!) are restricted from aiming their stings at any save the apostates. THEY WERE TOLD THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HURT THE GRASS OF THE EARTH (the common man whose faith was likely real but limited; thus many of England’s people were supporters of Wycliffe.) NOR ANY GREEN THING — this phrase is spurious though its idea is correct: the green, the alive or justified, were exempt. NOR ANY TREE: the stalwarts of faith, people with spiritual vitality. This is an interesting phrase. The trees were of necessity among those who accepted the truths. The warning, therefore, seems akin to the warning not to aim the truth at each other. BUT ONLY ON THE MEN WHO DO NOT HAVE THE SEAL OF GOD ON THEIR FOREHEADS: i.e., aim it at the apostates. These “men” (Christians) are professing to be Christians, but they are of the synagogue of Satan. To these the sun (v. 2) and the air (v. 2) — things of the gospel or of spiritual discernment — were obscured. These men are impostors — “MEN OF SIN.”

9:5 —NOT PERMITTED TO KILL THEM, BUT TO TORMENT THEM FOR FIVE MONTHS: Here the length of the Sardis Church is stated to be 150 years in length (30 x 5). During this time, no KILLING (no conversion to a Protestant organization) was to be permitted. 9:18 reserves this for the sixth Trumpet. But tormenting WAS permitted — actually encouraged.

TORMENT LIKE A SCORPION WHEN IT STRIKES A MAN: Satan (Luke 10:19) is here getting some of his own medicine. 1 Kings 12:14 suggests that the sting of the scorpion is much in excess of the sting of the whip. This insect occasions much suffering. One source suggests that a scorpion emits its poison through TWO openings (as does a snake). Might this suggest that the real STING of these truths was because the Old and New Testaments backed up the points under discussion? In short, their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man in that once someone is stung, he is careful to avoid the same insect and the region in which it dwells. These European leaders and people with influence knew that Papacy was becoming an albatross around their necks. Their Renaissance was blossoming; people were reasoning; they would LOVE to be free. Hence:

9:6 —IN THOSE DAYS MEN WILL SEEK DEATH: “Men” (nominal Christians) will seek death (separation from Papacy) — a repudiation of their lives as Roman Catholics. They were tired of serving an unreasonable and unyielding Papacy.

AND WILL NOT FIND IT: The mechanism for the Reformation was not yet in place. The scorpion-like locusts could not set them free to Protest the Papacy. They were still her captives. They could not KILL their relationship to the Pope.

AND THEY WILL LONG TO DIE, AND DEATH FLEES FROM THEM: This phrase only accentuates the agony of the beginning of the verse. The Renaissance had men SO WANTING to get away from the old way of doing things. But the Papal grasp could not yet be loosened. The verbal challenges to Papal authority gave them hope, but not strength to break away.

The remaining part of the narrative of this trumpet is a re-examination of the locusts. Verses 1 through 6 gave us the results of Wycliffe’s sounding. These final verses tell us in more detail about the saints of the day and how they functioned. This is important in that it tells saints under siege how they can continue and be sustained in their witness efforts.

9:7 —THE APPEARANCES OF THE LOCUSTS: This is much like 9:17. We are seeing how WE view the saints, the doctrines, and the works of the Sardis period.

LIKE HORSES PREPARED FOR BATTLE: Wycliffe’s followers, unlike those of Waldo, were out for a fight. They were not wanting to hide themselves and their doctrines in the mountains or sewn into their garments. These locusts went out to devour! They were CHALLENGING the Papacy!

ON THEIR HEADS CROWNS LIKE GOLD: As the 24 Elders (4:4) have Divine Authority, so too the ideas (heads) which support these doctrines (horses) BECAUSE Wycliffe and his followers supported everything by SCRIPTURE.

FACES LIKE FACES OF MEN: Since God’s LOVE is represented thus (4:7), so are Wycliffe’s teachings. They represented LOVE over the fear and fantasies propagated by Papacy. Wycliffe began his career by sending out the “poor priests” to teach the people by word of mouth and action the LOVE of God, rather than the greed and superstition being brought to them by the mendicant friars.

9:8 —HAIR LIKE THE HAIR OF WOMEN: Hair symbolizes spiritual strength (as with Samson). Women represent the Church — the true Church here; the false system was the MAN OF SIN who had NO SPIRITUAL STRENGTH; it was bound in earthly reasonings or conspiracies. The thought is the loveliness of spiritual strength which came from accepting the revealed truths.

TEETH LIKE LIONS: But do not be deceived by the lovely women with beautiful hair! These doctrines have TEETH — and not small ones at that! They have the power to deliver rending criticism backed by the power of the Lion of the tribe of Judah!

9:9 —BREASTPLATES LIKE BREASTPLATES OF IRON: Iron is strength. (Dan. 2:40) Breastplates are defensive armor. THESE breastplates are NOT iron, but are LIKE iron. That is, they have the strength of iron, but THEY are made of righteousness (Eph. 6:14). They are based on FAITH AND LOVE (I Thess. 5:8). This makes them UNASSAILABLE by false use of Scripture or by human reasoning.

SOUND OF THEIR WINGS: Wings when on an eagle represent the Old and New Testaments (12:4). This seems to show that these locusts are borne about by the SOUNDS of Scripture — the ring of Truth.

LIKE THE SOUND OF CHARIOTS: Chariots symbolize organizations. In the Sardis period, the followers of Wycliffe were organized in their approach to witnessing. First there were the “Poor-Priests” who traveled the English countryside teaching the people. Then there were the Lollards, Hussites, Moravians, etc. — all of whom organized their work in groups. Thus, the SOUNDS of Scripture (the Old and New Testament WINGS) came to the world through these organized saints. But they were not earthly organizations; they were groups organized around doctrines of the Lord. HENCE:

MANY HORSES RUSHING TO BATTLE: It was DOCTRINE, doctrinal clarity, that stimulated the followers of Wycliffe. It was SCRIPTURAL doctrine that encouraged their crusades. They were doing battle against the preposterous doctrines of the Antichrist. Antichrist would strike back with the Inquisition. The Lollards were hurt and somewhat restrained, but there seemed always some group to keep up the assault. The Teachings of Wycliffe would NOT DIE. Hence the poem by Wordsworth at the beginning of the notes on Sardis. And HENCE:

9:10 — TAILS LIKE SCORPIONS . . . TO HURT MEN FOR FIVE MONTHS: The tail of the scorpion is the part containing the stinger. (See notes on 9:17 for more on tails.) The tail symbolizes the LAST PART of something. The point here is that, if the Sardis period had to rely on the Lollards to keep up the work, it would NOT have lasted the whole period, the 150 years. But the spirit and works of Wycliffe were carried all over Europe (again see Wordsworth's sonnet). The movement had TAILS — new peripheral movements springing up as far away as Bohemia! These tails — the continuation of Wycliffe's message — are what kept things going for 150 years. These tails kept up the STINGING until Luther came along. These were the faithful ones of 3:4 who continued to walk with Jesus — in white.

9:11 — THEY HAVE AS KING OVER THEM: This "king" is Wycliffe. The next phrase says so: THE ANGEL OF THE ABYSS. How is Wycliffe a "king?" The term seems strange; but it is somewhat akin to the Matt. 24 account where the man is made "ruler" (Gk. = put in charge) over the Lord's goods. We cannot argue with the verse; it SAYS the ANGEL of the pit IS KING over these locusts. The thought is NOT that he is king over the individuals, but king over the hordes. It is his leadership that began their movement and his leadership that continues to spur it on through the age. This is likely the thought of Prov. 30:27: "The Locusts have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands" (margin: gathered together.) In other words, no ONE locust is king or recognizes another as king; but they go together in groups by their common aim: food. Thus the locust followers of Wycliffe do not recognize anyone as their king; but the aim of Wycliffe — the spread of the Gospel—is also their aim.. He is thus king of the movement. The Greek word for king (basileus) thus has as its etymology the Greek word "basis" which has exactly the same meaning in English — a base or foundation. Wycliffe is the base or foundation man of the movement.

HIS NAME . . . ABADDON . . . APOLLYON: This is a beautiful verse. Wycliffe is given a name — a NEW name, so to speak. The POWER of this verse is that his name is given in TWO LANGUAGES — Hebrew and Greek. How obvious can the Lord make it? Wycliffe's "kingship" is due to his faithfulness in translating and explaining and relying upon the TWO (Hebrew and Greek) Testaments. Both names have basically the same meaning: Destruction and Destroyer. By letting the Bible truths out of the abyss, he opened the door for truth to begin its destructive work against the lies of Papacy. These names might not seem desirable at first; but if the thing being destroyed is ERROR, the names are most pleasant!

9:12 — THE FIRST WOE IS PAST: And it obviously did its work. Those who dwelt on the earth felt the stings sharply. The door is now opened for the next step of reformation, and THAT will open the door for the final step during Laodicea.

THE SIXTH CHURCH, SEAL, AND TRUMPET

(The Reformation and The Time of the End)

Rev. 3:7-13

Rev. 6:12-17

Rev. 7

Rev. 9:13-21

Rev. 10

Rev. 11:1-14

HOW THE SIXTH CHURCH ANTICIPATES THE SEVENTH

The relationship between the sixth and seventh stages of the Church seems unique. In all of the chapters dealing with the sixth Church, the sixth Seal, and sixth Trumpet, there are fingers pointing forward to the seventh or last stage of the Church. This is likely because the Time of the End begins in the sixth stage and continues into the seventh. Even though the seventh introduces many new things, it must also deal with the consummation of the things which only had a beginning in the sixth stage. Realizing this can help in the interpretation and the understanding of several of the prophecies describing the sixth Church, Seal and Trumpet.

EXAMPLES

3:10 — Here the Hour of Temptation (a 7th period event) is mentioned in the 6th Church. It is said to be “about to come.”

3:11 — Here Jesus warns “I am coming SPEEDILY” (Diaglott). This warning seems appropriate in that the 6th stage goes out with so much still going on that the transition might easily be missed.

7:3 — The coming trouble (winds which hurt) is warned against but said not to come until the sealing is complete. Instead of dropping the subject with that statement, the Revelator CONTINUES his narration to explain how many WILL BE SEALED (which will not occur until the seventh stage is complete.) And, while he is at it, he explains the by-product class (the Great Multitude.)

10:6 — Here is the same messenger as we find in Dan. 12 prophesying the 1260 days saying, THE PROPHESED TIME IS ACCOMPLISHED. But, to insure that we know more is coming, he shows in verse 7 that more would be revealed when the 7th angel sounds.

10:11 — Here, after the disappointments of Adventism (verse 10), it is stated that more prophesying comes later (in the 7th stage.)

11:13 — In this verse we are left with expectation. When it states that a TENTH of the city fell, we must question, What about the other nine-tenths??? This, of course, is left for stage number 7.

6:14-17 — While these verses can (and should) be applied to the French Revolution (the TENTH part of the city which fell before the seventh stage), it is FULL of terminology reserved in Old Testament passages for the seventh stage. Notable among these are Joel 2:10 and Isaiah 34. The lesson seems to be: THESE THINGS BEGIN WITH THE TIME OF THE END AND CULMINATE IN THE SEVENTH STAGE.

IN HARMONY with all of this is Dan. 12 which first prophesies the 1260 days (The Time Of The End), but carries us on to BLESSED IS HE WHO WAITS UNTO THE 1335 DAYS. The connection is unmistakable.

THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH

(3:7-13)

Philadelphia means brotherly love. Luther's doctrine of Justification by Faith was so powerful a teaching as to change nearly everything. Among other things it changed the relationship among individual Christians. Because each man was now responsible directly to God for maintaining his justification and not functioning through a priesthood, the INDIVIDUALITY of Christianity was restored. One Christian could look at another and say, "I respect your individual relationship to Christ. We are all brethren seeking to grow in faith." Thus comes the brotherly love, admiration, and respect implied in the name of this Church.

The Philadelphia Church is unique in the lack of condemnation in its message. It was an active Church, always moving forward to new discoveries in doctrine and practice, always throwing off the shackles of Rome until the time that the sanctuary would be cleansed (Dan. 8:14).

An Interesting Date Parallel

The 2520 years of the Times of the Gentiles creates an interesting parallel between Israel and Christianity. 393 years before their beginning (606 BC) marks the year (999 BC) when Israel divided into the two and ten tribes. 393 years before their ending (1914 AD) marks the year (1521) when spiritual Israel divided into the Protestant and Roman sections. This seems to be a numerical prophecy of the Reformation. (When attempting to decide accurately and Scripturally the beginning date for Philadelphia – 1517 or 1521 – this parallel, along with the dating of 6: 9-11, speaks mightily for the accuracy of 1521.)

It is important to note, however, that, while the two-tribe kingdom of Judah kept the spiritual pre-eminence, the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel was NOT cast off. Likewise, while the Protestant denominations gain the spiritual pre-eminence after 1521, the Roman system is not cast off until later. Thus, 1521 marks a dramatic change, but not so dramatic as will later come to pass.

Chapter 3:7-13

Verse 7: The angel or messenger to Philadelphia is almost certainly Martin Luther. Some, who do not like parts of Luther's teachings and beliefs, insist on searching for another angel. But it is a great mistake to think that these messengers to the Churches are perfect or inspired. They are not. They are TIMELY and FAITHFUL deliverers of the meat due at that season. Luther has one of the main pre-requisites for the seven messengers: He and his teachings are well-known far beyond his immediate sphere of influence. There is no denying that it is he, and he alone, who successfully split the Church. This is a gigantic and necessary accomplishment. No one else can take the credit. His primary doctrine of Justification by Faith, is enormous in its import and impact. Revelation 6:13 showed us clearly that Napoleon's efforts to bless the Jews was UNTIMELY. Therefore, to exclude Luther as the sixth angel because he did not favor the Jews, seems Scripturally forbidden.

Lutherans frequently state that they wish Luther had died ten years sooner since his last decade is marked by strange reversals and uncomfortable statements. Could it be that he had Alzheimer's Disease? What a testimony this would be to God's ability to use someone faithfully — even if that person's flesh later succumbed to the common ailments of the race. This would not harm Luther nor his ministry.

Jesus introduces himself as he who is holy and true. Until now Rome successfully claimed to be the only holy and true church with the Pope as Christ's vicar. THIS introduction of Jesus to the Philadelphians is so very significant to them. They finally have the one TRUE and HOLY standard upon whom they can rely with perfect faith.

Rome also claimed to have the keys for everything spiritual (and temporal, for that matter!). But here Jesus introduces himself as the one who is the true possessor of those keys. When he uses the phrase "the key of David," he opens up an Isaiah prophecy of great significance for the Reformation. The phrase is lifted from Isaiah 22:22. A look at Isaiah 22 will bring great profit:

(Isaiah 22)

Verses 15-25 show the typical story of Shebna and Eliakim. This story seems an allegory of the Reformation. Shebna means growth; he appears to be typical of that great apostate system which grew like a great tree until all the fowls lodged in it. Eliakim means raised of God. He is the son of Hilkiah which means the Inheritance of Yahweh. Hilkiah, then, would seem to represent Jesus, the inheritor. Eliakim (a plural name) seems to represent the saints — particularly here the Reformation saints. Shebna is in charge of the royal household but is guilty of building great monuments to his own glory and memory. The Lord promises to depose him and cast him to an unimportant place until he dies. Eliakim is given the mantle and authority and THE KEY OF DAVID — the chief steward's responsibility over the master's goods. He uses the responsibility well and is firmly in place. It is a nice story; but the last verse implies that the Reformation church, too, would fall some day.

Rev. 3:7 continued: Jesus opens the door of liberty from Rome and closes the door of usurpation by Rome during this period of the Church.

Verse 8: The "deeds" of this church are not mentioned. The simple statement, "I know your deeds," implies that they were viewed with favor. The Lord then sets the door open for those deeds to continue without interruption. The statement regarding a little power could be taken several ways. It is much like Daniel 11:34 and seems to imply that they FINALLY have some power against that woman Jezebel — not GREAT power, but a little (which they seem to use well.) It is possible to minimize the word "little" and thus conclude that the statement means that they are the first to break from Rome with success and are, therefore, endowed with a little POWER — something preceding Churches did not seem to have against Rome. The interpretations do not significantly differ.

The keeping of His Word and not denying His Name are two notable qualities of the Reformation saints. The Scriptures alone were now the source of faith; the faithful following of God's character (name) learned from those Scriptures was their honest goal. Luther's words at Worms summarize it so well:

“Unless my conscience shall be convinced by the Word of God, I neither will, nor can recant . . . Here I stand; it is impossible for me to act otherwise — so help me God.”

Verse 9: Revelation uses the term Jew to mean Christian. The synagogue of Satan is, of course, the apostasy — those who claim Christianity but do not live it. Here is the statement that Rome must now acknowledge (bow to) the Protestant power and know, from observation, that the Lord is prospering this step forward in the history of the Church.

Verse 10: Romans 15:4, 5 reflects the idea of “the word of my patience.” Throughout the Reformation, the saints were constantly facing the changes and challenges to their faith by the rapidly unfolding understanding of Scripture. The proliferation of leaders and denominations were a constant source of upheaval in their Christian walks. Somehow, these saints seemed to keep a spiritual equilibrium in the midst of it all. Jesus here promises that the “hour of temptation” will, therefore, not be added to their burdens. The hour of temptation will not only involve the religious and philosophical controversies which the Philadelphians had to face, but also the upheaval of social, financial, and political stability. Its purpose is to be to “try THOSE THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH” — those who have roots in this world's order of things. The Hour of Temptation IS NOT for the purpose of trying the saints! The harvest saints MUST endure it; and they will overcome it if they have no roots in the earth. But it is NOT FOR THEM; it is for the world — it is to soften the world by taking away its confidence in its own institutions and, thereby, to prepare it for the kingdom.

Verse 11: The promise of coming quickly was of special meaning to those nearer the end of the Philadelphia period. It was the stimulus for the Miller and Wolff movements — the Adventists. Since the “Time of the End” was to occur in Philadelphia, the book of Daniel was to begin to be understood. The “coming quickly” was EXACTLY what the Adventists gleaned from Dan. 12.

Closely linked to this promise is the warning: HOLD FAST! Let no one take your crown! The disappointments of Adventism made many lose faith as did the contemporaneous philosophical challenges of higher criticism, evolution, Marxism, etc. Jesus did not say he was coming DURING Philadelphia; he said he was coming quickly. And it was shortly (quickly) after the discovery of the Daniel prophecies that he DID come. — thus marking the end of the 6th stage of the Church.

Verse 12: Here again we have the two-part refrain which occurs at the end of each of the seven Churches: (1) the SPECIALIZED message to overcomers of this particular Church, and (2), the REPEATED message: If you can hear, Listen (v. 13).

The Philadelphia period was characterized by change. It was possible to find new truth constantly; thus new denominations were constantly springing up. This was not necessarily bad; it could, however, prove very demoralizing for a Christian. Our humanity dislikes constant change. Therefore, the promise to become a pillar — a permanent support and foundation — in the true temple must be an appealing promise to the Reformation saints. They were obliged to leave the nominal temple — sometimes thrown out of it. The promise of eternal stability is, indeed, a comfort. As denominations arose, names changed. Finally Alexander Campbell revolted against the changes and said we just ought to be Christians! Therefore, again, the promise of NAME STABILITY is important. The overcomers were to have the name of the city of My God — i.e., the New Jerusalem. (Compare Gal. 4:26; Rev. 21:9, 10.) Before the Reformation, the only city deemed appropriate was ROME! But in the name Jerusalem is the promise of being the seed of the covenant and being the new ruling government. The overcomers were also to have Jesus' new name. This is possibly a reference to Jeremiah 23:6. In Jer. 33:16, the Church shares this name which includes (as promised here) the name of My God — Yahweh. When Jesus receives the name, he shares it with his Church through marriage.

THE PHILADELPHIA PARABLE

The 6th Parable of Matthew 13 (vs. 45, 46)

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

Luther's doctrine of individual standing in Christ (Justification by Faith) rather than group justification (as one catholic church), was the single most important spur to the act of personal consecration to God. The believer could now know that he was called to be a part of Christ and the great salvation. This was the discovery of the pearl of great price for which a man would "sell all he had" — consecrate his all. Thus a true Christian could genuinely respect and love others who were doing likewise. It is this very thing which gives this Church its name: Brotherly Love.

6. Philadelphia

(Rev.3: 7-13)

“Brotherly love.”

Highly praised without any reproof whatever: the believers were faithful to Jesus’ name and loyal to the truth message, despite having but “little strength” or power compared to the forces of spiritual darkness all around them. “An open door” (the beginning of a new era, with expanded opportunities for proclaiming the truth) was set before them by their Lord which none other could close (neither the power of Satan, nor the apostate church, nor any other force).

The Lord’s followers were to be kept safe from the hour of testing (probably the special trials in the time of trouble at the close or harvest of the Gospel Age) coming upon the entire world (beginning with the church) because “they kept the word of my patience” (they were persistently faithful through their own severe trials of faith). They were urged to hold fast to the truth and thereby retain their crown of life; for they were assured that their Lord would “come quickly” to receive them unto himself.

The overcomer was promised eventually to be worshipped by the false brethren “of the synagogue of Satan” (those ensnared by the defiling spirit of the Adversary) and to be made “a pillar in the Temple of God” (a vital and prominent part of the true temple—the church of Christ). The names of God and of the New Jerusalem were to be written on him, as well as a new name given by Jesus.

Martin Luther

(1483-1546)

Promising young German scholar who providentially turned from pursuing a lucrative legal career to take on the austere life of a monk, a decision destined to alter the course of world history. As a student and later a priest and doctor of theology, he became enraptured with the Bible but startled by what he found: the source of divine authority was the Bible itself, not the church; and salvation was attained by faith in God through Christ (Rom. 5:1, 1:17), not by rituals, sacraments, or penances. In 1508 he became a respected teacher at the University of Wittenberg and began preaching sermons that attracted wide attention. Based upon encouraging themes of God’s love and the assurance of salvation by faith, they contrasted sharply with the speculative philosophies and infidelity of the schoolmen.

Luther was gifted with mental genius, reasoning ability, energy, dedication and an eloquent manner, all of which stood him well in his growing role of reformer.. Tetzel’s sale of indulgences in Germany, offering pardon for sins, prompted Luther’s break with Rome in 1517 and the issuance of his 95 theses against papal authority. These created a sensation throughout the land and shook the very foundation of the church. In 1520 he continued his defiant stance by publicly burning the pope’s bull excommunicating him. This was followed in 1520-21 by three great tracts clarifying his main beliefs.

His *Open Letter ... Concerning the ...State* held that secular power was ordained of God and included overseeing the church and enforcing reform of its abuses, it thus struck a bold blow against the papal concept of ruling both church and state. In *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, he attacked the whole sacramental system, especially the Mass, and asserted that there were but two valid ordinances, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. He saw no biblical basis for popes or priests and believed that all members of the body of Christ were equal before God. He symbolized this “priesthood of believers” concept by introducing congregational hymn singing and conducting services in German instead of Latin.

In 1521 he was asked to defend his beliefs before the Diet of Worms, a prestigious gathering of princes and clerics called by Charles V, emperor of Germany. Luther’s presence there excited widespread interest; papal forces called for his censure but popular sentiment demanded a fair hearing. When the Diet called upon Luther to recant, with dignity he replied, “I cannot retract any teaching except it be disproved by Scripture or by reason.” His ensuing banishment by the pro-Catholic emperor forced him into brief retirement at Wartburg Castle under the protectorship of Frederick, the elector of Saxony. There, assisted by his friend Melancthon, he translated the New Testament into German, later published in 1534.

Luther clearly was the moving force of the Reformation, whose daring life forever shattered the medieval church and emphasized the rightful place of the Bible. He stands foremost among those called to lead God’s people out of the darkness of the middle ages into the light of a purer faith and a clearer understanding of truth.

From:: C.F. Redeker’s

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION, 1989.

Historical Events

- 1514 AD – Lateran Council began reform of church abuses; announced triumph over all heresies.
- 1517 AD – Luther posted 95 theses at Wittenberg: “the spark that set Europe aflame.” Followed by powerful sermons and writings that boldly attacked papacy and led to founding of widespread protest movements.
- 1521 – Diet of Worms condemned Luther as a heretic. Pope Leo X gave title “Defender of the Faith” to England’s Henry VIII for refuting Luther.
- 1534 – King Henry VIII separated from Church of Rome for its refusal to annul his first marriage.
- 1536 – Anabaptists tortured and slain in Munster.
- William Tyndale, English Bible translator, condemned by papacy and strangled at the stake.
- 1537 – Menno Simons, Mennonite leader. Forbade taking of oaths or killing. Rejected non-biblical terms.
- 1541 – John Calvin, banished from Paris, made Geneva focal point of Protestantism in Europe.
- 1545-1563 – Council of Trent met to reform church under Jesuit guidance. Adopted revised creed and launched Catholic “counter reformation.” Placed tradition of churchmen equal in authority to that of the Bible and officially added Apocryphal books.
- 1555 – Peace of Augsburg. Compromise allowed princes to decide religion of their territories.
- 1556 – Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, burned at stake for renouncing Church of Rome.
- 1559 – Pope Pius IV urged extermination of Huguenots in France (about 400,000 Protestants who had accepted Luther’s teachings).
- 1563 – Anglican Church adopted “Thirty-Nine Articles.” A mix of Protestant dogma and Catholic liturgy.
- 1572 – French Catholics massacred 70,000 Huguenots in Paris on St. Bartholomew’s Day (Aug. 23). Led Pope Gregory XIII to celebrate Mass of thanksgiving, proclaim a Jubilee, and memorialize the event with a new medal and paintings near Sistine Chapel.
- 1598 – Edict of Nantes. Granted freedom of worship to Huguenots in France after 40 years of relentless persecution. (Edict was revoked in 1685, prompting 500,000 Huguenots to flee to Protestant lands.)
- 16th century – Widespread Reformation movement crystallized lengthy effort to restore Bible truths. Led to founding of Protestant churches and first major setback for papacy. Leaders were Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox. Ended Middle Ages and changed complexion of Europe.
- 1611 – King James Bible published (London). Work of 47 scholars stood virtually alone for over 300 years as only Protestant Bible in English-speaking lands. Single most influential book in history of the world.
- 1641 – Irish Catholics massacred 30,000 Protestants.
- 1648 – Peace at Westphalia: ended 30 Years War and fixed boundaries of Catholic and Protestant states.
- 1703 – 1791 – John Wesley. Preached to masses in fields and streets. Raised moral tone of England.
- 1775 – Rising tide of public opinion against papacy. Influenced by Nationalism and Enlightenment in France and England.
- 1789 – 1799 – French Revolution. Opened era menacing to religion but especially undermined papacy. Napoleon Bonaparte’s humiliations of Pope Pius VI hastened the pope’s death as prisoner in France (1799). Marked low point and second major setback for papacy (ended of 3 ½ times of Daniel 12: 6,7).
- 1806 – Napoleon forced an end to the “Holy Roman Empire” that had existed since 800 A.D.
- 1799 – 1829 – Religious awakening in Europe and America. Spurred renewed interest in Bible and revealed need for cleansing errors of past. New groups founded; Bible societies began distributing Bibles widely and cheaply in common languages.
- 1829 – 1844 – “Millerite Movement” (Eastern U.S.). Aroused widespread interest in Bible prophecies of end times. Thorough in its reforms, it prepared sincere believers for further blessings. (Movement began at the ending of 1290 days of Daniel 12: 10,11.)
- 1846 – Evangelical Alliance (London). Forerunner of ecumenical movement. Consolidated beliefs of evangelical churches and stressed orthodox doctrines. Caused non-conforming groups (“sects”) to fall into disrepute. (End of 2300 days of Daniel 8:13,14, when “Sanctuary” class was “cleansed.”)
- 1854 – Doctrine of Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary proclaimed by Pope Pius IX.
- 1859 – Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* popularized theory of evolution. Revolutionized thinking worldwide and greatly weakened influence of religion.
- 1870 – King Victor Emanuel of Italy stripped papacy of all remaining temporal power in Rome and “papal states.” Marked third major setback for papacy.
- Doctrine of Papal Infallibility in matters of faith and morals proclaimed by Vatican Council.

THE SIXTH SEAL, PART I

(6:12-17)

6:12 - EARTHQUAKE. This is the French Revolution, an event which had much to do with ending the wilderness experiences of the Church. (Cf. Rev. 12)

(It may seem strange that the Seal begins by describing events so late in the Philadelphia period. One reason may be that the French Revolution and the Time of the End are the focal point of the Sixth stage of the Church. Perhaps, however, more important is that the Seals appear all to focus on events late in their periods. It is as if the Lord allows the period to unfold gradually and to be understood (UNSEALED) after much of the period is history. This seems only natural. We RARELY understand an experience WHILE we are going through it. Our understanding and appreciation come later.)

6:12 & 13 - SUN, MOON, AND STARS. This prophecy is the same as our Lord indicated in Matthew 24:29 where the “tribulation of those days” applies to the tribulation (NAS) of Matt. 24:8 — the troubles of the Gospel Age PRIOR to the Time of the End, the time DURING the 1260 years of Daniel 12’s prophecy.

(Some apply Sun, Moon, and Stars to the NOMINAL heavens where the Sun would be the Papal Authority, the Moon - the Roman Catholic Church Law, and the Stars - the clergy. While this does fit and is a possible answer, the interpretation which follows seems superior.)

SUN - the Gospel Light. This was challenged by Voltaire and the Enlightenment. The denominations at that time had too little truth to give the needed answers to the challengers. Thus the Sun was unable to enlighten the masses.

SACKCLOTH — mourning. (See 11:3, Luke 18:8, and Psalm 91:7) During the Philadelphia period which had begun with such doctrinal excitement, the eventual challenges of the Enlightenment, Higher Criticism, Evolution, Marxism, etc., destroyed the faith of many. The failure of the predictions of Adventists destroyed faith in even more. Though the Scriptures had been freed from Papal suppression at the end of the 1260 days, other factors made them mourn. Thus Luke says that when Jesus returns, “shall He find (the) faith in the earth?”

MOON — the Jewish Law; the O.T., as a reflection of the Gospel. If the New Testament realities were not understood, how much less the TYPES of the O.T.? They were viewed by the Enlightenment as barbaric and bloody.

STARS — The Apostles (Rev. 12:1) The teachings of the Apostles were reduced to a code of morals and ethics used for social and political applications. Their spiritual applications were ignored; thus they fell to earth(ly) uses.

NOTE: We have seen that things BEGUN in stage 6 CULMINATE in stage 7. Hence, texts like Joel 2, which have remarkable similarity to Rev. 6, apply to Laodicea and NOT to Philadelphia EXCEPT that they have BEGINNINGS in Philadelphia. The French Revolution is 1/10th of the city’s falling (11:13). Nine-tenths are yet to fall after Philadelphia.

AS - The events in Sun, Moon, Stars happen AS a fig tree casts its untimely figs. If we use “as” to mean WHILE, we can compare the heavenly symbols to CONTEMPORANEOUS events in the Holy Land. If we use “as” to mean LIKE, we can compare the heavenly symbols to THE WAY they relate to Time of the End troubles:

FIG TREE — This is Israel. There was something happening to affect the Jewish people in an important way.

UNRIPE FIGS — Napoleon, while in the Holy Land after his Egyptian Campaign in 1799, wanted to proclaim the region as a new homeland for the Jews. The IDEA was a good one which God intended to accomplish. But the TIMING was off — untimely, unripe. God had prophesied by the Jewish Double prophecies that 1878 would be the time for the re-establishment of Israel.

GREAT WIND — A great wind is a great strife or war. Lord Nelson's fleet had put an end to Napoleon's Middle-East empire designs and, thus, the Jewish hope was aborted - cast off by a great wind.

AN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT: The fig tree has a three-fold season. It first produces winter figs — a small undesirable crop. Then it has a crop on the old wood. These are good, but not best. It takes 70 days from blossom to ripe fruit for this crop — just as it took Israel 70 years to statehood (from 1878 to 1948). But the best crop is the crop on new branches, which is the final crop of the year. Prophetically, this crop is yet to come when Israel receives the New Covenant. Napoleon's crop was winter figs.

SUMMARY OF "AS" — If "as" means WHILE, the 13th verse means something like: While the religious challenges were occurring, the first stirrings of Zionism were born in Napoleon's Middle-Eastern escapades. If "as" means LIKE, the 13th verse means something like: Just as the idea for a Jewish homeland was premature, so is the darkening of Sun, Moon, and Stars and the accompanying troubles. This (the French Revolution) is only the preliminary 1/10th. Nine-tenths must wait. Bro. Shallieu suggests an interesting picture of this in I Kings 18:44. At the end of 3 ½ years of drought (corresponding to the 1260 days of Daniel), the SIGN of impending rain, storm, and trouble is NOT a whole cloudy sky, but merely a cloud the size of a man's hand. This cloud comes up from the sea (the restless masses - as did the French Revolution). It is the size of a man's hand — a fist: the power of the people forming trouble (clouds). But this is ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE TROUBLE. Jesus, for instance, would come WITH CLOUDS.

6:14 — HEAVEN WAS SPLIT (DEPARTED). Translators seem to disagree on the meaning of the word. Strong's seems to define it as a splitting rather than a departure. NAS translates it SPLIT. Split seems preferable when we look at history, but either can be explained. (Again, it is important to note that a similar event is forecast for the Laodicean period by Isa. 34. That will be more major in scope as it will involve 9/10ths of the city. This event in Chapter 6 only involves France.)

Prior to the Revolution, France had but ONE heaven — The Roman one. Then it had NONE because religion was outlawed early in the Revolution. But when religion was again legislated, it allowed, encouraged, and protected Protestantism along with Catholicism. Thus the heaven was SPLIT into two factions which, by law, WERE REQUIRED to respect and tolerate each other - a scroll rolling together.

(An interesting comparison can here be noted. When the Seals are introduced in Chapter 5, we find that the intent is to have the Lamb gradually OPEN the scroll by removing a seal at a time. Thus GOD'S PLANS AND PURPOSES have been gradually unfolding all during the age. Satan, however, has meddled in the affairs of the Church and has developed his own (apostate) heavens. Unlike God's scroll which will open to completion, Satan's rolls together before it is prophetically departed. This contrast seems no accident.

EVERY MOUNTAIN & ISLAND MOVED. Mountains are kingdoms; islands are more democratic nations. Note, they are NOT RE-moved, just moved. The French Revolution spread concern all over Europe. Napoleon's advances frightened the monarchies which feared the spread of French republicanism and the breakdown of society which France had experienced. All kinds of measures were subsequently taken to prevent such a spread of revolution. Perhaps the most visible result was the so-called Holy Alliance of 1846. Nothing would ever be the same again in Europe.

6:15-17 — Not only were nations moved by the experiences, but individuals from all segments of society were also— kings to slaves! It was not only the aristocracy which suffered in France, but the common people also. Thus verse 15 shows them all doing things to insure a better future. Some fled France to other “mountains.” Some “hid” themselves in protective strongholds. The French Revolution began a rush to insulate with nationalism, fraternities, alliances, institutions, societies, treaties, trusts, guilds, etc. During this period of the Revolution, END OF THE WORLD prophesying and theorizing became popular. It gained support from the Scriptures when the Adventist movement grew. The Reign of Terror terrorized well beyond France. Historians confirm that fears of Armageddon gripped many. Even unbelievers began to think that some sort of retribution was being meted out. Thus, in verses 16 and 17, when many are seeking hiding places in kingdoms and institutions, they claim fear of the “day of wrath.” This shows us THEIR FRAME OF MIND. It does not tell us that this is the time for the Great Time of Trouble. It IS, however, a 1/10th picture of what is yet to come.

THE SIXTH SEAL, PART II

(7:1-17)

The chapter division obscures the connection of Chapter 7 to what has come just before at the end of Chapter 6. It is VERY IMPORTANT to our understanding to see this connection. 6:12-17 has just shown the terrible troubles of the French Revolution period. These troubles COULD HAVE SPREAD. But it was not yet time for the general time of trouble. Only 1/10th of the city was to fall during the 6th period of the Church (11:13). Nine-tenths must remain for the trouble of the Laodicean period. Therefore, Chapter 7 begins by saying: ENOUGH! STOP THE SPREAD! IT IS NOT TIME FOR THE WHIRLWIND. THE CHURCH MUST BE FINISHED FIRST. THEN THE WINDS CAN BE SET FREE. This, in essence, is the entire message of Chapter 7. But the statement about finishing the Church before the final trouble allows the sender of Revelation to tell how many will ultimately be sealed as part of the body of Christ and what will happen to those (the Great Multitude) who did not prove worthy of their calling. Obviously, the Church IS NOT COMPLETED during the 6th stage of the Church — THAT'S the message of verse 3! But, as is so often the case in the 6th Church narrative, the Revelator LOOKS FORWARD to events in the 7th Church. He here looks forward to the completion of the Church and the Great Multitude.

7:1 — FOUR occurs three times in this verse. The number appears to be a symbol of universality and completeness of coverage. The expression, "The four corners of the earth" is still used today to mean that very thing. (In the Bible, multiples of 10, 100, and 1000 seem to retain the idea of the un-multiplied number. For instance 40 represents a COMPLETE period of testing. 400 seems also to carry this thought in Gen. 15:13 where the additional idea of 144,000 is contained since 400 years contain (360 x 400) 144,000 days. Thus we have extended the symbol of "4" even to the implication of the UNIVERSAL reign of the Church.) Other places which show the same symbology of the number four include:

Matt. 24:31; Rev. 20:8

Dan. 7:2, 3 Gen. 2:10.

FOUR ANGELS: These angels are said to be holding back the winds. The implication is that the winds (strife) cannot occur until certain information is available to cause the strife. It was TRUTHS about liberty, etc., which stimulated the revolution in France. It will apparently also be TRUTHS which cause the final cataclysm. Thus FOUR ANGELS may symbolize ALL AVAILABLE MESSAGES—the accumulated truths which culminate in the final period of the Church. It is possible that these four angels are the same as those in 9:14, 15. Until the advent of Protestantism, truths were restrained (bound) AT THE EUPHRATES — i.e., they were bound by the faithfulness of the people who supported Babylon. The message of the 6th Trumpet RELEASED the search for truth as nothing had since Jesus' first advent. Chapter 9 continues to show the powerful effects of these doctrines (horses). Chapter 7, however, shows that EVEN THOUGH the angels of 9:14, 15 are released, THEY ARE ALLOWED TO GO ONLY SO FAR. Verses 2 and 3 show that Jesus Himself FORBIDS the truths to go beyond what would hinder his work of completing the Church. Here is a specific fulfillment of Psa. 76:10.

FOUR CORNERS OF EARTH: The angels stand at the four corners of earth — in all segments of society where all the social, financial, political, and religious messages which will ultimately conflict are located. These elements of society actively fought the influence of the French Revolution in order

to keep a semblance of peace and order throughout Europe. Once truths are released they have dual effects: they stimulate change and they offer new reasons for stability and maintenance of the status quo. The post-revolutionary Europe attempted, and succeeded, in putting reins on the horses. **THUS** the four angels (which in a sense **CAUSED** the trouble) **ALSO** served to **HOLD BACK** its spread.

FOUR WINDS OF EARTH: It is important to distinguish between the winds of earth and the winds of heaven (as in Dan. 7:2). The various wars and strifes symbolized by winds have various causes. Some are based on ecclesiastical questions, some on social. Some are caused by the interactions of men, some by the interference of fallen spirits. Thus some are characterized by winds of heaven (ecclesiastical or demoniacal), and some by winds of earth (social or political.) In 7:1, the strife is social-political (earth). It is, however, important to note that what occurs in society frequently has the planning or backing of the spirit powers behind it. Thus, in Dan. 7, the winds of heaven (the fallen spirits) strive on the sea (restless humanity) to form the four empires which will dominate Daniel's people until the 20th Century. As each of those four apparently had a fallen angel as its head (see Dan. 10:20), it is also likely that the final cataclysm also will have demons behind its features. Thus we have texts like II Thess. 2:9, 10, Matt. 24:24, and Rev. 16:14. Then, as Rev. 16:17 shows, the **LAST** plague will be poured out on these powers of the air which should bring the release of the four winds of our Rev. 7 prophecy. Hosea 8:7 shows that, while a wind might blow, it is the **WHIRLWIND** that brings new destruction. Thus there **ARE** winds blowing, but **NOT THE FOUR WINDS** — the final blast with **ALL** (cf Dan. 2:35) of the directions and forces of accumulated truths coming together causing the anarchy with which this age will end. **GOD FINALLY SPEAKS** out of the **WHIRLWIND** — Job 38:1.

ON EARTH, SEA, & TREE: The winds are held back **SO THAT** the earth (society), the sea (the masses of humanity), and the trees (significant leadership) will not experience the kind of total disruption that would make the completion of the Church impossible — hence verses 2 and 3.

7:2 & 3 The angel here is almost certainly Jesus (Cf. Mal. 4:2). He has the seal — the tool needed to complete the work of sealing. No doubt this seal is the working of the Holy Spirit. He cries to the four angels a message guaranteeing what they were already doing. They **WERE**, in verse 1, holding back the forces of anarchy. But Jesus adds the **LOUD VOICE** of his authority to control history saying: Go this far and no further. Let **NOTHING** stop the primary work of this age — the completion of my bride. Until the Church is sealed in its forehead (the character-likeness of Jesus and the Father — see 14:1) — not necessarily beyond the veil — nothing else takes priority. One-tenth of the city has fallen, but the other 9/10ths is not permitted to do so until the bride is selected.

7:4 Here, as elsewhere, the number is literal. (While some numbers contain symbolic meanings, they are also literal. Seven is a symbol of Divine totality. But there **ARE** literally seven stages to the Church.) 144,000, as before noted, occurs as early as Genesis 15 where it is hidden in the four-hundred years. It occurs in the symbolism of the New Jerusalem in Chapter 21 of Revelation. Only because of nominal church error does this number seem unreasonable to some. The Body of Christ is a very special class — a class to which only 72 persons a year, for about 2000 years, qualify. It is not unreasonable to suppose that an average of six persons per month have made their callings and elections sure. The standards are high. This would be unreasonable only if the traditional error regarding the alternatives were true. But this class is a pre-determined number — unlike the Great Multitude (verse 9) of those who sought to be a part of that body but failed. They cannot be numbered by men because they are a by-product; they were not called to their ultimate place.

7:4-8 — These 144,000 are said to be from every tribe of Israel. As we have seen, Jews in Revelation are Christians. (Also compare Gal. 6:16; Rom. 9:6-8, 24-26.) The Lord in His symbolic use of the 12 tribes here, accomplishes many wonderful lessons for us.

The listings of the tribes vary from place to place to teach several lessons. Gen. 49, for instance, is purely genealogical. It simply shows the actual twelve sons of Jacob. His prophetic blessings for each, of course, are helpful in the later explanations of many prophecies. Another listing of the tribes in Numbers 2 shows another lesson. In it, Levi is left out of the numbering of the twelve tribes. This is to teach the spiritual lesson that the tribe of Levi represents the Church and Great Multitude— people who will (as did the Levites) have no inheritance in the land. But to keep the number at twelve, the tribe of Joseph is split into Ephraim and Manasseh (Joseph's two sons). The numbering of the tribes (Levi excepted) was to prepare to divide the land among them. When we get to Rev. 7, however, the tribes listed DO NOT REPRESENT ISRAEL AT ALL; they represent those who will be part of the body of Christ — the antitype of the Aaronic priesthood. Therefore, when this listing omits two tribes (Dan and Ephraim), there must be a potent lesson in it. Why are Dan and Ephraim NOT PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST?

Dan represents the second death class. Rev. 2:11 says overcomers will not be part of the second death. Dan does not overcome. Jacob's prophecy concerning him (Gen. 49:17; See also Judges 18) explains in part why this is true. Dan is like a serpent — a deceiver like the serpent in Eden. He waits by the path to bite the horses in their heels — not a fatal wound to the horse, but one, which unseats the rider. Dan is a challenger of doctrine in such a poisonous way as to destroy the faith of other Christians. Second death will be his lot.

Ephraim, the other missing tribe, is another kind of story. He also does not make it into the 144,000. But he does not lose his life. Chapter 7, from the 9th verse onward, deals with those typified by Ephraim — the Great Multitude. These BEGAN as candidates for a place in the body. One or several faults allowed them to fall short.

(A study of the names, the breastplate stones representing each tribe etc., will reveal the varying characteristics of each of these symbolic tribes. This will help to show the variety which God purposes for the Church which must function as a sympathetic high priesthood for the world of mankind during the kingdom. Psychologists have recently suggested that human personality types come in twelve basic varieties. This rings true with this picture.)

Ephraim means MULTI-FRUITFUL. It was a name frequently used for the 10 tribes — the tribes with less favor. It is interesting to note that the ten and two division of Israel's tribes has a chronological parallel to the division of Christianity into Catholic and Protestant groups at the time of Luther. (See p.110) Ephraim types the Great Company of verse 9. Hosea 7:8 and 11 give information about Ephraim which is helpful in understanding the Great Company class. "Ephraim mixes himself with nations." He is "half-baked" — an unripe Christian. He calls to Egypt and Assyria; he has not learned from whence his help cometh.

Because Ephraim (The Great Multitude) is typed by that part of the tribe of Levi which does not become priests, lessons regarding the Levites also explain this missing tribe of Ephraim. Because of this, Numbers 1:47 and 2:33 have a close link with:

7:9 — NO ONE COULD COUNT: The number of this class was not predestined, as was the number of the Body of Christ (verse 4). All whose Christian consecrations have been accepted by the Lord through the age but who have not overcome (or gone into second death) will be a part of this class. The IMPLICATION (by its name and the name of Ephraim) is that it will be a VERY LARGE GROUP.

Three Varying Uses of the Twelve Tribes of Israel

<u>The 12 Sons of Jacob</u> (Genealogical & Prophetic Purposes) Genesis 49	<u>The 12 Tribes of Israel</u> (Census & Land Division Purposes) Numbers 2	<u>The 12 Sealed Tribes of Israel</u> (Places in Body of Christ) Revelation 7
1. Ruben _____	Ruben _____	Ruben
2. Simeon _____	Simeon _____	Simeon
3. Levi _____	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 80px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></div> _____	Levi
4. Judah _____	Judah _____	Judah
5. Zebulun _____	Zebulun _____	Zebulun
6. Issachar _____	Issachar _____	Issachar
7. Dan _____	Dan _____	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 80px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></div>
8. Gad _____	Gad _____	Gad
9. Asher _____	Asher _____	Asher
10. Naphtali _____	Naphtali _____	Naphtali
11. Joseph _____	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 80px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></div> _____	Joseph
12. Benjamin _____	Benjamin _____	Benjamin
	Ephraim _____	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 80px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></div>
	Manasseh _____	Manasseh

FROM EVERY NATION. . . TONGUE: This expression (which we have studied separately) represents the sea-class of humanity — people without roots in the world. BOTH the Church and Great Company classes come from this group. Both classes are called only to the ONE CALLING; all start out to be prospective members of the Church.

BEFORE THE THRONE: Whereas the Church is IN the throne. To be before it is to be in service to it.

BEFORE THE LAMB: Whereas the 144,000 are WITH the Lamb (14:1.)

WHITE ROBES: See also verses 13 & 14. Their robes needed to be MADE WHITE; but they DO accomplish this cleansing and, therefore, are justified in the position they gain. (Cf. Num. 8:7, 8.)

PALM BRANCHES: Palms are symbols of victory or deliverance. The FEAST OF TABERNACLES (BOOTHES) is an example of this. Annually, the Israelites made TEMPORARY abodes of palm branches to symbolize the temporary nature of their wilderness existence before being given a home in “the Promised Land.” So, these booths of palms represent deliverance from the temporary to the permanent. In 7:9 they have the same meaning; the Great Company is delivered to its permanent home in heaven — never again to wander or to be in need. (See also verses 16 & 17.) Look at Lev. 10:12 to see the two of Aaron’s sons who remained after the death of those who offered “strange fire.” Eleazar (Gk. = Lazarus) represents the Church. He becomes the next priest (Deut. 10:6.) Ithamar (whose name means LAND OF PALMS) is, therefore, a picture of those who miss that privilege but who are yet delivered — the Great Multitude.

7:10-12 — This class acquiesces to its fate and gladly attributes its deliverance to God and the Lamb. A chorus of others (from Chapter 4) joins in on the praises due to a God who could in grace and mercy form such a valuable, evil-experienced, class as a by-product of His search for His Church.

7:13 — From here to the close of the chapter is a little side-light — a little extra view with more detail of the information originally found in verse 9. We have here a conversation between “one of the elders” (from verse 11) and John (representing the Church in the flesh.) This elder can be identified by what follows in verses 14-17. The thought in this verse, however, is that the Great Multitude class has been an obscure part of the Divine Plan. There had been no call to it. Being a by-product of the Church’s selection process, it is not featured clearly in Scripture. It is only natural, then, that the prophecy would ask, WHO ARE THESE? Where did they COME FROM?

7:14-17 — John’s answer begins: YOU DO KNOW! Stop and think about it. You actually wrote about this class in some obscure typical passages. (After all, how did the John class learn about the Great Multitude? It learned it through the tabernacle types.) From here to the end of the chapter, John, phrase by phrase, shows the elder, from the elder’s own writings, each of the qualities and experiences of the Great Company:

Num. 8:7, 8 shows how the Levites must WASH and be cleansed by sacrifice (Blood) of a bullock (representing Jesus — the Lamb of Revelation.) Hence: WASHED THEIR ROBES AND MADE THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

Num. 4:33 shows Ithamar (Land of PALMS) directing the sons of Merari (Bitterness) in the SERVICE OF THE TABERNACLE. Hence: SERVE HIM DAY & NIGHT IN HIS TEMPLE and GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY TEARS (from their BITTER experiences.) A part of this bitterness may be due to the “Great Tribulation” of verse 14. After all, the winds do not hurt the completion of the Church; but this is NOT promised for the Great Company. Indeed, they WILL (those alive at the end of the age) experience the four winds.

Num. 1:50 shows the service of the Levites over the tabernacle. Hence again: THEY SERVE HIM IN HIS TEMPLE.

Num. 18:21, 23 shows the PROVISION for the care of the Levites through the TITHE. It also shows that they bore their iniquity. Hence, THEY SHALL HUNGER NO MORE NOR THIRST because the Lamb will PROVIDE needs and shelter. (See also Num. 18:24, 31). Num. 18:32 shows the removal of their iniquity which they had carried. Hence: THE SUN WON'T BEAT ON THEM, OR ANY HEAT — the troubles they had in reconciling their lives to the demands of the Gospel will be over.

Moses, therefore, is the elder who asks the question. And it is from his writings that the John class came to its understanding of the Great Multitude. (Some other O. T. prophecies concerning the Great Multitude are Gen. 24:61-67; Psa. 45:13-15; S. of S. 8:8 and 5:2-8; Lev. 16:8; Cf. 1 Cor. 5:5 and 3:15; Num. 8:19.)

7:17 — GUIDED TO SPRINGS: Jesus in his discussion with the woman by the well made it plain that the overcomers WOULD BECOME SPRINGS; the Great Company, however, will drink of springs. (John 4:14)

THE SIXTH TRUMPET — PART I

9:13-21

A note before beginning: The sixth Trumpet, which takes part of Chapter 9, all of Chapter 10, and a large part of Chapter 11, IS VERY CHRONOLOGICAL IN NATURE. The intent of the Sender of Revelation was clearly to focus our attention on TIME. Indeed, ALL of the time features of Daniel 12 have their fulfillments IN or at the CLOSE OF the Philadelphia period. It is, therefore, imperative to notice the chronological focus of all three of these sixth-trumpet chapters. 9:15 speaks of hour, day, month, and year; 10:6 speaks of the “chronos” being completed; Chapter 11 speaks of time measurement in months (vs. 2), in days (vs. 3), and in implied years (3½) in verse 6. It then adds an additional “three and half days” period in verses 9 and 11 and reinforces the “hour” in verse 13. Indeed, Chapter 10, as we shall see, is specifically for the purpose of focusing on the “hour” of which 11:13 and 9:15 speak..

9:13 — The sixth angel is Luther. “I” is John who represents the Church in the flesh. The voice is a message. (“Four” may or may not be spurious. The golden altar DID, of course, have four horns. Four, representing universality, would show the complete power of the altar.) Horns represent power. The golden altar represents the sacrificing of The Christ during the Gospel Age. Therefore, the message seems to be:

Luther delivered his message, and the Church heard (as a result) a message regarding the power of individual sacrificing with Christ.

This is EXACTLY what Luther’s JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH doctrine accomplished. Christians were no longer subject to the Roman priesthood and its fraudulent sacrifice of the mass. ***They now stood before God as individually consecrated members of Christ’s body, sacrificing individually in Christ as part of the Great Sin Offering.*** This message is closely tied to 3:7 where the door is now open and no one can shut it. The saints and history itself, by this message, are released or loosed from the Papacy. The saints were now, in Luther’s words, ***“A Priesthood of Believers.”***

9:14 — The same voice (message) which was heard in verse 13 is also heard by Luther. It has an additional, extra-religious, meaning: Luther’s doctrinal revolution would ADDITIONALLY cause reactions in other parts of man’s experience. It would cause the release of “the four angels.”

THE FOUR ANGELS here are, no doubt, the same angels which we met in the sixth Seal (7:1-3). It will be of value to review their symbolism. Whether or not four ACTUAL angels are involved behind the scenes is not very material. Four, as we recall, is a symbol of universality. The 7:1 four were standing at the four corners of the earth — all parts of the established order of things. They were instructed by Jesus (7:2, 3) NOT to let things go to the point of anarchy (four winds). These four angels are probably the PARTS OF SOCIETY WHICH ULTIMATELY WILL GO TOO FAR, thus causing total breakdown. They are probably the (1) social, (2) political, (3) financial, (4) and religious elements of society.

Here in 9:14, Luther is told that his work would RELEASE these angels because they were, up until his time, BOUND IN THE EUPHRATES. The Euphrates is symbolic of the support of the people given to Babylon.

In Luther's day, of course, ALL support of the people had been to the Roman Church — the only Babylon at the time. Because the Roman Church had COMPLETE control over the elements of society, those elements (the four angels) COULD NOT FUNCTION outside of the approval of the Papacy. There could be no social changes, no financial theories explored, no political freedoms, and no religious questioning. The four angels were, indeed, BOUND in the Euphrates. The people who supported Rome were fearful of giving support to anything not sanctioned by Rome.

Luther's immediate experience after the Diet of Worms showed the BEGINNING of the loosing of the POLITICAL angel. Luther would, no doubt, have been murdered after his excommunication except for Frederick of Saxony's hiding him in his castle. Here was a prince who would not now be bound in the Euphrates.

9:15 — The implications of this verse must be viewed carefully. These angels are PREPARED for a very specific time and work, BUT they are released to accomplish something additional. In other words, the PRIMARY prophetic work will be for the hour, day, month, and year, but, before that, they are released to "kill a third of men." This two-fold function must be recognized in the interpretation.

Many suggestions have been made regarding the chronological implications of this verse. Each seems to be forced. We offer an alternative which is derived from WITHIN the symbolism of the sixth Trumpet. First, it is imperative to note that the Greek text uses the *definite article ONLY before the word HOUR*. (See study on HOUR in Appendix B.) Thus these angels were prepared for :

THE hour,
a day,
a month, and
a year.

If we look during the period of the Philadelphia Church, what can we find that might be called THE HOUR? Nearly all Bible students would conclude that the TIME OF THE END — marked by the close of the French Revolution — is the SINGULAR MOST IMPORTANT "Hour" in Philadelphia. (See 11:13.)

Because of this, verse 15 seems to be saying, the release of the four angels from the power of the Euphrates is SO THAT they will be contributors to the events of the French Revolution. THAT Revolution COULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED except that social, financial, religious, and political philosophies and liberties had reached such a degree of development and expression that all fury broke loose because of them — the FLOOD of ideas mentioned in 12:15.

But they are also released for A day, A month, and A year. Which day, month, and year? The answer seems clear BOTH in the Revelation account of the sixth Trumpet AND in Daniel's prophecy of the event. It will be the 1260th day (Rev. 11:3); it will be the 42nd month (Rev. 11:2); and it will be (pardon the strange English) the 3-1/2th year (Rev. 11:6; Dan. 12:7, and Rev. 10:6.). Thus, from the sixth-Trumpet account alone it is possible to account for THE hour, and one each (the last of each) of the days, months, and years.

But before we reach that special "hour," the release of these angels progresses SO THAT a third of men might be killed. Once Luther had begun the Reformation, there were three basic parts of the Christian world: (1) the civil powers, (2) the Roman Church, and (3) the new Protestantism. These angels didn't kill Protestants! In actuality, they MADE Protestants. They didn't kill the civil power. They didn't kill the Roman church either EXCEPT that those who made up the New Protestantism USED TO BE ROMAN CHURCH MEMBERS. Here is the third that were slain. They were KILLED AS Catholics; they were REBORN as Protestants. This division of Christianity would be one of the factors leading to the French Revolution — the time for which the four angels were especially prepared.

9:16 — Suddenly, out of nowhere, we have mentioned armies of horsemen numbering 200,000,000. The context just about demands that this verse be connected with the previous verse. These “armies” are, apparently, the third of mankind which have become Protestant. They are horsemen because they are being carried foreword by their new and exciting doctrines. This verse says that the John class “heard the number of them.” This statement is true as witnessed by the chart in THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES, page 16. This chart, published by the London Missionary Society, shows us that at the beginning of the Laodicean period, the world numbers approximately 116 million Protestants. Adding the number since the days of Luther, 200 million of them by the close of the Philadelphia period is a reasonable estimate — still vastly outnumbered by Catholics, but definitely a vast number.

9:17 — This, and the next two verses, is a description of the power of the Protestant movement during the entire Philadelphia period. John sees both horses and riders. The riders have DEFENSIVE armor — breastplates. This is to show the protection (Eph. 6:16) which the Biblically-supported truths supplied for the reformed believers. The horses, on the other hand, have OFFENSIVE equipment: heads of lions and, later, tails like serpents with heads. The lion’s head and all that comes out of its mouth shows the power at the head (beginning) of the reform movement. The message was so powerful that it DEVoured its adversaries; hence, a third of mankind were killed (converted). As the movement progressed through time, the power was not so great. As we near the end of the Philadelphia period, Catholic converts were rare — but the power of the tails (the many Protestant denominations which had grown out of the movement) was strong enough yet to “do harm.”

The breastplates of the riders cause some difficulty. Most translators and commentators seem to think that three COLORS are meant by the description, NOT fire, jacinth, and sulphur. If this be so, the colors are the RED of fire, the BLUE of the jacinth (hyacinth), and the YELLOW of sulphur. The meaning is not easy of interpretation. These ARE, of course, the three primary colors from which all other colors are formed. This might well signify that the protection of the Protestants is from the complete color palate of truths from the Bible — a true and reasonable fact. The sources of these colors would ADD significance: the purifying power of fire (even as the red doctrine of the ransom is the doctrine by which all other doctrines are measured and considered pure or not); the faithfulness represented by blue which comes from a flower (hyacinth) or the stone named after it. If the gemstone is intended, perhaps the hard radiance that is a solidified character is meant; if the flower is intended, perhaps the grace and promise of fruitage from faithfulness is meant. The sulphur, of course, is a poison. Perhaps the power of truth to poison any error which assaults it is intended.

These horses are fierce and offensive in character as was the initial trend of Protestant reforms. From their mouths (i. e., from their message, their witnessing, etc.,) come fire, smoke, and brimstone (sulphur). The Protestant doctrine WAS destructive of old ideas and ways (fire); it was confusing to its enemies (smoke); and it set out to poison the false “waters” which Babylon had called truth to that point.

9:18 — It was the OFFENSIVE onslaught that made converts (the fire, smoke, and brimstone); it was not the DEFENSIVE shield of the riders. This is a lesson to us all: We may be able to DEFEND the Truth — be able to use our shield; but the way to reap wheat is not in the defense of Truth, but in the bold and forthright promulgation of it — an OFFENSIVE act.

9:19 — AGAIN — the POWER of the doctrines is NOT in their riders! It is in their ability to SPEAK — their lions’ heads, and their serpent tails WITH HEADS. (See 9:17 for the contrast of tail and head.)

9:20, 21 The rest of mankind, NOT killed by these plagues, apparently refers to that segment of the Christian world which remained Catholic. They did not change the way they did things just because the Protestant reformation had come.

The listing of the WORKS OF THEIR HANDS (vs. 20) and the IMMORALITIES (vs. 21) does not seem intended for us to analyze each of the terms in the lists. On the contrary, the point seems to be that there are TWO AREAS IN WHICH THEY DID NOT REPENT. The FIRST area is that of false worship. This is the FIRST COMMANDMENT. The second area is that of harm to others. This is the SECOND COMMANDMENT. In these two, according to Jesus, is the whole Law and the Prophets. It is almost to say that the spiritual point of the Reformation was to bring to the attention of all professing Christians their having strayed from these two basic precepts. The Protestant movement would stress these two items; the Roman Church would not. And so it has been ever since — setting the stage for the final reform: Laodicea.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET —PART II

CHAPTER 10

THE SEQUEL TO DANIEL 12

Chapter 10 stands in the middle of the 6th Trumpet section to draw special attention to the fulfillment of an important part of the prophecy of Daniel 12. In both chapters there are clear parallels:

These ingredients not only help us see the connection between Daniel and Revelation, but they help us interpret Revelation 10.

DANIEL 12

The book sealed until the end time
An angel over the river
— both hands raised
— swears by Him...
— predicts 1260 years

REVELATION 10

The little book opens because it's the end time
An angel over the sea
— right hand raised; book in other hand
— swears by Him...
— notes that "Time's up"

Verse 1. The identity of this angel is subject to some question although it seems difficult to dismiss him from the angel in Daniel 12. That the angel of Daniel 12 is AT LEAST IN PART the same as in Rev. 10 seems nearly undeniable. The angel in Daniel predicts 1260 years (Time, Times, and Half a Time) while he stands over the water. The Rev. 10 angel stands over water and says virtually: "The time I predicted in Daniel is accomplished." It is possible — even likely — that the angel in Daniel 12 is Gabriel (Cf. 8:16; 9:21; 10:5, 6) who seems to be the Lord's messenger to teach Daniel about the end time. This, in itself, may not be of significance. However, it seems likely that angels are put in charge of certain events (e. g., the "destroying angel" of the Passover and the angel who destroys Sennacherib's hosts). Satan apparently appointed angels in charge of certain kingdoms. (See Daniel 10:13, 20.) In the same way, Michael is the prince over Israel (Dan. 12:1.) All of this is mentioned because the angel of Rev. 10 seems to be MUCH MORE than just Gabriel. It is more likely that it is Gabriel COMBINED with the task over which he has been appointed which, as we shall see, is the events surrounding the French Revolution and the Time of the End.

ONLY 3 TIMES in Revelation do we have "STRONG" (or mighty) ANGELS. One time is in 5:2 where a STRONG angel asks "Who is worthy . . . ?" Another time is in 18:21 where a STRONG angel takes up a millstone and predicts the violent overthrow of Babylon. The third instance is here in 10:1 where a STRONG angel ROARS creating thunders; he then states that the 1260 years are expired. It is clear that 18:21 deals with the final trouble before the peaceable kingdom. It is clear that 10 deals with the troubles of and following the French Revolution and Time of the End. The 5:2 instance, however, does not specifically mention any trouble. If, however, Chapter 5 does, as we think, deal with the time of the collapse of the Jewish Age, it IS, indeed, a time of trouble and great religious revolution. As the matter of fact, it is appropriate that the angel ask Who can open the book? (a question much like Daniel 12:4 and Rev. 10:2) BECAUSE, with the fall of Judaism and the Law, there was nowhere to turn religiously. The question was of import BECAUSE this strong angel APPARENTLY was the instrument of destroying the old order.

In summary of STRONG ANGELS: The three mentioned in Revelation seem to refer to angels AND their assignments at important turning points in history:

- # 1 to destroy the Jewish Age arrangement
- # 2 to begin the Time of the End troubles
- # 3 to destroy Babylon completely

The description of the STRONG ANGEL is detailed:

He is clothed with a cloud. Clothing in Scripture is justification; clouds are trouble. The meaning seems to be that this angel's justification for coming at this time is to be in charge of the trouble about to occur.

He has a rainbow on his head. Rainbows represent covenants or promises; the head is the part that thinks. Perhaps this is saying he has a promise on his mind to keep — the promise given to Daniel that the book would be sealed until the time of the end at which time the promises to Daniel would begin their fulfillments.

His face was like the sun. Face (prosopon) represents favor or disfavor; the Sun represents the Gospel truths. It is likely that his presence represents BOTH favor AND disfavor depending on the recipients. The more brightly shining truths from the Bible available during the Time of the End SCORCHED one class but ENLIGHTENED another.

His feet were like pillars of fire. There are three symbols here: feet, pillars, and fire. Feet seem to represent control; pillars represent support; fire represents destruction or cleansing or judgment. It IS possible, of course, that pillars of fire are a single symbol. If so, the meaning may be much like it was when God led Israel in the wilderness at night by a pillar of fire. This angel (and the events connected with him) might be leading the Church before morning arrives. Otherwise, the symbolism could be something like the angel's control (feet) is supporting the cleansing-judgment work which begins with the Time of the End.

Why is This Angel Not Jesus?

While it is entirely possible that this angel is Jesus as many have suggested and as similarities in 1:14, 15 support, there are compelling reasons to think it is not. His return at this time is out of place and would be misleading. If it is Jesus, there seems to be little connection with Daniel 12 despite the intended connection. It is Gabriel (Dan. 8:16, 17) who gives Daniel understanding concerning the Time of the End — NOT Michael. If the 10:1 angel is Jesus, it also does not fit the STRONG ANGEL usage. It is OBVIOUS IN 5:2 that the STRONG ANGEL is not Jesus (although 18:21 certainly COULD BE). Daniel's 10:5, 6 description of the angel (not named, but presumably still Gabriel) has just as much in common with Rev. 10:1 as does the Lord's description in Rev. 1:14, 15.

Verse 2. In the angel's hand (apparently his left hand; compare v. 5) is an open little book. Hand represents DOINGS. This angel is here, among other reasons, to present an open book. It is a LITTLE book because it is not the entire Bible; it is only Daniel. Daniel was told (in 12:4) that his writings would be sealed until the time of the end. As this chapter will later state clearly, IT IS NOW THE TIME OF THE END and, therefore, time for Daniel to be understood at least in part. Compare Jesus' words in Matthew 24:14, 15. (Note that the entire Bible and its meanings are represented as BOOKS in 20:12; In Chapter 5:2, the Gospel Age experiences are referred to as a sealed book.)

The angel has his RIGHT foot on the sea, his LEFT on the land. The specifying seems important. Verse 1 had said that the angel's face (favor /disfavor) was as the Sun — the enlightenment coming from an increased understanding of the Gospel. This light does FAVORABLE things for restless humanity which, at this time in history, starts to come out dramatically from the darkness of the previous centuries. This was called THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT, and it FAVORED the masses. The land class (the earth, the establishment) however, would find this increase of truth a problem. The very foundations of power structure were being challenged. The FEET of the angel, however, are on both — the angel (the events he was causing) would CONTROL the future experiences of both classes.

Verse 3. The message of this angel is clearly not minor. He cries with a LOUD VOICE which is then augmented with the description “as when a lion roars.” Proverbs 19:12 may be a clue to this. “The King’s wrath is like the roaring of a lion.” There is no question that the Time of the End issues in trouble and a beginning of a special kind of wrath. See Daniel 7:25, 26. Since the angel is clothed in a cloud, it is not surprising that all kinds of trouble erupt as he roars. Because truth uncovers the problems with the then-current “earth,” all kinds of CONTROVERSIES occur. The SEVEN THUNDERS seem to represent the complete questioning of everything by nearly everyone, which has its beginnings in the Age of Enlightenment. It is not difficult to realize the earth-shaking effects of such new and revolutionary thoughts as Evolution, Higher-Criticism, Communism, Existentialism, etc.

Verse 4. John represents the Church. He was about to write — to record as part of his (the Church’s) experience what he heard of the thunderings. But a voice from heaven — possibly some wise Christians?? — said Seal up what the thunders have spoken and do NOT write them. The thought seems to be that, even as the little book is now open, other things are also opening up; but these other things are NOT FOR THE CHURCH. The little book is for the Church. The Church should remain aloof, separated from the controversies, theories, and experiments of mankind now proliferating.

Verse 5. The angel now lifts his right hand to heaven. In Daniel, both hands were lifted. There may be more significance, but it does seem, at least, that one reason both hands are not here lifted is that the OTHER HAND has the little book in it. The RIGHT hand lifted would seem to say that the angel’s DOINGS (hand) are approved (RIGHT) by heaven.

Verse 6. As he did in Daniel 12, the angel swears by God. Rev. 10 adds the description “who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it. (“And the sea and the things in it” is apparently spurious.) Perhaps the thought is that since God ordained the “heavens” and the “earth” (in their symbolic senses), it is altogether fitting and proper that He should now meddle with their affairs in order to bring the NEW heavens and earth. This seems logical since the next statement virtually says that God had prophesied that He would, indeed, begin this intervention at a SPECIFIED TIME, and that specified time (1260 years) IS NOW EXPIRED: “Time’s up!” There shall be no more delay, no more time allocated without having the ‘Time of the End’ begin.

Verse 7. This verse begins with ‘BUT.’ Just because the 1260 days are over does NOT MEAN that no more is to happen! Quite the contrary. Daniel 12 had prophesied also the 1290 and the 1335 days. The angel is CLEARLY warning that the beginning of the Time of the End is just that — A BEGINNING. Much more will follow. And even though the little book is “open,” its understanding is not yet totally clear. When the 7th angel begins to sound, THEN the details of God’s plan would be clarified. The statement that God had “preached (this) to His servants and prophets” brings to mind Acts 3:21 where the similar statement is made regarding the Times of Restitution of all things. Without the understanding of the Restitution doctrine and its accompanying return of Jesus, the “MYSTERY” could not be ended. Having given this warning, the angel shows what will happen by ignoring it:

Verse 8. The voice from heaven again might be hungry Christians seeking to study the details of prophecy. The Miller Movement and its worldwide counterparts began to search the “little book” and to find many wonderful things. These movements were interdenominational and widespread — all focusing on the second advent prophecies and particularly their chronology.

Verse 9. The great Bible-study movements following the French Revolution were the greatest Bible study crusades in history up to that time. The Adventist predictions were STIMULATING and were rapidly absorbed by thousands and thousands (sweet as honey.) But, as the angel had warned (verse 7), the mystery was not yet to be finished. Their understandings were imperfect and wrong enough to be disappointing (bitter to the stomach). While prophecy lived on after the Adventist disappointment, Bible chronology had been given a bad name.

Verse 10. This verse merely confirms that the angel's predictions were correct.

Verse 11. Here again, the 6th stage of the Church leads to the 7th. The statement is clear: While you prophesied once about the return of Jesus, you will do it again (in the 7th period). The next time it will not only be of general interest to religious people (many peoples and nations and tongues,) but ALSO TO KINGS — those in high places of power. History confirms that the teachings during Bro. Russell's ministry caught the ears of many in power who, when World War I broke out, were not quite so sure that the world hadn't ended.*

The best MSS seem to indicate that this verse begins — “And THEY said to me. . .” The KJV says “And He said to me . . .” The KJV seems so much easier to interpret! But THEY, because of the context of the chapter, could only be BOTH the angel and the voice from heaven. The angel (back in Daniel 12) HAD PROPHESED more to come at the 1290 and 1335 days. A FEW of those with remaining faith in chronology from the Adventist movements also had a strong faith that the matter would clear up and they would continue the work. It was one of those little groups of enthusiastic Adventists into which Bro. Russell stumbled one day and which kindled his interest in pursuing the chronology of what was yet to come. The rest is history.

*The unique 4-part phrase of 10:11 might have a significant connection to chapter 17. At all other times (see 11:9 as an example), the phrase is “peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations.” It represents the common people — the “sea class” of humanity. Here, however, it is “peoples, nations, tongues, and KINGS.” Kings, of course, are from the class known as “those who dwell on the earth’ — rooted people. However, in 17:12 and 16, the Kings AMALGAMATE with the sea class in order to preserve the old order and to destroy the harlot. Perhaps 10:11 is saying that at that peculiar “one hour” the John class will have a special witness opportunity.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET — PART III

(11:1-14)

This is a chapter of equals. The 10th chapter, having brought us to understand that Daniel's Time-of-the-End prophecies were now being fulfilled, has set the stage for us to understand some of the principles of chronological symbolism. Chapter 11 in its own way tells us that 42 months, 1260 days, and 3 ½ years are all equal periods. Thus we know that the symbolic year has 360 days, and the symbolic month has 30 days. The Old Testament had, in a way, told us rather clearly that a day stands for a year in prophecy. It did not tell us exactly how long that year was or how long a month was. This 11th Chapter gives us other symbolic equals: we find that the TWO WITNESSES are the same as the TWO OLIVE TREES and the TWO LAMPSTANDS and the TWO PROPHETS (whose names are IMPLIED in verse 6). We also learn that the Great City (i.e., Babylon) is also typed or called by the names of Sodom and Egypt.

11:1 Because Daniel had prophesied that his own book would be shut up until the Time of the End, and because Chapter 10 helps us to understand that it is, indeed, NOW the Time of the End, THE BOOK OF DANIEL IS READY TO BE OPENED. This book, which is also a key to understand much of the rest of the Bible, thus provides the Church with a new UNIT OF JUDGMENT — a new standard of measurement: an opened Bible. While it is very true that Daniel could not be understood before the end of the French Revolution, it IS important to realize that the opening of Scripture had begun in a significant way earlier — in the days of Martin Luther. The doctrines (horses) were so very powerful (lions' heads) that they slew 1/3rd of men — i. e., they created a whole new segment of Christianity (Protestantism). Thus, during the period of the sixth Trumpet, the Church was furnished, as it had not been since the days of the Apostles, with a reliable standard of measurement. This is how verse 1 opens. This reed like a rod (this measuring rod, like a staff — like a guide for sheep) is the much-opened understanding of Scripture. This is PART of that message to Philadelphia, "I have put before you an open door which no one can shut."

Then there is a voice with the gift of the rod. Whose voice? There are two clues. It is likely that this is the same "voice from heaven" as was heard earlier in this trumpet (10:4, 8). It is likely that this voice is Jesus himself, the Shepherd of the Flock. This is strengthened by reading into 11:3 which says "MY two witnesses." The ownership must be God or Jesus; the latter seems the best choice in the context.

The voice says RISE. This is probably the awakening of the Church at the Reformation. Then it says MEASURE. To measure is to consider something to see if its dimensions are suitable. The Church was to begin measuring the TEMPLE, the ALTAR, and the WORSHIPPERS. This was all REQUIRED of the Philadelphia Church. It had thrown Papacy overboard and needed to reconsider much of Christianity. The TEMPLE is God's Plan — that in which He dwells. (The symbol has many specialized meanings. The Church IS the temple because the Church embodies the plan of God.) So here, the sixth Church is asked to look again at God's purposes for the Church as compared to the newly opened Scriptural freedom of Protestantism. They are to measure the ALTAR. This was of special import to Protestants. Before Luther, the mass was the sacrifice, the altar. That was now discredited. Luther's doctrine of Justification by Faith made a new priesthood of believers (in his words.) The concept of INDIVIDUAL SACRIFICE and CONSECRATION was the NEW measurement of the altar. The Church was also to measure the WORSHIPPERS. In 9:20-21 it is pointed out to us that the old standards for the worshippers were not acceptable to God. Those who would serve Him must now stand before Him with a new concept of their individual relationship with Him.

11:2 - BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING NOT TO BE MEASURED. The "court" outside the temple was

not to be the concern of the saints. We learned from the tabernacle arrangement that the court condition represented people who often claimed they were Christians, but whose lives were not fully consecrated to the narrow way of sacrifice with Jesus. The court dwellers are not spiritually-minded people; they do not dwell in the “holy.” These Christians are NOMINAL. Thus they are simply to be left alone — to be ignored as much as possible. The saints must measure, concern themselves, only with things in the holy. Jesus’ wheat and tares parable seems to refer to this point in history when the disciples ask “shall we root out the tares?” The answer was NO. This will only disrupt the wheat with what they should actually be involved with. The wheat must stay in the holy; don’t bother measuring the court. Verse 2 continues regarding the court: “It has been given to the Gentiles” —i. e., the NON-JEWS. Since “Jews” in Revelation symbolize Christians — true Christians, — Gentiles represent those which are not yet to the point where God can recognize them as true Christians.

These “GENTILES,” however, DO HAVE A PURPOSE IN GOD’S WORK. This verse stipulates that the court is GIVEN to them to allow them to accomplish the work of TREADING UNDER FOOT THE HOLY CITY for forty-two months — the 1260 years which end in 1799 at the Time of the End. We thus have TWO classes in Christianity. Jesus called them Wheat and Tares; Daniel called them the Host and the Sanctuary. Revelation here calls them “me” (John — the Church) and “The Gentiles.” The “me” class is also here termed THE HOLY CITY. (Interestingly, Num. 33 lists 42 sojournings of Israel. The meaning is obscure if there is a connection.)

An important comparison:

The word GIVEN occurs in both verse 2 and verse 3 — or some variation of the word, depending on translation. The comparisons are helpful.

Verse 2: The Court is GIVEN to the Gentiles so that they can persecute the true Church.

Verse 3: It is GIVEN to the two witnesses to prophesy in sackcloth.

In BOTH cases the time allotted is the same : 42 months, 1260 days. Thus, during the same period of time (the time the true Church flees into the wilderness — 12:6 & 14), the Church is persecuted but also fed by the Word of God. So, while God GAVE the opportunity for something bad to happen, He also GAVE a compensating blessing.

11:3 — Jesus will grant (or give) to his two witnesses (the Old and New Testament Writings) to prophesy — to continue teaching the life-giving Gospel for those who hunger after it. But they must do so in sackcloth — in mourning due to their suppression by Papacy in all areas which Papacy controlled. Clearly, this ability to suppress would be limited to the 1260 years. Once 1799 came, the embarrassed Papacy could not suppress the Scriptures anywhere.

These two witnesses DO prophesy. They are NOT silent, neglected, or hidden. BUT, they are, during this period IN MOURNING (sackcloth). They had much reason to mourn. They caused persecution for those who used them. They were suppressed in all localities controlled by the Papacy — which, until Luther’s day, was everywhere. On top of all of this, their true intent and meaning were being violated. The “church” which claimed to support them was the very institution which misused them terribly. There was, because of this suppression, NO RAIN — no blessings of truth. (Amos 8:11)

11:4 — We are here given more equal signs. The two witnesses ARE the two olive trees — the suppliers of the oil which pictures the Holy Spirit. They ARE the two lampstands — the givers of light to the Church. “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet.” Then they are said to “stand before the Lord of the earth.” To STAND BEFORE seems to be a symbol of a position of service (Cf. 7:15.)* Thus these witnesses, even in mourning, continually serve God and His purposes.

*For an interesting alternative to this application, see the note at the end of this section on the 6th trumpet. (p.138)

11:5 — Their continual power — even while in mourning — is here confirmed. Many agencies wanted to harm the Scriptures. The Scriptures, however, just like the doctrines extracted from them (see 9:17-18), had the power to eat up all arguments against them and foil any sinister plot to harm them. The text seems repetitive; but it is not. The last half of the verse seems to say that if someone PERSISTS in trying to harm the Scriptures, the power of the Scriptures will KILL him. That is, a constant battle with the Bible will, over time, make an honest man find out that he can't win — that the Scriptures are BETTER than he thought. He will be killed by them: his false beliefs will die; he will be CONVERTED. Many a Catholic and agnostic became a convert after trying an extended battle with the Word of God.

11:6 — This verse names two prophets without giving their names. It is clear that Elijah and Moses are the references — the two who were in the Mount of Transfiguration, and who represented the products of the Gospel and Jewish ages. It seems strange to say that the Scriptures had power to shut heaven. It was, after all, the 1260 years of their SUPPRESSION, their mourning, during which there was no spiritual rain. But if we recall how God arranged for Daniel's book to be "shut up," we have an answer. Prophecy was hidden because it was tied to unfulfilled events. Until the events occurred, the prophecies could not be unlocked. Thus Elijah (in antitype) could prophesy that there would be no rain until the Time of the End would unlock the mysteries. Therefore, there was "no rain during the days of their prophesying" — during the 3 1/2 symbolic years before 1799.

The Bible is also shown to have the power to turn water to blood and provide other such pestiferous plagues! Again we see what 9:17-19 showed and what 9:10 also shows about an earlier period. The Bible has ALWAYS been a thorn in the side of its enemies — those who dwell on the earth. Luther, in essence, said to the Roman church, your water is not drinkable.

Before going on, it would be good to ask why the Bible is featured so strongly in this message (verses 3-12). There may be several reasons. Chapter 10 specified how the LITTLE BOOK (Daniel) was now OPEN. Chapter 11 is stating the same. It is showing the emergence of the Bible from the 1260 years of wilderness experience. This is one of the PRIME events of the 6th stage of the Church. The Bible is now being PRINTED instead of hand-copied. It is being translated widely. It is being made available in all Protestant regions. It is being more widely understood; and as the Philadelphia period nears its end, its very secret time prophecies are being opened due to the events of the Time of the End. This message gets the Church ready to UNDERSTAND more as was promised to the "wise" in Daniel 12. NEVER before this time was the Bible becoming such an important factor and power in the lives of the saints.

11:7- This verse begins a section dealing with the treatment of the Bible near the Time of the End. Many theories have been expounded as to the meaning of the 7th through 12th verses. The one explanation which seems easiest to document and which seems best to fit the stipulations of these verses we offer here.

This verse begins (NAS): "And when they have finished their testimony . . ." This translation and most others, seem to miss the mark of the Greek text's meaning and leads to erroneous interpretations. The Greek verb for "finished" is in the SUBJUNCTIVE. This seemingly minor point of grammar makes a

great deal of difference. The translation (a very literal one) given in the CONCORDANT version is very good and very helpful. It reads: “And whenever they should-be-finishing the witness of them . . .” The thought in English is that this verse takes place NOT AFTER the 1260 years, but AS THEY ARE FINISHING. The fulfillment, therefore, should NOT be sought after 1799 or even AT 1799, but as the French Revolution is in progress leading UP TO 1799. This is enhanced by verse 13 which says IN THAT HOUR there was a great earthquake. In WHAT hour? The hour (or time) during which the Bible is undergoing the stated experiences. The thought is also enhanced by verse 12 which points out the exaltation of the Scriptures “in a cloud” — that is, DURING the trouble of the French Revolution.

These evidences lead us to the conclusion that Uriah Smith’s explanation (appended at the end of the 6th Trumpet study) is the most viable explanation extant. Smith quotes extensively from THE MIDNIGHT CRY by George Storrs — one of the more important books of the Adventist movement. His remarks will form the basis for the interpretation of the next few verses.

When the Bible is coming to the end of its sackcloth testimony period, a beast that comes out of the abyss will (1) make war with it, (2) overcome it, and (3) kill it. The ABYSS is a condition of powerlessness. Therefore, this “beast” is something which has not had power for some time. It seems to be the REPUBLICAN form of government which was now established in France but which had not been in Europe since the days of the Roman Republic of antiquity. The French Republic MAKES WAR on the Two Witnesses; it OVERCOMES them — it abolishes as much of the old Scripturally-based practices in society as possible. The Sabbath is gone; the 10th day replaces it; etc., (See Smith’s details). And it KILLS them — they are outlawed.

11:8 —THEIR DEAD BODIES (their remains — the physical pages of Holy Writ) lie in the street. We today have visual experiences in our cities of the meaning of this symbol. When we see the homeless lie in the streets, we know that we see rejection, powerlessness, hopelessness, lives that aren’t being lived. Thus were the two witnesses in the street “OF THE GREAT CITY.” The reference seems certainly to Babylon — the realm of the Roman Church. France was part of that Roman Church City. France had been Roman Catholic and very anti-Protestant. We now have more equal signs. The Great City (Babylon) is also “spiritually” (typically) called Sodom and Egypt. She was typed by Sodom because of her characteristics (Ezek. 16:49.) Egypt is typical of the Western, nominal Christian world — a place of worldly wisdom without God. The verse concludes that this is where “THEIR LORD WAS CRUCIFIED.” Jesus, of course, was crucified in Jerusalem. In one sense the Roman Church is an apostate new Jerusalem. But the meaning seems better that Romanism crucified Jesus on a daily basis, illegitimately, by the sacrifice of the mass — the very sacrifice which Luther’s doctrine of Justification by Faith makes null and void.

11:9 —This verse and verse 10 CONTRAST the reactions of two groups of people to this development of the outlawing of the Bible and religion in France. (See study in Appendix B on THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH and on PEOPLES, TRIBES AND TONGUES AND NATIONS.) In this verse, the sea class — those without strong ties to this world — those who have some sympathy for and yearning for God, look at the fallen Bible and will not permit it to be forgotten — to be laid in a tomb. This they do for 3 ½ days (3 ½ years.) The French abolition of the Bible was from the fall of 1793 until the spring of 1797 — 3 ½ years.

11:10— In this verse, on the other hand, we have those who hate the Bible because of its restrictions and condemnations of their ways of life. These are those with ROOTS in the current order of things — those who dwell on the earth. They rejoice. They DID! The partying in France over the put-down of religion and the exaltation of the goddess of “reason” were elaborate, noisy, and ecstatic. The gifts they gave to one another were monuments to the “new order.” Perhaps the most visible gift was the giving

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11:13 — AND THERE WERE KILLED SEVEN THOUSAND (CHARACTERS) OF MEN. . AND THE REST WERE TERRIFIED AND GAVE GLORY TO THE GOD OF HEAVEN — A comparison with I Kings 19:18 suggests a possible symbolic answer to this text. 7,000 in Elijah's day had not bowed the knee to Baal. This would well represent those who are still true worshippers of Jehovah in Elijah's day. In the context of Rev.11:13, the French Revolution, the 7,000 might well represent true Christians in France. When religion was outlawed by the revolutionary government, the names (the professions, the Christian characters) of these individuals were unrecognized. As Christianity was "slain", so was the reputation of anyone claiming it. Thus, 'the rest' would refer to the general populace — nominal Christians — who, upon the re-establishment of Papacy and religion, having been terrified by the revolutionary events, again gave glory to the Papacy. With Elijah, this event occurred at the close of the 3-1/2 symbolic years (1260 days) and also related to the literal 3-1/2 years spoken of in Rev.11:9.

to the people Notre Dame Cathedral renamed the Temple of Reason. It is not easy to overstate the ecstasy of the anti-religionists during the Revolution. They were so very pleased to have done away with the ball and chain of religion.

11:11 — But, as we read in Smith's book, this all lasted only 3 ½ years. Those who would not permit the burial triumphed in the French Assembly, and the Bible was not only PERMITTED again, but LIVED in a sense never possible before the Revolution. The "Breath of life from God came into them" in the sense that they were now protected so that their persecution was over (See Smith for details.)

They STOOD ON THEIR FEET — they now walked "under their own steam" so to speak. They no longer had to be supported by the efforts of others to hold them up. GREAT FEAR fell on the beholders: This may refer to the reverence which the opening Bible gained in the eyes of Christians, or it may refer to the apprehension of the Roman Church which realized the genie was out of the bottle.

11:12 —The LOUD VOICE from heaven could, of course, be representative of God's labors having exalted the Scriptures out of their sackcloth condition. It is more likely, however, the voice of the Protestants which exalt the Scriptures on a world-wide basis with the formation of Bible societies beginning in 1804. They go up into heaven — they re-assume their position in the religious world — IN THE CLOUD. This suggests that the exaltation of the Bible began before the trouble (cloud) of the revolution had ended. This agrees with Smith's interpretation. THEIR ENEMIES BEHELD THEM—not just NOTICED them! But they realized that they now had a force with which to reckon which they could not put down or suppress as they had in the old days.

11:13 —The placement of this verse is important. We had already learned from Chapter 9 about the angels released for a specific hour. We had already learned from 6:12 that this period experienced a great earthquake. But 11:13 is placed where it is to let us know that WHILE the two witnesses were going through their peculiar experiences while finishing their testimony in sackcloth, a great earthquake was going on. "IN THAT HOUR there was a great earthquake." This verse is here NOT to concentrate on the quake, but to draw to our attention its relationship to the Bible's experience. A TENTH OF THE CITY FELL: Which city? The very city mentioned in verse 8. The city is Babylon; its street was in France; France was 1/10th of the fall of Babylon. Nine-tenths are yet to come under the 7th Trumpet.

The fall of 1/10th of the city had a great leveling effect. The 7000 NAMES OF MEN which were killed in the quake (see margin or good Greek text) seems to refer to the abolition by the Republic of all titles, aristocratic and clerical. It has been claimed (but there seems no available documentation) that there were literally 7000 different titles abolished. Everyone was then known by the common title "citizen." THERE VERY WELL MIGHT BE another viable explanation. This is hinted at in the following phrase: "and the rest were terrified. . ." Why would this group known here as "the rest" be contrasted to those who lost their titles? (See alternative and better explanation on Facing Page 137)

THE REST WERE TERRIFIED AND GAVE GLORY TO THE GOD OF HEAVEN: The revolution DID frighten France and much of the rest of Europe. Under Napoleon, the Papacy was again established as the official state religion, and France has remained eminently Catholic since. Therefore, the "God of heaven" here is almost certainly the Pope.

(A note to consider: Since France — a 10th part of the fall of Babylon — is typical of the greater trouble with which Babylon will ultimately and totally fall, it is quite possible that the leveling effect of the removal of titles, aristocratic and clerical, is something which will have a parallel in the final trouble. This sort of thing was tried in the Communist world when all became "comrades." While there is a

truth to the concept of the equality of all, it must be remembered that there is also a basic error to this concept. God has set up, even among men, a priority system, a chain of command. The Apostles, for instance, have more Scriptural authority than do the 7 messengers to the Church. The messengers, on the other hand, have an authority beyond the elders, etc.,etc. In the world also, the refusal to recognize legitimate authority structures is contributing rapidly to the disintegration of the secular order.)

11:14 — Chapter 8:13 had informed us that the last three Trumpets would be “woes” to those dwelling on the earth — those whose roots in the present order make them enemies to changes which threaten the status quo. In 11:14 we have reached the end of the 6th Trumpet. It has caused GREAT WOES to the establishment which had functioned without basic threat for well over a millennium. The verse concludes warning that there is now the THIRD WOE coming quickly. It came 75 years after the Revolution. But the thought of quickly is not all determined by time. The Revelator seems to be saying, “Don’t stop to catch your breath. Don’t get so wrapped up in the ending features of the 6th Trumpet (things like the Miller Movement, etc.,) that you are inclined to miss the SUBTLE CHANGE from stage 6 to stage 7.” We mentioned in the note at the beginning of the 6th period study that the 6th period anticipates the 7th in many passages. This is one of those places. The seventh period of the Church BEGINS WITH RELATIVE OBSCURITY. In this sense it is considerably different from the periods preceding it which all seem to have begun (with the possible exception of Thyatira) with some notable events. It is clear that the Lord does not wish His saints to miss this transition. As Daniel recorded: “How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1335 days!” But the blessing was to be INVISIBLE!

**FOLLOWING ARE IMPORTANT PAGES FROM URIAH SMITH’S BOOK
WHICH ARE PERTINENT TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF CHAPTER 11**

CONCERNING REVELATION 11: 7-12:

The following pages are a copy of pp. 538, 539, and 540 from Uriah Smith’s book on DANIEL AND THE REVELATION. Smith’s is an Adventist. He here quotes from George Storrs and from Croly and gives what seems to be the best of many answers to the meaning of the 3½ days.

(His explanations of verses 9 & 10 are not so good in light of our investigations of the phrases “people and kindreds and tongues and nations” and “they that dwell upon the earth.”)

“. . . . and in one night, *fifty thousand* of them were murdered in cold blood, and the streets of Paris literally ran with blood. Thus our Lord was ‘spiritually crucified’ in His members. *Again*, the watch-word and motto of the French Infidels was, ‘CRUSH THE WRETCH,’ meaning Christ. Thus it may be truly said, ‘where our Lord was crucified.’ The very spirit of the ‘bottomless pit’ was poured out in that wicked nation.

“But did France ‘make war’ on the Bible? She did; and in 1793 a decree passed the French Assembly forbidding the Bible, and under that decree the Bibles were gathered and burned, and every possible mark of contempt heaped upon them, and all the institutions of the Bible abolished; the Sabbath was blotted out, and every *tenth* day substituted for mirth and profanity. Baptism and the communion were abolished. The being of God was denied; and death pronounced to be an *eternal* sleep. The Goddess of Reason was set up, in the person of a vile woman, and publicly worshipped. Surely here is a power that exactly answers the prophecy.” This point will be further developed in the comments on the next verse.

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

“The language of this verse denotes the feelings of other nations than the one committing the outrage on the witnesses. They would see what war infidel France had made on the Bible, but would not be led nationally to engage in the wicked work, nor suffer the murdered witnesses to be *buried*, or put out of sight among themselves, though they lay dead three days and a half, that is, three years and a half, in France. No; this very attempt of France served to arouse Christians everywhere to put forth a new exertion in behalf of the Bible, as we shall presently see”.

⁴George Storrs *Midnight Cry*, May 4, 1843, Vol. IV. Nos. 5, 6, p. 47.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Verse 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 dwell on the earth.

“This denotes the joy those felt who hated the Bible, or were tormented by it. Great was the joy of infidels everywhere for awhile. But ‘the triumphing of the wicked is short;’ so was it in France, for their war on the Bible and Christianity had well-nigh swallowed them all up. They set out to destroy Christ’s ‘two witnesses,’ but they filled France with blood and horror, so that they were horror-struck at the result of their wicked deeds, and were glad to remove their impious hands from the Bibles.”

VERSE 11. And after three days and a 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.

Witness Restored. — “In 1793, the decree passed the French Assembly suppressing the Bible. Just *three years after*, a resolution was introduced into the Assembly going to supersede the decree, and giving toleration to the Scriptures. That resolution lay on the table *six months*, when it was taken up, and passed without a dissenting vote. Thus, in just *three years and a half*, the witnesses ‘stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.’ Nothing but the appalling results of the rejection of the Bible could have induced France to take her hands off these witnesses.”

“On the 17th of June, 1797, Camille Jourdan, in the ‘Council of Five Hundred,’ brought up the memorable report on the ‘Revision of the laws relative to religious worship.’ It consisted of a number of propositions, abolishing alike the Republican restrictions on Popish worship, and the Popish restrictions on Protestantism.

“1. That all citizens might buy or hire edifices for the free exercise of religious worship.

“2. That all congregations might assemble by the sound of bells.

“3. That no test or promise of any sort unrequired from other citizens should be required of the ministers of those congregations.

“4. That any individual attempting to impede, or in any way interrupt the public worship should be fined, up to 500 livres, and not less than 50; and that if the interruption proceeded from the constituted authorities, such authorities should be fined double the sum.

“5 That entrance to assemblies for the purpose of religious worship should be free for all citizens.

“6 That all other laws concerning religious worship should be repealed.

“Those regulations, in comprehending the whole state of worship in France, were, in fact a peculiar boon to Protestantism. Popery was already in sight of full restoration. But Protestantism, crushed under the burthen of laws of Louis XIV, and unsupported by the popular belief, required the direct support of the state to ‘stand on its feet.’ The Report seems even to have had an especial view to the grievances of the Church; the old prohibitions to hold public worship, to possess places of worship, to have ingress, etc.

“From that period the Church has been free in France . . . “The Church and the Bible had been slain in France from November, 1793, till June, 1797. The three years and a half were expended, and the Bible, so long and so sternly repressed before, was placed in honor, and was openly the book of free Protestantism!”

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.

“*Ascended up to heaven.*’ — To understand this expression, See Daniel 4:22: ‘Thy greatness is grown reacheth unto’

THE SEVENTH CHURCH, SEAL, AND TRUMPET

(The Harvest Period)

Rev. 3:14-22

(See also discussion of Rev. 7 under SIXTH SEAL)

Rev. 8:1

Rev. 11:15-19

A NOTE REGARDING THE SEVENTH CHURCH, SEAL, & TRUMPET

The seventh Church, Seal, and Trumpet are all part of the harvest period of the Gospel Age. In one sense, therefore, they belong in Part II of this notebook, which deals with the Harvest. Since they are a part of the sequencing of the seven Churches, Seals, and Trumpets in Chapters two through eleven, they are placed here in Part I. Part I, remember, deals with the Gospel Age INCLUDING its Harvest. When, however, the study of the Harvest is undertaken in Part II, it is wise to include the study of the seventh Church, Seal, and Trumpet for a more complete picture.

THE LAODICEA CHURCH (3:14-22)

It is, strangely enough, a little more difficult to analyze this Church's message than the previous messages. When we live in the middle of a situation, we are more inclined to negate important things and to exaggerate little things. The question regarding to whom the Laodicean message is written is even a problem. (See in Appendix B the study entitled "To Whom Are the Seven Church Messages Written?")

The study of this message is closely tied to the study and appreciation of the parables of the Wheat & Tares and The Wise and Foolish Virgins. The lessons and inherent prophetic elements of those parables greatly affect the understanding of this last Church.

Before beginning a look at the message verse by verse, it is perhaps wise to have a five-step, brief narrative of the evolution of the message:

1. As Laodicea begins, the wheat are in captivity in Babylon — somewhat drowsy and stunned by the events of the Miller Movement period.
2. In Babylon they are exposed to the prevailing conditions, beliefs, and attitudes of their surroundings: a comfortable, lukewarm snooze; a feeling that the spiritual advances of the Reformation have made them rich both in information and in temporal things.
3. Suddenly the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom!" — with its attendant other doctrinal challenges — stimulates the wheat (and even some prospective wheat) to begin a re-evaluation of their positions.
4. The result is a COMING OUT (Rev. 18:4) — a GOING OUT TO MEET HIM (Matt. 25:6) — and a fervent trimming of lamps. It is the time of which Mal. 3:1-3 speaks. It is a time when the refiner's heat will purify the consecrated (the Gold & Silver classes — the Sons of Levi) to realize and correct the dross which has been part of their lives (the wretchedness, miserableness, poverty, blindness, and nakedness.)
5. To accomplish this cleansing, these must apply the counsel of verse 18 to activate their zeal in the procurement of gold, garments, eye salve. In so doing they can OVERCOME the prevailing weakness yet in Babylon (vss. 15-17) and, thus, receive of the Lord's kind discipline (vs. 19) and of his provided meat in due season (vs. 20.)

This narrative includes much NOT in the Laodicea message itself, but, without question, relative to the same period and experience. This message is relative to the PREVAILING CONDITIONS of our day and, therefore, what WE (not Babylon) must overcome. Babylon has been cast off; the Lord sends no message to a cast-off church. This message is entirely to "YOU," not TO or ABOUT THEM. The message is not about individuals; yet, individuals must be the ones who overcome the weaknesses stated.

3:14 — The Angel is Charles Taze Russell. (See Appendix B article entitled "One of the Angels." Also see the study on the chronology of the seven Churches.) It is interesting to note that in all of these seven Church messages the direction is "To the angel . . . write." It is as if the angel himself, more than the Church, needs to know these things. Historically the angels seem very much to have acted and preached based on the content of these messages. It is not, of course, that these messages are not to the Churches themselves, but rather that they are to the Churches THROUGH the angels. Without recognizing the angel and what he has been given in the way of understanding, the Church cannot hope to receive much of the message.

3:14 cont'd, — LAODICEA: The name means something like JUDGMENT OF or BY THE PEOPLE, or possibly JUSTICE OF or BY THE PEOPLE. The etymology is not precise. Some apply the meaning to the separation of wheat and tares by suggesting the meaning as A JUDGED PEOPLE. Another very viable meaning is the period in which JUSTICE is SOUGHT BY THE PEOPLE — clearly a social phenomenon of our time. Others suggest that it means JUDGED BY THE PEOPLE referring to the Rev. 18:21 prophecy in which the Lordship of Churchianity is ultimately rejected by the people and swallowed up by the sea classes (restless humanity). The actual city of Laodicea had many parts of its history and description which help us understand the anti-type. For instance: its products were famous BLACK CLOTH made from local wool, embroidered garments, and a well-known eye medicine called “Phrygian powder”; it also was an international banking center; its citizens were quite wealthy.

THUS SAITH THE AMEN. . . The word means true, truth, sure. It is the word translated VERILY with which Jesus begins so many statements, and it is thus inseparably linked with him. Perhaps the Laodicean period needs this assurance that Jesus’ words and promises are, indeed, true. The expectations of the Miller Movement had many wonder about the possibility of finding sure truths in Scripture. The advent of Darwinism, Marxism, etc., strongly necessitated a counterweight of Scriptural truth. Jesus assures us in Laodicea that he is providing what is needed.

FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS . . . Since “amen” assures truth to us, this phrase must mean something different. Jesus, in his ministry, was faithful and truly witnessed before all the power and character of God. Since Laodicea is a time when the Son of Man would find little faith on the earth, the implication is that we, as did he (as we EMULATE HIM), must also be prepared to be faithful and true witnesses to God in this day of nearly no faith.

BEGINNING OF THE CREATION . . . Jesus’ third part of his introduction to us is that he is God’s first creation. Without understanding this IDENTITY of Jesus, this stage of the Church could neither receive nor appreciate the wealth of clarified doctrine which makes up the meat in due season. Perhaps prophetically it also warns that our understanding of this truth may be a particular trial for us before the age completely ends. (See Prov. 8:22, Lamsa)

3:15, 16 — For many, COLD means someone who is NOT THE LORD’S. They would, therefore, need not to be spewed out since they were never in. This is certainly a reasonable interpretation. However, an additional and helpful lesson can be drawn if the words be meant differently. These verses show lack of clear commitment in deeds. This should be noted carefully. The Church had done WELL during Philadelphia. No ill is spoken of it. It had rejoiced in the opening of prophecy and understanding. After Miller, however, it had (according to Matt. 25) fallen asleep. This sleepiness is NOT ONLY in prophecy and doctrine, but, MOST IMPORTANTLY, in character-building. It is the LUKEWARM CHARACTER with which the Lord is not pleased. He WISHES we were COLD OR HOT — Hot for RIGHTEOUSNESS, and cold toward INJUSTICE. See Heb. 1:9 and Psa. 45:7. See also I Tim. 6:17, 18. This will likely be the reason for a great number of Great Multitude at this end of the age — these are CONSECRATED SAINTS (“you”) who are lukewarm.

3:17 — In addition to the lukewarmness, we now have a listing of the problems to which Christians of our day can fall prey — the things which, because they are integral parts of the thinking of our day, we must search out in ourselves and overcome.

I AM RICH: HAVE BECOME WEALTHY: NEED NOTHING — This three-part listing has in common in all three parts that we can be proud of what we have and self-sufficient in it. We have all heard among ourselves the statement “WE HAVE THE TRUTH” spoken in a way which sounds just a bit to much like attainment. The end of this verse points out that if we have this attitude, we are not able to see what we really are and what we really lack.

What is implied by each of these three phrases? I AM RICH would seem simply to say that we over-rejoice (rejoice beyond appreciation into revelling) in what WE HAVE (rather than what we are!) I AM INCREASED WITH GOODS (“BECOME WEALTHY” = NAS) seems to say that we BOAST over having more than what others have or did have. We possibly fulfill this when we scoff at “poor Babylon” which doesn’t have the honor of having received this windfall! We also fulfill this weakness when we look back to past ages of the Church and wonder how they ever could have been spirit-begotten or made their elections sure seeing that they had so little “goods.” I HAVE NEED OF NOTHING is an attitude we display when we refuse to listen to reason; when we think no one has anything to offer us; when we think we understand everything there is to understand at this end of the age. It also, worse yet, shows that attitude which says “I’ve made it.” While we might not say such a thing in so many words, we can say it by acting out a weekly routine of thinking we are just fine because we know the truth and attend studies.

WRETCHED — Because we think we are rich, we can’t see that we are WRETCHED (Strong’s 5005 — enduring famine or craving). BUT! We would say, I’m not hungry or craving! Each of us can think of those moments when we feel that life MAY not be doing all it could for His service. In the world, many wealthy people have said, “Riches have not brought me that satisfaction with life which I craved.” While WE might be satisfied with THE TRUTH, we should have an inner hunger, an inner craving, to be applying those riches of truth to self-growth, character building. We should NOT endure the craving, we should fulfill it. When we feel we have overcome something, we have a REAL satisfaction which the KNOWLEDGE of truth itself can never equal.

MISERABLE — Strong’s 1652 = pitiable. This is surely how God, or even mature Christians, look at us. If we have not learned to value truth above POSSESSING it, we are, indeed, to be pitied.

POOR — Poor in application, in spirituality — NOT in what we have in the way of information!

BLIND — NOT blind to dispensational truths, but blind to our own shortcomings. What is more blind than a wealthy man who doesn’t know what to do with his wealth? The answer is a Christian who doesn’t know what to do with truth.

NAKED — This word DOES NOT MEAN WITHOUT CLOTHES. Many apply this to being without the robe of righteousness; but this can be true only in a partial or accommodated sense. The concordances and Greek lexicons agree with one voice that this word SOMETIMES means naked, but just as frequently, if not more so, means INADEQUATELY CLOTHED. The proof that that is what is HERE meant can be found by comparing this verse with 16:15 — a prophecy also of the Laodicean period with a remarkably similar wording. Notice in 16:15 that those mentioned HAVE garments which they are admonished to KEEP — to take care of, to keep from tearing and soiling and wrinkling lest he walk about NOT naked, but inadequately covered — inappropriately covered to their shame. This message (3:17, 18 as well as 16:15) is TO THE CONSECRATED. Those who do not overcome will become Great Multitude — forced to make their garments appropriate. (A similar use of the word is James 2:15. It does not speak of those with absolutely no clothes, but of those with inadequate clothing in a literal sense.) The lesson in Rev. 3:17 is that IF we exult in the riches of truth WITHOUT using it to better our characters, we are relying on our minds, our understanding, to justify ourselves — a justification which is just filthy rags. When we APPLY truth, with Jesus’ help, to our characters and trust him to make up the deficiencies, THEN we are keeping our robes of righteousness appropriately.

3:18 — This verse contains the Lord's remedies for the ills of Laodicea. He suggests three needed procurements:

1. gold refined by fire,
2. white garments,
3. eye salve.

The first of these is so that we might be RICH in the true sense. The second is so that we will not be EXPOSED. The third is to give us sight.

In one sense, these three items summarize three of C. T. Russell's basic teachings. He taught the Church's share in the offering for sin — the obtaining of the Divine Nature itself through the sacrifices necessary for character development so that we could partake in the blessing of all the families of the earth. (Gal. 3:16, 29) He stressed throughout his ministry the need for reliance on the robe of Christ's righteousness and the need for our not relying on our own strength or wisdom because the arm of flesh will fail us. He also taught the need for humility to discern not only the harvest truths, but the application of them in our daily lives.

GOLD REFINED BY FIRE immediately brings Mal. 3 to mind. The lesson is spirituality at the cost of the sacrifice of self. The TRUE RICHES, which this brings, is character-likeness to Jesus and the resulting glorification at the end of our courses. 1 Peter 1:7 is an important cross-reference. In it we also see the trial of faith by fire being more precious than natural gold — because it brings forth the true gold.

WHITE GARMENTS would, to the natural Laodiceans, be an import! Their home-grown product was clothing of BLACK wool. The nakedness of verse 17, remember, was not total lack of covering, but, rather, inappropriate or ill-kept clothing. The reference seems to be to SELF-JUSTIFICATION which (Isaiah 64:6) is filthy rags. The lesson seems to be that we should cherish the goodness that we have received from Christ Jesus by NOT THINKING WE ARE BETTER just because we have RECEIVED WHAT IS BETTER.

EYE SALVE was the tool of Jesus in the healing of the man blind from birth (John 9:6). Its recipe was the combination of dirt and Jesus' spit. The lesson seems unmistakable and in harmony with the previous two symbols. The eye salve which we must apply to self is the Holy Word (truth, water, from the mouth of our Saviour) mixed with the attitude of humility (dirt). This salve will help us function in the brotherhood to which we have been called. Without this brotherly love and cooperation we are blind. (I John 2:9-11).

3:19 — This verse is inserted in what seems on the surface to be an illogical spot. But further thought suggests that it is placed here to counteract what might be a discouragement due to the previous verses. In 15-17 we learn of the depressing state of things in Laodicea. In 18 we learn what we must do — a list which might seem difficult. But here in verse 19, it is as if the Lord says, "Don't worry. I will admonish and teach you what you need." REPROVE & DISCIPLINE (NAS) or REBUKE & CHASTEN (KJV) are from Greek words which mean ADMONISH AND TEACH. (The teaching MAY, but does not necessarily, involve punitive corrective action.) (Compare also Heb. 12:6, 7.) (Prov. 9:8-10 is also pertinent.) It is helpful to remember Jesus' own advice to the Harvest Church. (Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Mk. 13:33-37; Luke 21:36) to WATCH. This seems to be the thrust of verse 19: WATCH my admonishing and teachings. Those who are in my love will be led by these things in a way to accomplish the needed purchases of verse 18. Don't be discouraged; WATCH and LEARN. BE ZEALOUS & REPENT. The word THEREFORE is here. This loving message is not only to those who are near the Lord but to those who may have strayed into lukewarmness, poverty, and "nakedness." BECAUSE I will lift you out of your problems, HEAT UP! (Zeal = heat). Repent = change. The words of II Peter 3:9 come to mind. Peter's words are about OUR DAY.

3:20 — Those watching and learning from the admonishing and teaching, who have become zealous and willing to change their courses, are now told what special blessing they will receive. BEHOLD! This word, behold, is used as a flare — an attention getter — so that we do not miss some of the Bible’s most sublime teachings. The message here is the message the Church has wanted to hear since Jesus left the scene nearly two millenia ago: BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM — in the words of the parable. He has returned; He is PRESENT — secretly, like a thief. He is announcing his presence (Matt. 25:6) although some, even if they hear the knock, will not be ready to respond! (Matt. 25:8-10 and Song of Solomon 5:2-4). The presence, of course, is announced through the angel to the period. It is announced by the revealing of the meanings of the time prophecies of Daniel and by the understanding of the type of the Jubilee year. Thus the need for the teachings of verse 19. Zealous study and prayerful thought must be given in order to hear the knock. There are two IF’s: (1) IF we hear, and (2) IF we open. The announcement is not denominational; it is individual. It is the individual’s responsibility to respond. We hear the knock — OH! but THAT’S not what it says! “If anyone hears MY VOICE.” The “voice” is probably the announcement made of the presence by the 7th angel. Jesus promised that his second advent would be announced in this fashion: Matt. 24:30, 45-47. So, IF we hear the VOICE and IF we OPEN — if we allow the message to cause us to accept the importance of the knock and not to delay our response as the foolish virgin of S. of S. 5:2-4, THEN he will come in to us and we will eat together the food, the meat in due season (Matt. 24:45.) The word “DINE” (NAS) here is an important one. This is the word for the evening meal — the LAST meal of the age. At the opening of the age (John 21:12-15), Jesus shared BREAKFAST (NAS) — the FIRST meal of the age — with his disciples. So, among other blessings, we are to understand that the Laodicean Church will have an abundant, complete, satisfying meal of truth, sufficient to take it to the end of its day.

3:21 — We again have the CHORUS which ends each message: To him who overcomes. . . Each stage of the Church has two kinds of overcoming. It must overcome the things which all stages have in common. It must also overcome the specialized difficulties of its own time. If the Laodiceans overcome their own special problems, they will SIT on Jesus’ throne even as he overcame and sat down with the Father in His throne. The KJV suggests that Jesus IS sitting with the Father during the Laodicean period. The NAS makes no such suggestion. But either suggestion can be justified. If we use the KJV, we have Jesus in a co-regency with the Father until the peaceable kingdom — the time Matthew calls “the throne of HIS GLORY” — the period of “regeneration.” (Matt. 19:28.) This would be once ALL of his “angels” (the Church) are with him beyond the veil. (Matt. 25:31.)

Whether this throne-sitting is the peaceable kingdom or the “change” (1 Cor. 15:51-55) can be argued. But what is meant to us personally by the promise cannot. To SIT means to have control. Jesus will share the control of his kingdom work with us beyond the veil. The result will be glorious — the blessing of all the families of the earth even as was promised to Father Abraham. The throne represents judgment authority. Finally there will be righteous judgment!

“AS I ALSO OVERCAME . . .” may be an important phrase. Jesus overcame by giving his life as an offering for sin. This may symbolize the completion of the sin offering as the last stage of the Church ALSO overcomes by giving its life sacrificially at the hands of a non-understanding world.

3:21 — The CHORUS continues its second part: He who has an ear. This is BROADER than verse 21. It reminds us that we must overcome NOT ONLY the trials of our own day, but we must hear, in addition, the messages to the other ChurchES. It is human nature to think of our own experiences as the important ones. “Oh, poor me!” But the Lord would have us not so narrow. He wishes us to look at the history of the whole Church; He wishes us to have sympathy and fellowship in the sufferings of ALL of the Christ. He wishes us to feel part of a BODY. He wants us to know the brotherhood of the entire age. He does not want us to be narrow and parochial. He wants us to feel insufficient in self. He wants us to feel like a limb, a joint, an ear — any PART, as long as it is ONLY a part.

THE LAODICEA PARABLE

The 7th Parable of Matthew 13 (vs. 47-52) — THE DRAGNET

This is a parable about harvesting, even as the Laodicean Church is entirely located in the Harvest of the Gospel Age. (The Wheat & Tares Parable — 13:24-30; 36-43 — which has its beginnings in the Smyrna period, extends to the end of the age to make additional points affecting Laodicea.)

The net represents the collecting of believers (FISH — Matt. 4:19) from the sea class of humanity. The harvesters gather good fish into vessels (the barn of Matt. 13:30? — or ecclesias?) and cast the bad (tares) away (“into the furnace” — just as in Matt. 13:42), thus losing their profession as fish.

At the close of these seven parables Jesus gives a clue that these seven have meanings beyond their INDIVIDUAL import — that these seven parables represent the seven Churches of Revelation if we can receive the hint. In 13:51 he asks if the disciples understand — thus exciting in us the desire to know if there is something we DON’T understand. In 13:52 he begins his next statement with THEREFORE — that is, if you get the point, you have an additional responsibility. If we are scribes (recorders and reporters of what we learn about the kingdom of heaven in all of its rich detail), then we are like the owners of rich estates which must dig into the trunks in the attic and cellar of our palaces to constantly find wonderful treasures which have not yet been brought out into the open light for the joy and delight of the interested.

Church Name & Characteristics

7. Laodicea

(Rev. 13: 14-22)

“Justice for the people” and “Judged people.”

Strongly condemned: the believers were lukewarm in their deeds (“neither cold nor Hot”), self-satisfied and deluded. They considered themselves rich and prosperous by worldly standards, though actually spiritually “wretched, poor, naked and blind” (in a state of confusion, lacking the true riches of divine grace and truth, unmindful of God’s plan of blessing or its stage of development, and immersed in worldly pursuits). Therefore, they were to be “spued out of (Jesus) mouth” (cast out of divine favor as the Lord’s spokesman).

They were urged to respond to Jesus’ reproofs, repent of their sins and regain their spiritual integrity and zeal. They were counseled “to buy of (him) gold tried in the fire” (to obtain true heavenly riches and the divine nature at the cost of self-sacrifice, trial, and suffering for Christ): to obtain “white raiment for clothing” (the robe of Christ’s righteousness): and to “anoint (their) eyes with eyesalve” (use present truth to appreciate the unfolding of God’s plan of blessing and the significance of end-time events). And finally they were invited to open to the knock and voice of Jesus (to recognize their returned Lord by the fulfillment of Bible time prophecies) and to sup with him (be privileged to partake of his fellowship in rich spiritual feasting).

The overcomer was promised to be seated with Jesus in his throne (symbol of rulership in the Messianic Kingdom), even as Jesus was privileged to sit in his Father’s throne (symbol of universal dominion, glory and power).

Messenger

Charles T. Russell

(1852-1916)

Successful young Christian businessman who was troubled with the failure of church creeds to depict the noble character of God. Only by examining the Bible directly was he able to discover an all-wise, powerful, loving and just Creator, worthy of devotion and worship. When he perceived God’s comprehensive plan of salvation to bless the human race (Eph, 1:9,10; Psalms 72), he devoted his life to the full-time ministry.

In 1876 he was elected Pastor of an Allegheny, Pennsylvania, Bible class and began a period of intense study and formulation of beliefs. He preferred the topical method and by rightly dividing the Bible according to symbols, parables, types and time periods was able to strike complete harmony in its teachings. In 1897 he began publishing a monthly religious journal, *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, which for almost 40 years became one of the mainstays of the Bible Student Movement which he launched. In 1886 came the first of a series of Studies on the Scriptures entitled *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, which reached the phenomenal circulation of six million. His voluminous writings were characterized by an easy flowing style that contrasted sharply with the complex theological treatises of his day and were well received.

Pastor Russell became widely known by his weekly sermons published in 2,000 city newspapers across the country. Hundreds of autonomous Bible study groups elected him as their pastor; they appreciated his doctrine, his exemplary manner of life and his warm, kind personality. He gave great emphasis to faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ as fundamental to all hope of future life. He also taught that full conversion of the world awaited the development of the elect class as joint heirs with Christ; that together, Christ and his church would administer a future earthly Kingdom to bring the opportunity for salvation to the remainder of mankind, including all who have died.

Pastor Russell traveled constantly as public lecturer and as preacher to many of the congregations that had elected him as their beloved pastor. In 1914 he climaxed his 40-year ministry by producing *The Photo Drama of Creation*, a unique state of the art audio-visual production depicting God’s dealings with mankind – past, present and future. It was successfully shown to over ten million viewers in major cities at home and abroad.

Messenger

Charles T. Russell

(continued)

Despite his appeal to the general populace, his work was vigorously opposed by most church ministers. They frowned at his lack of denominational training and deemphasis of church organization. They continued to defend the orthodox doctrines of hell-fire, Trinity and the inherent immortality of the soul which he denounced as pagan concepts that lacked biblical authority.

Pastor Russell's prodigious writings continue to be valued for their lucid explanation of the Bible and revealing of the plan of God for man's uplift. He brought an awareness of end times and of an expectation of grand prophetic fulfillments, including the imminent establishment of God's long-promised Kingdom on earth.

Historical Events

1874 A.D. – Beginning of our Lord's Parousia (invisible presence). Marked by ""blessedness" at end of "1335 days" of Daniel 12:12 – an outpouring of spiritual truths not seen since the days of the early church. Opened modern era benefiting from industrial progress, knowledge explosion, rapid travel and increased wealth, but also led to global unrest, wars and conflicts. (Daniel 12:1,4)

1876 – "Bible Student Movement" founded by Pastor C.T. Russell in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Rapidly expanded to local congregations across U.S. and convention gatherings in large cities. Discarded errors of Dark Ages and stressed importance of Christ's ransom sacrifice, the high calling of Gospel Age, Christ's invisible presence in harvest of age and God's plan to culminate in restitution blessings for all mankind.

Late 19th Century – "Higher Criticism." A movement of scholars mainly from Germany that analyzed Bible from literary and historical aspects. Despite claims of constructively identifying sources and methods of Bible authors, it seriously undermined authority and inspiration of Scriptures.

Early 20th Century – Struggle between "Modernism" and "Fundamentalism": a radical weaning of traditional beliefs vs. a reaffirmation of orthodoxy. One repudiated miracles, the fall of man, need of atonement and the resurrection; the other sought to define basics of the faith and expose evolution, higher criticism and "cults." Invoked bitter controversy, with liberal views prevailing until recent times.

1914 – Outbreak of World War I. Shattered hopes of building a modern society without war. Witnessed end of theory of "divine right of kings" with collapse of old ruling houses of Europe. (End of "Times of Gentiles" prophecy, Luke 21:24.)

1925 – "Monkey" trial of John Scopes, biology teacher, at Dayton, Tennessee. Widely publicized test case to determine legality of state laws forbidding teaching evolution in public schools. Both the prosecutor William J. Bryan (a noted statesman) and the defender Clarence Darrow (a famous lawyer) volunteered their services. Scopes was fined but belief in creation was so ridiculed that the state laws became outmoded.

1929 – Lateran Treaty: Italy recognized international sovereignty of Holy See, with pope as temporal head of Vatican State (108 acres). Papacy reimbursed for earlier loss of "Papal States." Led to establishing of diplomatic relations between Vatican and all major governments except U.S. and Russia.

1929 – 1930's – Pope Pius XI worked out 18 concordats (agreements) with European powers to ensure Roman church's spiritual authority over Catholics in their respective lands and freedom from secular control.

1938 – Outbreak of World War II. Caused global disruptions that contributed greatly to moral breakdown of society and weakening of religious restraints.

1948 – Birth of World Council of Churches (Amsterdam). Ensuing conferences held in Evanston (1954), New Delhi (1961), Uppsala (1968), Nairobi (1975), and Vancouver (1983). A fellowship of over 250 churches—Protestant, Anglican and Greek Orthodox—from over 90 countries, organized to discuss urgent problems of practical Christianity. Gave tremendous impetus to ecumenical movement.

Mid 20th Century – Papacy regained level of world prestige not seen since Middle Ages. Enhanced by diplomatic ties, attention-gathering encyclicals and media coverage of Vatican events.

1962–1965 – Second Vatican Council (Rome). Colorful, highly publicized gathering of Catholic bishops from around the world, initiated by Pope John XXIII. Updated church government, practices and liturgy. Dramatically altered previous opposition to ecumenism and laid groundwork for dialogue with Protestant groups – now called "separated brethren."

1963 – Pope John XXIII issued encyclical, Peace on Earth, Termed by President of U.N. General Assembly as “a guiding beacon in a world anxiously searching for concord and understanding.”

1965 – Pope Paul VI’s enthusiastic reception at U.N. in New York. “No more war; war never again!” climaxed his appeal to General Assembly Greatly enhanced his image as Christianity’s leading spokesman on international affairs.

1968 – Pope Paul VI’s encyclical banning artificial birth control. Stirred worldwide turmoil within Catholicism and opened dissent in other areas, including papal infallibility and celibacy of priests. Pope Paul unable to heal rift during his pontificate.

1970 – Surge of Fundamentalism. Churches stressing Bible teachings and traditional values began gaining members while mainline modernist bodies suffered losses. Efforts made to introduce Creationism into public school texts. By 1980, movement gained political strength and boosted Regan presidency.

1970 – Growth of “electronic churches.” Start of era of mass marketing of religion by handful of television preachers who were catapulted to power and prominence. Leaders included Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker, Pat Robertson, Robert Schuller, Jimmy Swaggart and Oral Roberts. By 1985, a dozen televangelism ministries approached \$100 million each in annual operating budgets.

1979 – Pope John Paul II began a series of worldwide good-will visits that would make him the most traveled pontiff in history. In Istanbul (former Constantinople), Turkey, he proposed reunion with Dimitrios I, the ruling patriarch of 150 million Eastern Orthodox believers, attempting to heal Christianity’s oldest major schism (since 1054).

1982 – World Council of Churches’ doctrinal proposal. A compromise on Baptism, Eucharist and the ministry that culminated decades of effort to harmonize irreconcilable views. If approved, promises to be greatest advance in unity since before Reformation.

– Pope John Paul II’s historic trip to England. He proposed reunification of the Anglican Church (65 million) with Roman Catholic (764 million), under headship of pope. Churches separated since 1534.

1984 – U.S. established formal diplomatic relations with the Vatican despite protests from fundamentalists.

1985 – “Jesus Seminar” founded in U.S. A group of over 100 liberal professors from major seminaries and religious colleges. Use “higher critical” methods to dispute authenticity of Jesus’ sayings in Gospels.

1987 – Widespread scandals among top T.V. evangelists. Disclosures of immorality and misuse of vast contributions weakened popular support. Both religious and political arms of fundamentalist movement severely shaken.

– Pope John Paul II’s extensive tour of U.S. Favorable media coverage boosted his popular appeal. He appeared as a credible, likeable leader, promoting social justice and traditional church dogma.

THE SEVENTH SEAL

(8:1)

The usual approach to this verse has been a chronological one. This, however, does not seem the best approach when our study on “HOUR” (See Appendix B) demonstrated rather conclusively that hour is NOT used chronologically in Scripture. HOUR is a non-specific time with a certain characteristic. The most logical prophetic approach, therefore, is one in which we search for an hour somewhere in the Revelation prophecies concerning the Harvest and then reason on how half of it might be of significance.

It has been suggested that the period of silence in the nominal heavens early in the period of Bro. Russell’s ministry might fulfill this prophecy. Once Bro. Russell had begun to present to Christianity his harvest message, there seemed no one anywhere who could refute it — a real silence in the nominal heavens. This might well be a good explanation except for two things: (1) why would this period not simply be called an hour — a period of non-specific time with a specific characteristic? To call it half an hour is to give it a chronological application. (2) When the opening of a Seal can be pinpointed in time, the Seal appears to be opened toward THE END of the Church period rather than at its beginning. Note as an example the sixth Seal. While the 6th Church begins in the early 16th century, the Seal appears to be opened at the time of the French Revolution — late in the 18th century.

Where, then is the hour of which the seventh Seal speaks? — the hour which can be divided in some way in half? Frank Shallieu suggests Rev. 17:12 as the likely answer. It fits well. Rev. 17:12 speaks of the day yet future when the last collaboration of earthly powers prior to the peaceable kingdom will occur. It is the ONE HOUR when the ten horns receive authority as kings with the beast. The narrative continues to show that it will result in the final destruction of the harlot. Can this period be divided in half? Perhaps. We are aware that the day will come when the Great Multitude must first learn that the Church is gone and secondly rise to the occasion by making white their robes. The Great Multitude will be instrumental in the throwing of the grapes into the winepress (14:17-19). But before making their robes white, there will apparently be a period in which the Great Multitude will be stunned by learning that it is left alone. See Jer. 8:20 and Hab. 3:17, 18 as examples. This period of dealing with this information might well be the half hour in which the TRUE heavens (the Great Multitude being the only true heavens remaining on earth) will be silent. Once the situation is appreciated, there will be nothing to hold these brethren back. They will speak; they will act; they will have their robes washed; they will be victorious in the spirit while they die in the flesh; they will NOT BE SILENT, but will speak openly causing the breakdown which will destroy Babylon. The LAST half hour will be very noisy!

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

11:15-19

11:14 — The seventh Trumpet is the third woe. Job 33:14 provides an interesting cross reference.

11:15 — The Laodicea Church message has in common with the seventh Trumpet message the proclamation of the Lord's second advent. It is possible in 3:20 that "my voice" is the message given by C. T. Russell which announces the parousia and the reign. Many, of course, joined Pastor Russell in the proclamation with much enthusiasm; hence, we have LOUD VOICES in heaven making the announcement: THE KINGDOM (the sovereignty) of the world has become that of our Lord (Yahweh — compare Psalms 2:2) and of His Christ (Jesus & his faithful); and He (Yahweh) will reign forever and ever (NAS). Jesus, of course, only reigns for the first thousand years (I Cor. 15:24-28).

This Trumpet is also the "last trumpet" of I Cor. 15:52, the "trump of God" of I Thess. 4:16, the Jubilee trumpet of Lev. 25 with its implied attachment to Acts 3:19-21.

11:16-17 — The 24 prophecies of the Jewish Bible (see Appendix B) who SIT (control) on their THRONES (positions of judgment — their words are extensions of God's own statement of His law) FALL ON THEIR FACES AND WORSHIP GOD (an act of displaying homage which the prophecies are seen to do as they are seen to be fulfilled.) They "SAY" (by being fulfilled), we are thankful for this time which all of the Old Testament writings have proclaimed. The fact that the terms WHO ART AND WHO WAST are used here may be significant. He, in terms of the prophecies, WAS because in the PAST He made these predictions. But now He IS, in that WHAT HE FORETOLD is currently happening. There can, of course, be no question about the eternal nature of God. What this tribute says is that God is now MAKING MANIFEST that eternal nature — the continuity from the past into the present. He is doing so BY BEGINNING THE PROMISED REIGN, the forepart of which belongs to His Christ.

11:18 — This verse now explains some of the NATURE of that reign — things which the Old Testament had predicted. Daniel 12:1 equates the trouble (the angry nations) with Jesus' standing up — beginning to exercise the regency granted him by and with his Father. The verse mentions three basic events: (1) trouble, (2) God's wrath, and (3) dealing with the dead. The enraged nations may well refer to 1914 although a case can be made for earlier anger among them. The wrath of God is likely the seven last plagues BECAUSE in them the wrath of God is finished. (See 15:1- NAS). The dealing with the dead is mentioned IN THE ORDER in which God begins to deal with the eternal position of each class. That is, THY BOND-SERVANTS THE PROPHETS were the FIRST to have their eternal position determined (Heb. 11:35). THE SAINTS were next to have this determination made (during the Gospel Age). Finally, THOSE WHO FEAR THY NAME, THE SMALL AND THE GREAT (i. e., the world of mankind) are the last to have their eternity decided — during the Millennium. During this same Millennium, of course, some will not gain life at all as He will DESTROY THOSE WHO DESTROY THE EARTH (the social order then prevailing) by their unwillingness to conform to the laws of the mediator.

11:19 — This verse is a SUMMARY of the more detailed events in Chapters 15 and 16. The wrath of verse 18 is the plagues of 15:1. The temple of verse 19 is the scene of 15:5-8. The lightning, sounds (voices), thunder, earthquake, the great hail of verse 19 are the culmination of the plagues in the seventh plague of 16:17-21.

The NAS reads "the temple of God which is in heaven was opened." The KJV reads "the temple of God was opened in heaven." A comparison of manuscripts and translation evidence seems to favor the KJV

as does the likely interpretation. The temple represents God's plan (or, in various applications, parts of that plan.) When the seventh Trumpet sounded (1874), God's plan WAS OPENED to those dwelling in the heavenlies — those who were watching and praying. One of the most important, as well as one of the most neglected, doctrines was at the center of this opening of understanding: THE COVENANTS. THAT is what is here pictured as being revealed in the temple: The Ark of the Covenant. Christ, of course, is the antitypical ark; but the picture is broader; the COVENANT part of the title is stressed. Christ IS Christ BECAUSE he is the mediator of the New Covenant in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. Bro. Russell's understanding and clarification of the covenants was at the very core of our being able to understand the plan of God at this time in history.

LIGHTNING flashed because increased truths did and will add to the confusion in society and the ecclesiastical world. Psa. 97:4.

SOUNDS (Voices) represent the many messages or explanations that are offered because of the vast and important changes in society and religion.

THUNDER represents the resulting controversies arising from increased glimpses of light.

EARTHQUAKE is symbolic of the upheaval of the social order already experienced and soon to increase.

HAILSTORM symbolizes the hard truths (Isa. 28:17) which, while already begun in a small sense, will become of such unbearable weight as to wash away all remnants of the old order.

TWO COMPLETE VIEWS OF THE GOSPEL AGE:

Chapter 12: The Woman, Manchild, and Dragon

Chapter 13: Two Beasts, an Image, and the Overcomers

THE WOMAN, MANCHILD, AND DRAGON

CHAPTER 12

Among the 13 chapters which form the first section of Revelation, Chapter 12, is one of the most complete units. Being able to interpret it correctly is the key to interpreting the remainder of Revelation. It might even be wise for a student to begin with Chapter 12 and then work both directions to understand the remainder of Revelation. Following is a relatively complete exposition of Chapter 12.

V. 1 — In the religious world (heaven) appears a sign (see margin) — a sign of a change from the Jewish Age to the Gospel Age. We see a woman (A woman can be the Church if she's a virgin, the false church if she's a harlot, or a covenant: Gal. 4:24). This woman is the "Sarah Covenant" ("The New Jerusalem" covenant of Gal. 4:26, the "covenant of sacrifice" of Psalm 50:5). Some call her the grace covenant. She is the covenant under which the Church is developed. She is clothed with the sun (the gospel) but has the moon (the Jewish Law and prophets) as a foundation. Her head (the part which thinks) is crowned by the 12 light-bearers (the Apostles).

V. 2 — She wants to be delivered of her true seed (the wheat class). Unfortunately, as we shall see, and as we know from Jesus' parable, there will also be a false seed (tares). That her seed is plural may be seen by the reading of verse 17 where it refers to the "remnant of her seed."

V. 3 — Another sign of the changing age occurs: a great red dragon. A dragon is a civil power. The red dragon actually became the official symbol of pagan Rome after their symbol was the eagle. This dragon is almost certainly the civil power known as pagan Rome on its way out of power. Paul refers to it in 2 Thess. 2:7 as "he who now letteth." The New American Standard reads, ". . . he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way" In short: Pagan Rome fought the development of Christianity (false as well as true), but pagan Rome was to disintegrate, making way, as Paul points out, for the "mystery of iniquity" — the tare class which would dominate Christianity and make Babylon such an anti-christian institution. This dragon has seven heads (forms of government) and 10 horns (supporting powers). The antichrist will eventually dominate these 10 powers. Thus we saw in 11:13 that a tenth part (France) fell in the French Revolution. The crowns upon the heads show Rome's sovereignty during its seven stages.

V. 4 — The tail of this dragon is likely Constantine as he was the LAST emperor in Rome; he moved the Imperial capital to Constantinople setting up great changes in history. Constantine, now embracing Christianity, and being chief religious ruler of the empire, called the Council of Nicea which drew to it one third of all the bishops (stars; teachers) of heaven (the Christian religious rulership). It is almost at this point that Babylon is born. The bishops are "cast . . . to the earth" — they now become primarily embroiled in earthly power-grabs and political maneuvering. Their spirituality is lost. The dragon, wishing to use newly-born Babylon (the wheat-tare mixture) to strengthen Rome, is ready to devour (assimilate) this "new" religion for political reasons.

V. 5 — The child of the covenant (which was supposed to be true Christianity) turns out to be a "manchild" — "the man of sin" which, during the Christian age, would rule all nations with total authority (a rod of iron). This is the clear history of the Roman Church during what most scholars call the Dark Ages. This "child" (the Papacy) was exalted to being "God on Earth" (Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4.)

V. 6 — Consequently the true covenant (and her true seed mentioned in verse 17) had to flee into a condition of mind-separateness, away from this symbolic "city" (government) which persecuted her. (17:18). Here for 1,260 years (from 539 A.D. when the Pope had obtained dominance in the city of Rome until 1799 A.D. when the French Revolution ended with the embarrassing capture of the Pope by Napoleon), the true saints fed on whatever truth God let to be known in the midst of the darkness.

V. 7 — How did this happen? There was a great struggle (war) in the religious world between the Papacy ("Michael" means "One Who As God") with its followers, versus pagan Rome religious interests.

V. 8 - The dragon did not win. Papacy did. Pagan Roman religion disappeared — no room found for it in heaven (the religious world).

V. 9 - Rome, and all subsequent civil power, now did not exercise religious authority. The emperor gave the Pope the title “PONTIFEX MAXIMUS” (Chief Religious Ruler) — a title only the emperors had worn. Now civil power was cast to the “earth” (a secular rule only). Note the 4-name entity here: “dragon, serpent, Devil, Satan.” This has been discussed in the treatment of 20:2 where this symbol also represents a purely civil power. (No doubt, however, under the dominion of the literal Devil.)

V. 10 - The result of this rise to power of the Roman Church was the loud boast in heaven (the religious world): “We are the kingdom of God on earth! We have conquered pagan religion! They who have persecuted us are now beneath our power.”

V. 11 - Naturally, Papacy attributes the victory to Jesus. Papacy also attributes it to its martyrs whom it venerates. Thus they claim the victory due to the martyrdom of those “accused” (v. 10) and to their life-stories (“the word of their testimony”), and also to their willingness to love the church over life itself (“loved not their lives unto the death”). Papacy will always be thenceforth willing to ask others to sacrifice for the maintenance of church power.

V. 12 - The rejoicing continues IF you are part of the apostate church (“ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them”). IF you are not, WOE! The false church quickly took on the power of the persecutor, and it used the dragon (civil power) to enforce its persecuting power. Throughout the 1,260 years of Papal dominance, the earthly princes readily obeyed Papal dictates knowing that the rule of the church seemed endless, but that of the civil princes, only a “short time” — unless, of course, they obeyed.

V. 13 - The civil power relished its job of cooperating with the man of sin in putting down all “heresies.” Heresies, of course, were truths promulgated by the “woman” (covenant) and those being developed under her.

V. 14 - The Dark Ages (3½ symbolic years) were pictured by the 3-½ year period in the life of Elijah when there was no rain. (Water is a symbol of truth.) See also Amos 8:11. The true Church was fed during this time by the two wings (Old and New Testament writings) of a great eagle. (The eagle is far-sighted and represents WISDOM.) This wisdom, of course, is the Bible itself which sustained true Christians all during the 1,260 years of Papal persecution. Notice she is hidden from “the face of the serpent.” Face is a symbol of favor. She was OUT OF FAVOR with the civil authorities. (Serpent and dragon are the same character as is shown by comparing verses 15 and 16.).

V. 15 - Elements of the civil power were tired of being under the thumb of the Pope. They revolted. They revolted by what history calls the “Age of Enlightenment.” There was a large and dramatic spread of TRUTH (water) — so much truth that it was a flood. This was a flood designed, in large part, to do away with the oppression of religion (false or true, it made no difference). This movement was centered in France and erupted into what we know as the French Revolution. Among other things, it OUTLAWED RELIGION.

V. 16 - Things didn’t quite work as expected. The earth (society everywhere) liked the idea of truth. Revolution spread everywhere. But many liked religious truth also. By accepting revolutionary trends, the world actually opened the way for religious freedoms. This helped the woman. Since 1799 A.D. Papacy has been unable to control the rapid rise of religious truth-seeking and investigation. In terms of the Elijah picture: it rained everywhere!

V. 17 - Religious truth is always a threat. This final verse indicates that, before the Church is completed, the civil power will yet “make war” with the remaining members of the true Church.

NOTE: The first phrase of 13:1 belongs in Chapter 12. It reads, (in its corrected translation), “And he stood upon the sand of the sea” (Chapter 13 then begins, “And I saw a beast . . .”) The sand of the sea is a symbol for the great masses of humanity. The civil powers yet dominate the masses until the Lord will overthrow their selfish rulerships.

ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER 12

WHO IS THE WOMAN?

A number of brethren feel uncomfortable with the suggestion that the woman represents the Sarah Covenant. One reason for this uneasiness is that it opens the way for the common misapplication of the manchild's being Jesus — an interpretation which ruins Chapter 12 and which makes a reasonable interpretation of it impossible. That such a misinterpretation is possible, however, is not a good reason for dismissing the possibility that the woman is the covenant. Nevertheless, EITHER interpretation of the woman (Sarah Covenant or True Church) is quite workable and will not do violence to a good interpretation of the chapter. We, therefore, here give some of the good reasons for considering the woman to be the True Church.

The woman is nourished in the wilderness for 1260 years even as the true Church is fed by God during the 539-to-1799 period during which the anti-typical Jezebel persecutes.

(NOTE: There is a Scriptural precedent for God's nourishing a covenant in a wilderness condition. See Gen. 21:13-20 with Gal. 4:22-26.)

Elijah represents the Church in the flesh. The woman of Rev. 12 has experiences just like those of Elijah in that each is fed of God in the wilderness for 3-½ symbolic years. (The change in gender is puzzling. But the problem is more with Elijah since the Church is usually represented by a woman.)

The woman can be identified with natural Israel. (She would, therefore, be the antitype — Spiritual Israel.) This connection is made by a comparison with the dream of Joseph in Gen. 37:9-11 where the same symbols (sun, moon, and 12 stars — Joseph being the 12th) represent the family of Israel which are used to symbolize the woman of Rev. 12.

Rev. 12:17 "remnant of her seed" might refer to Protestantism (i. e., the active Church from the Reformation onward.) Since the FIRST child is Papacy, the second could well be argued in its plural form to represent other denominational movements. The Church DID bring forth both movements. Likewise, the dragon makes "war" with each of these seeds. However, this remnant may simply mean the true Church in the sense of Psalm 102:28. Just as the Church can be reapers and wheat, so can it be both woman and seed. (See also Gal. 4:19).

In 12:17, the dragon persecutes the remnant subsequent to the Time of the End. Papacy, after it recovered somewhat from the Napoleonic era, worked with her restored contacts among Europe's kings (dragon). In Catholic countries, the spirit of persecution was directed — and still is — against Protestants. In the same spirit, Elijah also had moments of fleeing from Jezebel after the 1260 days.

See article 4a (PARALLEL CONSTRUCTION OF PARTS ONE AND TWO). If the woman of Chapter 17 is the false church, there is consistency in layout if the woman of Chapter 12 is the true Church.

TWO BEASTS, AN IMAGE, AND THE OVERCOMERS

(13:1 - 14:5)

(NOTE: Please consider Item #74g in Appendix B before a study of this chapter.)

— A NOTE ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF VERSES 1 THROUGH 10 —

Brethren have struggled with the interpretation of this chapter because, historically, it appears to be out of order. This has even led to inaccurate interpretations. For instance, the prevailing Bible Student view of the wounding of one of the heads is that the Reformation accomplished this. This IS accurate. But when we see the head wounded in verse 3 and the 1260 years shown later, in verse 5, it does not seem easy to reconcile THE ORDER OF INFORMATION PRESENTED. However, once we see a little secret of the construction of this narrative, we can feel very comfortable with the symbolisms and their historical fulfillments which Bro. Russell presented to us.

Once we are introduced to the Leopard Beast and its physical description (verses 1 and 2), we are given a SERIES of histories of this beast. Each history, each part of the series, begins with what has been GIVEN to the beast. Then follows what RESULTS from the beast's having been given these various things. With each part of the series, history CLICKS BACK in time to take another look at this beast. Hence:

(1) In verse 2, the beast is GIVEN power, throne, and authority. Then (verses 3 and 4) we see the HISTORY of that authority: one of the heads (authorities) is wounded; but the beast recovers.

(2) In verse 5, the beast is GIVEN two things: a Mouth, and Authority To "DO" for 1260 years. Then in (verse 6) we see the HISTORY of those two things: Blasphemy against God and the saints during that period.

(3) In verse 7, the beast is GIVEN authority over the restless classes of humanity (tribes, peoples, tongues, and nations.) Then (verse 8) we see the HISTORY of that authority: ONLY "those who dwell on the earth" really worship him. The rest merely submit to his overwhelming control.

Verse 9 then gives the LESSON which applies to all of the above histories.

Seeing this clever and consistent method of narrative makes this chapter very clear and easy of interpretation.

13:1 — The first phrase of this verse,

AND HE STOOD ON THE SAND OF THE SEASHORE, belongs to
the end of Chapter 12 (which see for an explanation.)

AND I SAW: Here again we have John's peculiar section marker. It is with this phrase that the new vision begins.

A BEAST COMING UP OUT OF THE SEA: A beast represents the less-than-ideal characteristics of mankind. (See Eccl. 3:18.) Sometimes the symbol seems to apply to one man as with Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:16.) Most often, however, the symbol applies to a group of men (a government or institution) with unholy characteristics.

This beast (the Roman Church-dominated arrangement), comes out of the sea (restless humanity) because this apostate Christianity was born in the crumbling ruins of the pagan Roman Empire — a time of great restlessness and turmoil.

HAVING TEN HORNS: Horns are powers — supporting powers. The history of Roman Europe shows a rather continuous involvement of about ten states in support of the Roman arrangement. (See NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST by Bro. Anton Frey, page 190.)

SEVEN HEADS: Heads are the IDEA part of any creature. The church-dominated empire has gone through seven major changes in the way it has related church to state beginning back in the days of Justinian when the church became more than just the state religion. (See Item #74g for a discussion of these heads.)

ON HIS HORNS WERE TEN DIADEMS: This is different from Chapter 12 which has the diadems on the HEADS rather than on the HORNS. Here is the difference:

CHAPTER 12: Emperors (who were at the helm of any of the forms — heads — of government) ruled the Roman Empire. Rome WAS the AUTHORITY, NOT its provincial horns. Thus the crowns were on the heads.

CHAPTER 13: After the ascendancy of the “little horn,” the Empire began losing its over-all rule. When Justinian made the Bishop of Rome PONTIFEX MAXIMUS, it was, in fact, a political move despite the meaning of the title. Justinian needed to enforce CIVIL RULE in the provinces far from Constantinople. The fact that the “little horn” could subdue three other horns shows the civil power of the Papacy in the region. Thus Rome lost its over-all dominion and the provinces (horns) GAINED political autonomy. This is here shown by the crowns’ being on the horns FROM THIS POINT FORWARD. Note and remember that the Papacy was ONE OF THE CROWNED HORNS — but the one he chose to wear was an ecclesiastical crown with power to give “Divine Right” to the lesser horns. This left this “little horn” with astonishing influence which would never have been attainable were he only to wear an ordinary civil crown. Because this delegation of power to the horns begins historically with Justinian, we are justified in seeing Justinian as the FIRST of the seven heads of this beast.

ON HIS HEAD WERE BLASPHEMOUS NAMES: The whole concept of church-state union (fornication) is an abomination in God’s sight. Therefore, the heads, the ruling church-state collaboration, are a blasphemy. Blasphemy means “an evil-speaking.” What has spoken more evilly of God’s character than what the apostasy-state combination has done in His name? The word NAME means character. Blasphemous names, therefore, mean evil-speaking characteristics. Thus, the false church need not have SAID anything bad about God. It is what it DID that says it all.

13:2 — THE BEAST WHICH I SAW: It is important to note that this beast borrows from the first three civil beasts of Daniel 7. Satan is quick to incorporate the “best” of his previous efforts. Babylon, Persia, and Greece were each distinguished by certain characteristics which allowed them to gain great power. The Papal beast, by using the success of all of these, was able not only to GAIN, but to RETAIN power for a long time.

LIKE A LEOPARD: (See Jer. 13:23). This beast is camouflaged (wolf in sheep's clothing?) and, thus, able to work without being seen (behind the scenes.) It is spotted — able to use one policy here, a conflicting one there, — whatever suits its nefarious ends. Like Greece (which was represented by the leopard in Daniel 7,) Papacy claimed to be the seat of learning and civilized attainment.

HIS FEET LIKE A BEAR: How does this beast walk? Where does a bear walk? Wherever it wants to! The Papal beast, through its enormous size, its threatening power, was able to convince all would-be challengers to submit. Just to look at it would give all powers pause. The description of Persia (Dan. 7:5) suggests the bear in a threatening position. The response is — OKAY! Take what you want! “Arise, devour much meat!”

MOUTH LIKE A LION: Babylon's king had a mouth which was both pompous and threatening. (See Dan. 4:30 and 3:19.) Papacy, of course, has the same reputation (Dan. 7:8, 20, 25.) Compare Isaiah 31:4.

It is not clear why John mentions the characteristics in REVERSE of the order found in Daniel. Daniel deals with Lion, Bear, and Leopard; Revelation 13 deals with Leopard, Bear, and Lion. This may simply be because Daniel was looking FORWARD as to what WOULD COME while John is looking BACKWARD seeing WHAT WAS.

AND THE DRAGON GAVE HIM HIS POWER, THRONE, AND GREAT AUTHORITY: It is not easy to say whether or not these elements were received at any specific time. Whatever church-state exultation occurred, occurred at the expense of the dying pagan Roman Empire. Chapter 12 dealt with this change. The first real POWER was given with Constantine's making of Christianity the Empire's religion. The THRONE may refer to AUTHORITY OF JUDGMENT or to the literal PLACE of rule by the GREAT MOUTH — the horn which dominates the beast. THRONE, as a symbol of the authority of judgment, possibly dates from Justinian's granting of the title of PONTIFEX MAXIMUS (Chief Religious Ruler) to the Papacy. Papacy was, of course, in ROME. We may, therefore, find the THRONE referring to this SEAT OF POWER. It is so mentioned in 2:13 — during Pergamos (the period of Earthly Elevation.) The removal of the capital from Rome to Constantinople by Constantine gave Papacy a PHYSICAL location from which to build its sphere of influence. Justinian made this throne official. GREAT AUTHORITY (with the emphasis on GREAT) seems to go beyond the chief religious title and the exultation of one of the “horns.” The fact that Charlemagne allowed his crowning by the Pope, the fact that Otto the Great founded an empire called the Holy Roman Empire (the FIRST WORD of which title exalts the Papacy), shows the GREAT AUTHORITY which the dragon (civil power) GAVE to the Pope.

13:3 — For the TIME of this verse, see the explanation at the opening of the Chapter 13 discussion.

AND ONE OF HIS HEADS: We have just seen in verse 2 that the beast had been given great authority. We now see the historical result of this: ONE of his seven heads — one of his overall ruling AUTHORITIES — has that authority challenged significantly. If our speculation be correct (App. B., Item #74g), it is the THIRD head which is here meant.

AS IF IT HAD BEEN SLAIN:

NOTE VERY CAREFULLY: There is a change of pronouns in this context. When the beast is the subject, the pronouns are HIS or HIM; when the head is the subject, the pronoun is IT. This is important in interpretation.

13:3 continued —

AS IF IT HAD BEEN SLAIN:* IF the head were slain, and IF there were no other head to take its place, that would have been the end of the beast. IN ACTUALITY, the HEAD was slain in a sense, and not in another. This sounds like double-talk! But, the nature of the fulfillment of this prophecy is very subtle. The beast, of course, is the church-state cooperation between the “little horn” and the civil power. While the “little horn” has retained its identity over the centuries, the HEADS have changed. The first SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT (head) was that of the Roman emperor (Justinian) as civil head with the “little horn” as chief religious ruler. The second SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT (head) was a clear division between east and west Rome. The empire over which Justinian had ruled yet existed in Constantinople. But the west was now rather independent and was under a new western emperor, Charlemagne. Charlemagne was actually TRICKED by the Pope into letting the Pope put the crown on the emperor’s head. But Charlemagne allowed it and, subsequently, felt a bit embarrassed by the whole thing as it caused a rift with the eastern empire. Nevertheless, the SYMBOLISM of the act, and the virtual new arrangement in the west, constituted a new HEAD. Later, in 962 a third SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT (head) came into being under Otto the Great. This head gave the new arrangement the title of HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE, the first word of which magnifies the place of the “little horn.” East and West Rome were now officially and actually two separate and distinct empires. It is this THIRD HEAD, the HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE, which was “slain” by the Reformation. Historians confidently claim that the harm done to the Holy Roman Empire by the Reformation was so great as to constitute “. . . the virtual dissolution of the empire.”

It might be of interest to note that the emperor at the time of Luther was Charles V. It was he who presided at the famous Diet of Worms which proclaimed Luther a heretic. But the German princes protected Luther, absorbed his religion, and, thus, wiped out the very seat of Charles V’s empire.

HIS FATAL WOUND WAS HEALED: NOTE: It was NOT the head (not “its” wound) that was healed. It was HIS (the beast’s) wound that was healed. The Holy Roman Empire DID NOT DISSOLVE! It reconstituted itself and CAME BACK UNDER THE SAME NAME, but under a DIFFERENT HEAD. The period between Charles V and the Peace of Westphalia was a period of reorganization for the Holy Roman Empire. When it RECOVERED from its Reformation wound, it WAS A DIFFERENT BEAST with the same name. Thus, since the Peace of Westphalia, the Holy Roman Empire had a NEW HEAD or system of government — the FOURTH head and beast. This arrangement continued until Napoleon came along, destroyed the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, and created a NEW HEAD, the FIFTH.

AND THE WHOLE EARTH WAS AMAZED AFTER THE BEAST: The Reformation challenge to the Roman church-state empire was SO great that it WAS no less than amazing that the Holy Roman Empire withstood its onslaught and retained as much prestige as it did. The beast WAS hurt, but it recovered. It NEEDED a little support which is why we will later see in verse 12 that the advent of the two-horned beast was a blessing for the beast; the formation of a like beast in England helped the Europeans acknowledge the ten-horned beast as a viable sort of entity.

* AS IF IT HAD BEEN SLAIN: The peculiar nature of this expression demands attention. The head was, indeed, slain. But to history the slaying seemed to be TEMPORARY in that the Holy Roman Empire made a comeback. When it DID come back, it REALLY had a new head, but because it did not change its NAME, it appears to the casual eye to be the same old creature unchanged. But it WAS changed — in nearly all ways except by name.

13:4 — AND THEY WORSHIPPED THE DRAGON: It must be remembered that the allegiance of peoples to their governments is as strong as their allegiance to the churches affiliated with those governments. The Holy Roman Empire thus continued with the adoration of its subjects, and a Catholic part of Europe was insured.

BECAUSE HE GAVE HIS AUTHORITY TO THE BEAST: The co-dependency of church and state is inescapable. If the empire says “The Papacy is our spiritual head; it gives us God’s right to rule,” the people say Amen to government and Pope forming one grand beast!

THEY WORSHIPPED THE BEAST: NOT the church, remember, but the church-dominated arrangement. We must await chapter 17 before we can clearly separate the woman from the beast.

WHO IS LIKE THE BEAST?: The Catholic Holy Roman Empire was great and extensive. Even after Protestantism had taken its toll on former parts of the Empire, the question was still valid — “Is there any empire like THIS one?”

WHO IS ABLE TO WAGE WAR WITH HIM?: Who can successfully oppose the Papal-Roman Empire? The question was getting a little hollow after the Reformation, but the answer was still “NO ONE YET!” Napoleon would give it a try later; in a sense, however, he would not destroy it — merely alter it once more, give it a new head. He **WOULD** destroy the Holy Roman Empire, but he would **NOT** destroy the beast — the church-state system.

13:5 — AND THERE WAS GIVEN TO HIM: This phrase begins another look at this beast, one which clicks back in time. (See comments on construction of this chapter at the beginning of the notes on Chapter 13.)

A MOUTH SPEAKING ARROGANT WORDS AND BLASPHEMIES: This is a clear reference to Dan. 7:8, 11, and 25. A brief history of this “mouth” is found in Volumes II and III. Papacy was the mouth. (Papacy, remember, is **NOT** a head, but a horn with prominent eyes and mouth.) Papacy was the bark of the beast; the civil powers were the bite.

AND AUTHORITY TO DO FOR FORTY-TWO MONTHS: Papacy “did” things most indirectly — through the state. But this authority to “do” through the state went practically unchallenged unto 1799 when the forty-two months expired.

13:6 — AND HE OPENED HIS MOUTH IN BLASPHEMY: It was Papacy’s practice to destroy by condemnation — evil speaking (blasphemy).

AGAINST GOD, TO BLASPHEME HIS NAME: This is the first of **THREE** targets of his blasphemy. The doctrines of Papacy totally misrepresent the character (name) of God, thus making sure few could truly know God.

AND HIS TABERNACLE: This is the second target of his blasphemy. The tabernacle and temple represent God’s plans and purposes — the tabernacle, more particularly, the plan of redemption. The mass and other abominations totally destroy the concepts of God’s plan.

THOSE WHO DWELL IN HEAVEN: This is the third target of the blasphemy. It might be considered by some that the saints (those who dwell in heaven) **ARE** the tabernacle. This is true to a degree. But the parallel text in Daniel 7:25 mentions the same three targets of Papacy: the Most High, the Saints, and the Plan (“times and law.”) The saints dwell in the holy of the tabernacle, a sanctuary of spiritual light, food, and prayer.

13:7 — AND IT WAS GIVEN TO HIM TO MAKE WAR WITH THE SAINTS AND TO OVERCOME THEM: It is most likely that this sentence is spurious. This “given” was already covered in verses 5 and 6. It seems redundant to repeat it here. It is easy of explanation if it is legitimate, but it is likely not.

AND AUTHORITY WAS GIVEN TO HIM: Once again we have another section introduced by the beast’s being given something. In this case the focus is on people:

Note the THREE authorities given to the beast by this time —

1. The GREAT AUTHORITY of rulership (vs. 2).
2. The TIMED authority to wear out the saints (vs. 5).
3. The authority over the masses of people.

OVER EVERY TRIBE AND PEOPLE AND TONGUE AND NATION: This four-part name represents the “sea” class of humanity — the restless masses (Cf. 17:15, and see Item #69.) The thought is that this beast had control over everyone in its domain — even people who might not have much interest in its leadership.

13:8 — AND ALL WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH: This class represents those with an interest in the status quo — people with rooted interests. (See Item # 69.) This verse is here to show a CONTRAST. Even though the beast has authority over all (vs. 7), ONLY those who like the socio-political arrangement because of their own selfish interests (those who dwell on the earth):

WORSHIP HIM: No one else EXCEPT the “dwell-on-the-earth” class could possibly worship this monster. Note what might SEEM a contradiction. 13:4 states that the whole earth worshipped dragon and beast. This is not contradictory as EARTH represents established society, the equivalent here of “those who dwell on the earth.” The group in 13:7 is the “sea,” not the earth.

(HE) WHOSE NAME HAS NOT BEEN WRITTEN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD IN THE BOOK OF LIFE OF THE LAMB WHO HAS BEEN SLAIN: This long description, amplifying “those who dwell on the earth,” must be significant because of the amount of space it takes! First, it clearly identifies this class as being non-spirit-begotten. Secondly, and more importantly, it encourages the spirit-begotten ones who must live through the experience. It does so by reminding them that (1) the place of the TRUE Church has been established long before the false came along and will, therefore, not be neglected or hurt by this beast, and that (2) the lamb, whom they follow, experienced death which they might also experience. But, (3) death is of no significance if you are in the BOOK of LIFE.

13:9 — IF ANYONE HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR: This refrain carries us back to the messages to the seven Churches (Chapters 2 & 3). It is always coupled there with (and here, no doubt, is meant to bring to mind) the words: TO HIM WHO OVERCOMETH. Most of the Church has had to overcome this beast. The rewards will be stipulated to all who refer back to Chapters 2 & 3.

13:10 — This verse is a summary lesson following all of the foregoing descriptions of the beast. It is a lesson in overcoming implied in verse 9. Its lesson is clarified by a comparison with Jer. 15:1, 2.

IF ANYONE IS FOR CAPTIVITY, TO CAPTIVITY HE GOES; IF ANYONE KILLS WITH THE SWORD, WITH THE SWORD HE MUST BE KILLED: The lesson here is one of reaping what has been sown. It is the Lord’s rule: those who favored slavery for others will be enslaved by their own devices; those who use violence or deception will be victims of the same.

HERE IS THE PERSEVERANCE AND THE FAITH OF THE SAINTS: This phrase occurs again in 14:12 following the description of the decades of Babylon's decline and fall during the Harvest. The message in both passages is clear: the saints MUST ENDURE the wait while all about them SEEMS to take so long. Both passages (13:9 and 14:8-11) describe either the promise or the fact of Babylon's punishments. The faith and perseverance of the saints DEPEND on their belief that this retribution WILL come. This is part of the reason for the long description in 13:8. Faith in the glorious results is a mainstay.

CHAPTER 13, PART II

THE TWO-HORNED BEAST

Once we have seen the history of the ten-horned beast, we are introduced to a second player in this drama. One reason the ten-horned beast recovered from its Reformation wound is that this new player demonstrates that there is yet left some real church-state power — even separate from the original beast. It, in essence, revitalizes the concept of Divine Right and church-state unity — just at the moment when the Reformation might have killed the concept.

13:11 — AND I SAW: Again we have one of the Revelator's obvious divisions of his story.

ANOTHER BEAST: Something akin to the first beast, thus called “another” one. This one is also a church-state empire.

COMING UP OUT OF THE EARTH: This beast, unlike the first one, is not born out of chaos in the empire, but, to the contrary, evolves rather smoothly out of existing society — actually a break-off from the existing Holy Roman Empire.

AND HE HAD TWO HORNS: two supporting powers. This makes identification quite simple since such a beast is only to be found in one place. Even though the Church of England and Ireland was officially so known only for about 70 years during the 19th century, its two-power characteristic is sufficient to identify it. It FUNCTIONED as the church of these two countries for over 300 years. It is important to remember also that this beast IS NOT the Church of England and Ireland, but rather the church-state system of these two countries combined.

LIKE A LAMB: Apparently this description is given as a CONTRAST to the Leopard Beast of 13:1, 2. This would, then, imply a temperate nature to this beast — not at all like the Holy Roman Empire.

AND HE SPOKE AS A DRAGON: In the English Empire, the King is titular head of the church. Therefore, this beast has been (and, no doubt, WILL BE in any future involvements) more noticed for its political than its theological pronouncements. Brethren might well pay special note to this phrase. It seems clearly to say that England's secular involvements would have more to do with prophetic fulfillment than its religious dogma.

13:12 — AND HE EXERCISES ALL AUTHORITY OF THE FIRST BEAST: Recall that the first beast had three kinds of authority. (See page 164.) Apparently all of these authorities would apply to the two-horned beast except the 1260-year license. This phrase tells us the tyranny which this new beast was capable of. Virtually everything the Roman beast claimed, the English beast claimed. Only the mouths differed. One had the Pope, the other the King.

IN HIS PRESENCE: i.e., AT THE SAME TIME. The two beasts were doing the same things except that each did it in his own sphere of influence.

AND HE MAKES THE EARTH AND THOSE WHO DWELL IN IT: Society and those with a stake in it. Society is impersonal, but it had to conform. Those who dwell in it are individuals who are the mainstays of society, people with something to lose if society doesn't "worship" the beast. This need for CONFORMITY to preserve the status quo is what prompted persecution of dissenters. The English refugees to America during this period were attempting to escape this societal conformity and its requirements.

TO WORSHIP THE FIRST BEAST: By example. England and its church-state arrangements, being virtually no different from the Holy Roman Empire, made criticism of the Roman Beast impossible. The establishment of the English church-state actually HELPED the Holy Roman Empire recover from its grievous wound inflicted by the Reformation. How can you criticize your twin? By its doctrine and structural example, the two-horned beast promoted worship of its European counterpart.

WHOSE FATAL WOUND WAS HEALED: The wound was caused by the Reformation. The healing was AIDED by Henry VIII's establishment of the English Church. The history of the two beasts and their successes are inseparable. While they were enemies, they were also comrades. It is well stated of Henry: "... he beheaded 'traitors' who recognized Papal headship, and burned 'heretics' who denied Papal doctrines." The only REAL enmity between the two beasts was between their two mouths (King and Pope).

13:13 — AND HE PERFORMS GREAT SIGNS: At this point in the narrative, the various brethren who interpret this prophecy divide in their opinions. Some explain verses 13-17 as past — symbolic of powers exercised by the English beast similar to those having been exercised by the Roman beast. Others do this but EXTEND the application into the future. Yet others feel that these verses are almost certainly yet to be fulfilled. The arguments are sound on all three accounts. We must await the Lord's interpretation. Because Bro. Russell's viewpoint was the second of these three options, and because his views seem most reasonable to the fact and the context, we will parallel his thoughts in these verses.

The GREAT SIGNS seem to refer to the exercise of power by the English church-state to insure compliance to its doctrine and practices.

SO THAT HE EVEN MAKES FIRE COME DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN: Fire represents judgments (and/or their destructive results.) Heaven is the ecclesiastical world. The judgments of the English system against heretics were severe:

TO THE EARTH IN THE PRESENCE OF MEN: The fire which ecclesiastically judged society was a tool of the church to frighten men into compliance. Punishments were public so that none could escape the warning lessons — hence the phrase IN THE PRESENCE OF MEN (Cf. vs. 12 where the same phrase shows how the English church flaunted its authority in front of the Roman beast.) MEN, in 13:13 may be a reference to true Christians. This practice of the English beast to intimidate dissenters was one of the causes of many leaving England for America.

13:14 — AND HE DECEIVES THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH: The deception was that he actually had spiritual authority. Note, however, that the only ones really deceived are "those who dwell on the earth" — non-spirit-begotten ones whose primary interests are their temporal affairs.

BECAUSE OF THE SIGNS: The best way to deceive is to tell a lie big-enough. The "signs," the manifestations of spiritual power, exercised by this new beast gave a message:

TELLING THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH: Showing them by example

TO MAKE AN IMAGE TO THE BEAST WHO HAD THE WOUND: It is important to remember here that those who get the idea (by example) to make an image are “those who dwell on the earth.” Protestantism in general was a Reformation movement in which, probably, all (or nearly all) of the true saints were involved. It was NOT the idea of the saints to make an image. It was the idea of “those who dwell on the earth” — those who need another and newer vehicle to expand their worldly roots.

The image, note, is not to the beast who inspired it, but to the 10-horned beast. This is telling. Why would the 2-horned beast say to make an image to the 10-horned beast? The fact is, the 2-horned beast was, in its own way, an image of the other beast. By being so, it told the power people (“those who dwell on the earth”) that they TOO could make ANOTHER image if they find it profitable to do so. In other words, by example, the 2-horned beast was saying: “If I can do it, why can’t others?” The Catholic politico-socio-economic world had, in a sense, lost the world of Protestantism for their profit-making ventures. How could they regain this market? They could work toward amalgamating Protestantism into one large, cooperative block — a new sort of beast, but not so strong as, only an image of, a reflection of, the first beast WHO HAD THE WOUND OF THE SWORD (by Protestantism’s Reformation) but who HAS COME TO LIFE in a semi-rejuvenated, new-headed, Holy Roman Empire.

13:15 — THERE WAS GIVEN TO HIM: Note this phrase carefully. We encountered it several times in the description of the Leopard Beast. This phrase was consistently followed by a history of what happened once something was “given” to the beast. The same now happens here.

TO GIVE BREATH TO THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST: The image is the Protestant church federation. The English beast has been instrumental in all efforts in this direction. This is clearly shown in history. The British Empire was an immensely important factor in unifying the post-French-Revolution world — most particularly the non-Roman Catholic world. Remember, this beast speaks “as a dragon” — its civil influences are as important as its ecclesiastical ones. It does not seem far-fetched to claim that the influences of the British Empire were an important factor in contributing to the movement toward the federation of Protestant denominations. England’s maritime economic pursuits unified the Protestant world in the 19th century.

At this point it is wise to note Bro. Russell’s hesitancy at predicting now much more MIGHT happen in the future. He clearly leaves open the door to the thought that this MAY HAVE BEEN mostly fulfilled by the Church of England’s cooperation in Protestant federation. IF more is to come, we will see it; IF more is not to come in this regard, we should not make our unfulfilled expectations embitter us.

It is of great value to note the similarity of this image to that found in Daniel 3:1. The beast itself (13:18) is denoted by the number 666. Daniel’s image, almost certainly related to the Rev. 13 image, is 60 cubits by 6 cubits. We are given only TWO DIMENSIONS. This seems to be saying that the Image of the Beast is only two-dimensional — it has no depth. (Perhaps this is saying that it is never a real church-state union.) It is a hollow imitation of its great model. It has not, nor will it ever have, the KIND of power, influence, prestige, or authority of the beast after which it is modeled. Nevertheless, it DOES get “breath.” It becomes alive and functioning and, as the continuation of this verse shows, it exercises sufficient influence to be a problem.

THAT THE IMAGE MIGHT EVEN SPEAK: It gains enough power to become another mouth. It gains the ability through pronouncements to change attitudes and alter behaviors (Note that its mouth is never defined — never clearly delineated as are the mouths of the two great beasts.)

AND CAUSE AS MANY AS DO NOT WORSHIP THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST TO BE KILLED: Killing here, as elsewhere, seems to be actual or functional excommunication. The message is, “If you don’t go along with our federated standards, we don’t recognize you as Christians.”

13:16 — AND HE CAUSES ALL: Uniformity is Satan’s trademark.

THE SMALL AND THE GREAT: The amount of influence one has in the world is not an exemption.

THE RICH AND THE POOR: The amount of one’s wealth or wealth of knowledge is also not an exemption.

THE FREE MEN AND THE SLAVES: The amount of intellectual independence one has is also not an exemption.

TO BE GIVEN A MARK: an evidence of allegiance.

ON THEIR RIGHT HAND: Their cooperation.

OR ON THEIR FOREHEAD: The mental and/ or character assent.

13:17 — AND THAT NO ONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO BUY OR TO SELL: in the spiritual marketplace of ideas. This HAS happened. Those who have the truth have been systematically excluded from the spiritual marketplace of orthodoxy and confederated Protestantism. Can it get worse? Possibly; even probably. But it need not do so to fulfill this verse.

EXCEPT THE ONE WHO HAS THE MARK: A mark is a characteristic. The characteristic is probably willingness to help, or at least not to oppose, the accepted religious way of doing things. (Cf. 13:5).

THE NAME OF THE BEAST: — possibly the TITLE of the beast (i.e., membership in it.) Or, since name means character, it possibly means that you are not only willing to cooperate, but you are inherently LIKE the beast. We also use the word NAME to represent authority — as when we ask in Jesus’ NAME.

OR THE NUMBER OF HIS NAME: This phrase raises a question which the next verse helps to answer. Number means VALUE. When people say, “I’ve got your number,” it means they know what you are LIKE. They know your VALUES. The number of a name means the VALUE OF HIS CHARACTER. Perhaps this means that, if you have value to the system, you are safe. They will USE you as long as you remain of value to them. Throughout history, the 10-horned beast has operated on the philosophy that the end justifies the means. That is their value system.

13:18 — HERE IS WISDOM: What a marvelous way to catch our attention! Everyone would like to be wise. But the meaning is NOT that. It means, as does Daniel 12:10, that those who are blessed with God’s favor will understand, and no one else.

LET HIM WHO HAS UNDERSTANDING: No one will be able to “calculate the number” except those who understand the place of the Roman system in history.

CALCULATE THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST: Several items in this phrase need attention. First, the “number” must be “calculated.” It does not just plainly appear. Secondly, it is related to the 10-horned beast — the one to whom the image was made (verse 14). Thirdly, number symbolizes VALUE. Whatever must be calculated apparently has something to do with the beast’s “value.” This doesn’t mean monetary value, but rather the “value (number) of his name.” (Verse 17) His name STANDS FOR SOMETHING.

It represents his values. History shows us that the values of the apostasy can be summed up as usurped power and authority. Verse 5 summarizes this idea. Thus, when we learn that Papacy's claim is to be the one who rules in place of the Son of God, and that Papacy, therefore, appropriated the blasphemous title VICARIVS FILII DEI, we HAVE the name which identifies his values (number).

THE NUMBER IS THAT OF A MAN: Paul identified the "man" — the office — to which this refers as the "Man of Sin" and the "Son of Destruction." (II Thess. 2:3, 4) It is the Papacy.

HIS NUMBER IS 666: The sum of the Roman numerals is VICARIVS FILII DEI is 666. MANY titles or descriptions (in several languages) of the Roman system calculate to this figure — a fact which corroborates the conclusion. VICARIVS FILII DEI, however, (VICAR OF THE SON OF GOD, or VICARIOUS SON OF GOD) seems the best explanation for the reasons stated above.

Bro. Loomis points out that the three languages used on Jesus' cross (Latin, Hebrew and Greek) all have words representing this number. The Hebrew word ROMIITH (Roman):

R = 200
O = 6
M = 40
I = 10
I = 10
TH = 400
666

(The Hebrew alphabet, of course, must be used!)

The Greek word LATEINOS (Latin Man); again, using the Greek alphabet:

L = 30
A = 1
T = 300
E = 5
I = 10
N = 50
O = 70
S = 200
666

There are apparently a number of other solutions — all pointing to the Roman system. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that coincidence is ruled out.

CHAPTER 14:1-5 CONTINUES THE NARRATIVE

It is clear that the chapter division is in the wrong place. The first five verses of Chapter 14 show those with the PROPER mark on their foreheads — the overcomers. It completes the story of Chapter 13. If this were not so, Chapter 14, about the Harvest, would have the Church complete at the beginning of the Harvest!

14:1 — AND I LOOKED: Here, again, John uses his reliable focus changer. Since 13:11 we have been concentrating on the history and effects of the 2-horned beast and its interaction with the fortunes of the 10-horned beast. Now we look at the class who refused to receive the mark.

AND BEHOLD: This “Behold” is all important as a lesson to the saints. The way of faithfulness — separate from beasts, image, and their markings — is clearly laid out along with the glorious results.

THE LAMB: the one to whom we were introduced in Chapter 4, and the one who (in 13:8) is not interested (for now) in “those who dwell on the earth.”

STANDING ON MOUNT ZION: Standing is a position of action. Zion is the spiritual seat of the Kingdom (Psa. 50:2; Psa. 128:5; Isa. 2:3.) The kingdom is, in this picture, ready to begin in its fullest sense. (See Obad. 21.)

AND WITH HIM: in glory; the Harvest is ended when this verse applies.

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND: The literal number of the body of Christ.

HAVING HIS NAME AND THE NAME OF HIS FATHER: The KJV, unfortunately, leaves out “his name.” Note that these saints don’t just have a “mark;” they have NAMES. It is notable that it is NOT Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! It is also possible that the saints have BOTH of these names because (as represented in Chapters 4 and 5, 12:1, etc.) they have had their characters developed NOT just by the New Testament writings alone, but also by the Old Testament writings which center around the Father more than the Son.

WRITTEN ON THEIR FOREHEADS: To summarize this as “intellectual appreciation” falls far short of the intent of this passage. First of all, these saints have the NAMES (characters) of Father and Son written on them. This is not intellectual (although it INCLUDES what their minds know.) The forehead symbolizes the total being — the soul. It is out front where all can see it. And what is seen imprinted on these saints is the characters they have emulated. Note also that while the beasts were not particular whether marks were in hand or forehead, God IS particular. A mark on the hand is insignificant, insufficient, even inconsequential. The NEEDED mark is a NAME (a completed character.) And THAT mark can be only one place: the total being, the soul, the “forehead” of the individual.

14:2 — AND I HEARD: Once again John re-focuses our attention:

A VOICE FROM HEAVEN: Beginning here and progressing through verse 3, there are many difficulties of interpretation. For instance:

(1) How many voices are there? The Greek seems to show only one in verse 2 — the one which is LIKE three things: water, thunder, and harpists. Unfortunately, verse 3 says, “they” sang. Is it the harpists? Are “they” (harpists) collectively the ONE VOICE of verse 2? (Of course, voice can legitimately be translated SOUND; therefore, John may have heard a SOUND from heaven.)

(2) Harps were earlier (5:8) connected with the 24 Elders. This is NOT the case here since (14:3) THESE harpists play BEFORE the Elders.

(3) Only the 144,000 can LEARN this song. Who, then, is teaching them? Clearly, it cannot be anyone who has “learned” it. The two possibilities seem to be:

(a) Either the voice IS that of the 144,000 who have learned the song and who are singing it,

OR

(b) The voice is God’s Who is teaching it to the 144,000 who learn it. This second option does NOT seem possible since God would not sing it “before the throne.”

The conclusion, then, seems inescapable that the voice IS the collective voice of the 144,000.

The following interpretation is based on this reasoning.

14:2 — AND I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN: When John says, “And I heard,” he is re-focusing our attention to something. That something is apparently the 144,000 just mentioned in verse 1 who are on Zion with the Lamb. The point here is to show WHO it is who has overcome the beast and image influences. FROM HEAVEN (See Item #74c) seems to refer literally to the spirit realm since it is here where the glorified saints are (verse 1)

The VOICE is now likened to three things which apparently represent three periods in the experience of the Church. This is difficult of interpretation. Waters, thunder, and harps are hardly symbols which belong together! It is for this reason that we feel the three symbols reflect THREE DIFFERENT TIMES in the Church’s experience. When the Church reaches MOUNT ZION, but before the peaceable kingdom comes, it can look back to its ORIGINS (the sea class, hence waters); it can look at its then-current RESPONSIBILITIES (the noisy - hence thunderous - destruction of the old order); and it can look forward to its KINGDOM WORK (the happy harmony of a new world — hence the harps.) Thus:

WATERS: Where the Church came from — from many peoples (waters). Compare 5:9.

THUNDER: What the Church does upon glorification at the Harvest’s end — participating in the thunderous whirlwind with which the age ends. See Rev. 2:26, 27 with Jeremiah 25:30, 31 with a combination of Psalm 77:18 and Job 38:1.

HARPISTS: What the Church will do once the trouble is over — harmonize God for the people. See Isaiah 14:7 and Psalm 30:5 (margin = singing.)

14:3 — AND THEY SANG A NEW SONG: Just as the prophecies (5:8, 9) could sing a “new song” when, at the first advent, the Lamb had fulfilled an important portion of their predictions, so now, the saints can sing a new song when ALL of the second advent prophecies have reached their climax. But this song is different in one special way. It is PERSONAL. It is the result of having endured and overcome. It is something which no one else CAN know except those who went through the training.

BEFORE THE THRONE: This is NOT the position of the saints in most prophecy. But here it is the appropriate place to sing. It is to Him Who is on the throne that they owe all thanks and reverence for having been taught this song which no one else can sing. The saints place themselves forever willingly at God’s service (before the throne) even as Jesus himself wore the girdle of servitude willingly even after his glorification (1:13).

BEFORE THE FOUR LIVING ONES: How we can sing forever to the interworking qualities of God’s universally perfect balanced character!

AND THE ELDERS: The saints can, without reservation, sing praise to the help they had from the prophecies — the very foundation of their standing (12:1). Is this not the purpose Paul had in mind when he wrote Hebrews 11 and 12:1 — perhaps the whole book of Hebrews? The tendency of modern Christianity to dismiss the Old Testament writings is a testimony that they could not fit into this picture.

AND NO ONE COULD LEARN THE SONG EXCEPT THE 144,000: This song is THEIR testimony. It is unlike anything any other human being has experienced. It cannot be sung until the other side because “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?” Psa. 137:1-4.

WHO HAD BEEN PURCHASED FROM THE EARTH: This phrase unites the first “new song” at the beginning of the age (5:9) with the second “new song” at the end of the age. The first song is sung as the prophecies acknowledge the beginning of the Church. The second song is sung as the completed Church acknowledges the end of the prophecies.

14:4 — THESE ARE THE ONES: We now have a clear description of the history and character of the ones who are singing, the ones who have been purchased from the earth. They:

HAVE NOT BEEN DEFILED WITH WOMEN: They have not let association with the “churches” of Christendom soil their robes.

FOR THEY HAVE KEPT THEMSELVES CHASTE: The implication is clear: the “women” have NOT kept themselves chaste. They have committed spiritual fornication by compromising themselves with the governments of this world and /or with the spirit of worldliness. (This may even suggest that the image — while not a church-state union — is a church-state cooperation, agreement, or compromise.)

WHO FOLLOW THE LAMB WHEREVER HE GOES: They have never lost sight of whom their head is; nor have they ever been reticent to follow his leadings, however strange the place may be they are led.

THESE HAVE BEEN PURCHASED FROM AMONG MEN: Here is another clear reference to the sin-offering participation of the saints. We know Jesus purchased the whole race. But this “purchased possession” (the race) must wait until this group of saints — recipients of the ransom merit EARLY — might have something to sacrifice jointly with their head. Men WERE purchased; but the saints are PURCHASED FROM AMONG MEN. The implications to the doctrine of the sin offering are inescapable!

AS FIRST FRUITS TO GOD AND TO THE LAMB: Another demonstration of the saints as part of the sin-offering process. The firstfruits are an OFFERING, NOT a part of the general crop.

14:5 — NO LIE WAS FOUND IN THEIR MOUTHS: — Their COLLECTIVE mouth which represents their collective message. They, and they alone, were God’s mouthpiece during the age for the distribution of the TRUTH. No lie was in their message because they conscientiously sought God’s message and not to put forth their own ideas.

THEY ARE BLAMELESS: See Hebrews 9:14. God has justified them. Who will lay anything to their charge? Romans 8:33.

Revelation

Part II:

The Harvest

14:6 — 19:21

A NOTE REGARDING PART II

Part II of Revelation deals with the Harvest period. However, the seventh Church, Seal, and Trumpet are all part of the Harvest period also. They are treated in Part I of this notebook because they are part of the sequencing of Churches, Seals, and Trumpets found in Chapters two through eleven. Part I of the book of Revelation deals with the Gospel Age INCLUDING its Harvest. Therefore, any study of the Harvest in Revelation should also cover the seventh period as it is represented in each of the five views of the Gospel Age.

A SUMMARY CHART OF PART II OF REVELATION

Picture Number	Contents of Picture:	Inclusive Verses:	Picture begins early in harvest as:	Picture shows destruction symbolized as:
1.	<u>THE HARVEST WORK'S</u> relationship to the decline and fall of Babylon	14:6-20	(14:6) The eternal Gospel preached since 1874 (14:8) The casting off of Babylon in 1878	14:20 Treading the Grapes
2.	<u>HISTORICAL EVENTS</u> which weaken the apostasy throughout the harvest.	15:1-16:21	(15:5) New Covenant understood since 1874 (15:8) Sleeping Saints raised in 1878	16:19 Divided Babylon drinks of the fierce wrath
3.	<u>THE POLITICAL EVENTS</u> which destroy Babylon	17:1-18	(17:1) The "angel" explains the judgement of the apostasy (1874) and points out its date (1878)	17:16 The horns and beast eat her and burn her flesh
4.	<u>THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS</u> which contribute to her decline and fall. (Picture includes the subsequent rejoicing.)	18:1-19:10	(18:1) Jesus' return in 1874 (18:2,4) Announcement of judgement in 1878	18:21 Millstone cast into the sea with violence
5.	<u>THE SPIRITUAL VIEW</u> of the harvest period.	19:11-21	(19:11) Understanding of Divine Plan revealed in 1874 (19:14) Sleeping Saints glorified in 1878	19:20 Beast and False Prophet thrown alive into lake of fire

— INTRODUCTION TO THE HARVEST CHAPTERS —

Much study has gone into the interpretation of Chapters 14 through 19 with greatly varying results. To attempt to decide which interpretations may be correct, it is probably helpful to attempt to draw a BIG PICTURE of these chapters — an overview which allows us to perceive order and reason in the sequence of Harvest pictures. Large contexts are as important as small contexts when it comes to interpretation.

As varied as Chapters 14 through 19 are in their content and symbolisms, they DO all have ONE THING in common. Each of the five Harvest views presented has as its climax the final, total overthrow and destruction of Babylon. Realizing this, we can WORK BACKWARDS from each of these climaxes to see how each Harvest perspective is related to this common event.

— The Five Accounts of Babylon's Total and Final Destruction —

1. In 14:19, 20, Babylon is destroyed in the “wine press” picture. Preceding this we see that 14:6-18 SPECIALIZES in the perspective of how the harvest work leads up to this destruction.
2. In 16:19-21, Babylon is destroyed in the “7th Plague” picture. Preceding this we see that 15:1-16:18 SPECIALIZES in the perspective of how various events (vials full of plagues of wrath) lead up to this destruction.
3. In 17:16, Babylon is destroyed by being devoured and burned by the 10 horns and a beast. Preceding this we see that 17:1-15 SPECIALIZES in the perspective of how the world's powers and peoples realign themselves against Babylon leading up to this destruction.
4. In 18:21-24, Babylon is destroyed in the “great millstone” picture. Preceding this we see that 18:4 - 20 SPECIALIZES in the perspective of how various political and economic entities deal with Babylon's loss of prestige and power since 1878 leading up to this total destruction.
5. In 19:20, Babylon is destroyed by being cast alive into the lake of fire. Preceding this we see that 19:11-19 SPECIALIZES in the perspective of how the Lord and His saints cooperate in the “battle” which leads up to this destruction.

Several items are noteworthy. The five repetitions of the Harvest are there to show us five different perspectives of the period. This helps us, by comparing and by contrasting these perspectives, to see where we are on the stream of time and to see what should happen next. All five of these views begin near the opening of the harvest and climax with Babylon's total destruction. One of them goes BEYOND the destruction to show the rejoicing. (19:1-10.)

All perspectives DO NOT MENTION all of the factors present in the other perspectives. For example, Chapter 18 does not show why or how Babylon is cast into the sea. Chapter 17 shows that this final event comes from the horns' and the beast's hating her; but Chapter 18 is silent on this factor. We can, with clear conscience, INSERT the ideas of 17:16 JUST BEFORE (or as PART OF) 18:21. Chapter 17 is SILENT on who it is that throws the grapes into the vat. Chapter 17 is FOCUSING on horns and beast. But we can, again with clear conscience, INSERT the events of 14:19 into the concept of 17:16. We thus get a COMPLETE picture. Failure to do this comparison and insertion dooms us to incorrect and foolish conclusions. Careful comparison and insertion allows us to see what ALL SEGMENTS of society are doing during the complicated times of this century.

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THE LORD AND SIX ANGELS

(Chapter 14)

Initially it is necessary to note that the chapter division is not in the proper position. Chapter 13 should end at the close of 14:5. THE REASONS: Chapter 14 is a Harvest chapter — the FIRST chapter which deals with the Harvest exclusively, and the first chapter in the second section of Revelation (Chapters 14 - 19) dealing only with the Harvest period. How strange, then, to begin the Harvest section of Revelation with the Church complete! Yet 14:1 has the Church complete with the Lord on Mt. Zion. It IS TRUE, of course, that the Church is completed during this period; but this period does not BEGIN with the Church completed. Recall that section one of Revelation has five complete views of the Gospel Age INCLUDING ITS HARVEST. First are the seven Churches, the last being in the Harvest. Next are the seven Seals, the last being in the Harvest. Third are the seven Trumpets, the last being in the Harvest. Then Chapter 12 details the relationship of ecclesiastical and civil power to the true seed. This chapter also ends with the dragon pursuing the remnant of the seed — obviously all the way through the Harvest. The fifth and final view is Chapter 13 in which the two beasts attempt to control the religious affairs of the whole age. Clearly they succeed in making “those who dwell on the earth” conform to the beast or its image. These either have the hand mark (cooperations) or the forehead mark (character-likeness) to confirm their positions. But this view, too, carries on through the Harvest (14:1-5) where we find the fate of those who DO NOT WORSHIP the beast or his image. They ALSO have marks — but ONLY in their foreheads (character-likeness). In THEIR foreheads are the names of the Father AND (see NAS) the Lamb. There IS NO HAND MARK here. Faithfulness requires character development, not merely cooperation. By the time we get through 14:5, we have the WHOLE STORY which Chapter 13 began: those who DO, and those who DON’T worship the beast and his image. 14:6 begins an entirely new look at the Harvest period — BEFORE the Church is glorified.

Chapter 14 divides nicely into three main sections: Verses 6-12, verses 13,14, and verses 15-20. Jesus appears in the middle of these sections; three angels appear in the first section and three more in the final section.

VERSES 6 - 12

The three angels here represent 3 PARTS OF THE HARVEST MESSAGE. Notice the increasing import of their messages: The first PREACHES; the second CONDEMNS; the third WARNS. The progression of thought is very much as is our individual, personal experience in finding the Harvest truths. FIRST we HEAR the message; NEXT we see clearly the FILTHY DOCTRINE of historical “Christianity”; FINALLY we realize clearly our RESPONSIBILITY in separation and the DANGERS involved if we remain a part of what God has cast off.

ANGEL # 1: (verses 6 & 7) “ANOTHER” is incorrect. The manuscripts read “AN ANGEL.” (There is no angel before this one. It is clear that ANOTHER makes no sense.) This first angel is the angel which opens the Harvest. He is FLYING — flying is the active tool of searching (for wheat in this case.) His flight is in mid heaven — directly in the midst of the Christian religious world, not favoring one end over the other. He has the EVERLASTING GOSPEL — an implication that VARIATIONS of the gospel had been popular at various times during the age; but THIS Gospel is the totality of the story — the one which accounts for and covers the good news of ALL AGES. Note that this message is for the REAPING OF ALL OF THE FIELD (and probably for the additional work of binding the tares) because it is preached to both groups:

Those who dwell on the earth (the establishment part of Christianity)

and

Every nation, tribe, tongue, and people (the sea-class part of Christianity,
from which the Church & Great Multitude come.)

i.e.,

from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. 24:31).

His voice is LOUD. History has demonstrated this. The Harvest message was broadcast far and near with clarity and distribution unparalleled by any former reformation. His message, although it contains MUCH MORE, is based on that most basic of doctrines: WORSHIP GOD — don’t worship the CREATED, but the CREATOR. No other approach will allow us to find or comprehend THE TRUTH. Don’t worship the religious world (heaven); don’t worship the society (earth); don’t worship the liberty seeking masses (sea); don’t worship the accepted sources of truth (springs of water). These items may be symbols of the parts of this present world which the Lord ordained for a while until it is time for His kingdom. But people have worshipped the items, not the ONE Who ordained them. These items, though, may not be symbols. The statement may simply be: Worship Him Who made it all, but cease from the worship of the things made.

It is specified that the REASON for re-adjusting the focus of worship is that THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT HAS COME. It is now the Harvest period, and all that worships the created over the Creator will fail this judgment. It is interesting to note that it is the HOUR of judgment rather than the DAY. It is, of course, the beginning of the 1000-year DAY of judgment; but the FOCUS here is not on the whole age, but only on its beginning, the Harvest; this first hour of judgment deals with the weighing and destruction of false Christianity before individual judgment begins for the world.

ANGEL #2: (verse 8) This angel is said to FOLLOW the first one. But the Greek for followed means accompanied, to be in the same way with, or to be as a disciple. It is NOT that this angel comes later; it is that his message accompanies the message of the first angel. If the first angel might be named THE HARVESTING ANGEL, this second angel might be named THE JUDGING ANGEL.

There are many subtleties in this verse. It introduces BABYLON — a term hitherto unfound in Revelation. But the verse includes enough information to identify this symbol clearly. Babylon, of course, was both a city and a kingdom; therefore, this Babylon should also be a capital and an independent power. It is said to be “the great.” While original Babylon was a great empire, this Babylon would apparently have greater influence. It is termed “SHE.” This is very revealing. A woman is either a church or a covenant. No covenant fits this description! From the verse it is clear she is no virgin; therefore, she is not the true Church, but the apostate. How wonderfully the Lord can introduce a symbol out of the blue and yet, with it, give all the information necessary for its interpretation!

This Babylon has influence well beyond its own borders: she made all the nations drink. Her primary sin is said to be fornication — the amalgamation of church and state. While Babylon’s sins can be expanded far beyond this, it is clear that the Lord is especially displeased with her unfaithfulness to Jesus as her head. Instead of waiting for his return and the establishment of his kingdom with her as his bride, she insisted on establishing her own temporal power. This doctrine (wine of wrath), with which the nations were made “drunk” (incapable of sound judgment; unstable), has been responsible for much of the chaos in Europe over the last 2,000 years.

This verse gives us a chronology. From our prophetic studies of time, we learned that the casting off of Babylon FROM FAVOR was scheduled for 1878. This information will become necessary when we interpret verse 13.

ANGEL # 3: (Verses 9 - 12) The third angel might be named THE PLAGUING ANGEL. Leave or else! This is his message. (Cf. 18:4) Verse 9 refers back to the characters of Chapter 13 to warn again regarding the cooperation or character likeness with churchianity — Protestant or non-Protestant. Verse 10 shows the results DURING THIS HARVEST PERIOD: God’s wrath, no longer tempered as it was during the age, but now full-strength for the destruction of the apostate systems, will be shared by all who remain affiliated with those systems. The torment will be mental anguish. No one who is aware of error but chooses to ignore it can rest comfortably in hypocrisy. The fire (righteous destruction) which will consume the old errors and their attendant systems will also eat away at any spirit-begotten Christian still in the midst of it all. The brimstone (sulphur poisoning) will get what the fire misses. NOTE especially that this all takes place IN THE PRESENCE of the holy angels and the Lamb. The Lord has returned; those of his saints having been harvested stand with him and watch as the rest of Christianity suffers. Verse 11 shows that there is no let up. The smoke (the evidence of the burning) is everywhere; there is no hiding that the apostasy is suffering. And this will continue AGE-ABIDING (“forever”) — i.e., until the age is over. Those with the Lamb HAVE REST (Matt. 11:28); those who do not come out have suffering PERPETUALLY (day nor night.) — the situation only gets worse.

Verse 11 also mentions the “mark of his name.” This means the CHARACTER represented by the name of the beast. What his name is, is apparently symbolized by a number (13:18) which must be CALCULATED. The total will be 666. One of the primary titles of the Papacy, and one which formerly was on the gate to Vatican City, is VACARIVS FILII DEI (Vicar of the Son of God). The name means One In Place of the Son of God. In Roman numerals, the name does equal 666. The significance, then, of the MARK OF HIS NAME seems to be the character which usurps authority from Jesus and uses it to rule over others. This was the meaning of NICOLAITANS in Chapter 2.

Verse 12 is very important. It summarizes everything since verse 6. It is saying that all of this torment will take SO LONG as to try the patience of the saints. And since this has all been going on since 1878 (verse 8), and still goes on, it has, indeed, been an ongoing test of our faith as time passes. This verse is so very important because it ASSURES us that this whole Harvest period WILL take very long. It says, KEEP FAITH; don’t give up; though it tarry, wait for it.

THE BLESSED WHO DIE (verse 13) It is as if verse 12 might DISCOURAGE US that the Lord immediately inserts verse 13. He says: Even though you might wait long for the completion of the destruction of the apostasy, if you die during this time, there is something special for you — you need not SLEEP; you will be changed in a moment (I Cor. 15:51, 52) because you are now in the sounding of the seventh (the last) trump. Recall, that verse 8 gave us a date: 1878. This date now becomes important because verse 13 states that this special blessing is FROM HENCEFORTH — from a specific moment; from 1878. We are dead (as humans, sacrificially) in Jesus — baptized into his death (Rom. 6:3). If, from henceforth, we die (literally) our labors (strength-consuming service) will end; but our works (of praise and service) will continue — on the other side of the veil WITHOUT laboring.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT INTERNAL SECTION DIVISIONS:

While Revelation employs several methods of construction to let us know when the subject or time is changing, one of these methods is very noticeable to the eye. Verses 13 and 14 both begin with similar expressions: AND I HEARD, AND I LOOKED. Verse 6 (which really begins this chapter) begins AND I SAW. This is one of the Lord’s sign-posts to tell us that there is an interruption in the narrative. We may be jumping forward or backward in time, or we may be taking a new perspective of what is already being discussed. In any case, this is an important KEY in the interpretation of the book. When verse 13 begins, it is not referring to the end of the Harvest after the saints’ patience has been tried (which verse 12 just mentioned), but it is jumping way back to verse 8, the time of Babylon’s being cast off from favor. Verse 14 begins a new look at the Harvest, totally unrelated to the subject matter of verse 13.

THE LORD OF THE HARVEST (verse 14) We here begin the Harvest once more — from a new vantage. A cloud is trouble, but this cloud is white — righteous trouble. It is righteous because it is the Lord's wrath undoing the unrighteousness of the age. Jesus has returned; and as is the tendency of Revelation, he is not called Jesus, but the Son of Man. It is interesting to note that he SITS on the cloud. Sit is a symbol for control. This is not random trouble; this is CONTROLLED TROUBLE. No matter how severe the time of trouble may become, we may rest assured by this verse that it never will be out of control. On his head is a golden crown — Divine authority. In his hand a sharp sickle — the device for harvesting. This verse shows so clearly that when the king returns it is not for the peaceable kingdom immediately; it is to control the trouble which will destroy Babylon, and to harvest the wheat.

THREE MORE ANGELS. These three angels are related to the work which Jesus has returned to do. There is no break in the narrative at the end of verse 14. While, for convenience, we divided the chapter into three sections, it divides on a construction basis more clearly into two: 6-13, and 14-20. Here is a brief summary of the last three angels before examining the context in detail:

ANGEL # 4 comes out of the temple.	verse 15
ANGEL # 5 comes out of the temple in heaven	verses 17 & 19.
ANGEL # 6 comes out from the altar	verse 18.

ANGEL # 4 has a message for the Lord.

ANGEL # 5 has no message, but does have a sickle.

ANGEL # 6 has a message for angel # 5.

ANGEL # 4: The TEMPLE can represent several things, but all of those things are parts of one thing: THE DIVINE PLAN. Note that this angel tells the Lord what to do! Who can have such authority? Obviously, God, Himself can. But this angel IS NOT GOD. It is part of God's PLAN. Which part? The chronology. Notice his message: IT IS TIME TO REAP. Jesus WILL listen to this angel because, as part of his Father's plan, the chronology dictates when the Son acts. The chronology is a LOUD VOICE. It woke up the Christian world about the time of Miller (Matt. 25:1-13). The message also includes the purpose of the TIME: TO REAP. The harvest is ripe (margin: DRIED). This is the harvest of the earth. What earth? It is the earth of Acts 1:8 and the "all nations" of Matt. 28:19. It is the search everywhere for wheat (the DRIED harvest.) Verse 16 has the Lord following the direction given. He reaps the earth. The earth WAS REAPED — that is, the Church is completed. The end of verse 16 takes us to the glorification of the 144,000.

ANGEL # 5: This is the angel without a message. Note where he comes from: THE TEMPLE WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. Temple has not changed; we are yet dealing with a part of God's plan. But which part? A part which is not yet glorified. A part which is still associated with "heaven" — the religious world here on earth. He also has what the Lord had — a sickle, a device to harvest. But why? If the Church is complete (verse 16), what is left to harvest?

This verse proves Bro. Russell's point that the Harvest is NOT merely the collecting of the saints, but also the burning of the tares. But if the 144,000 is gone, who participates in this final harvest work? The Great Multitude. This angel IS THE GREAT MULTITUDE. We will leave him now and rejoin him later.

ANGEL # 6: Our final angel has power over fire and comes out from the altar. This identifies him completely. The true Church spent its life on the altar in sacrifice and fell below it as ashes as their individual sacrifices were completed. (See 6:9, 10). For their faithfulness they were granted the power to destroy the nations which had been their persecutors (See 2:26, 27). They, therefore, have power, once glorified, to destroy (power over fire). This angel is clearly THE CHURCH GLORIFIED. Back to

ANGEL # 5:

This angel (# 6) calls down to the Great Multitude, (# 5) yet on earth, with a loud voice (as yet unidentified.) He tells them to gather the fruitage (unholy) of the vine of the earth. When Jesus said he was the TRUE vine, he thus prophesied that there would be a false vine — an apostate Christ. Here it is at its maturity.

Relatively little is told us about the closing hours of the Great Multitude here on earth. It is clear from this passage, however, that they will help in bringing down Babylon in the final hours of the Harvest period. This angel does not TREAD the winepress, but he DOES throw the grapes in to be trodden — the final act of the Harvest.

THE WINEPRESS:

The press is for the purpose of crushing out the juice. Clearly here the juice is not juice, but blood. This winepress is for the purpose of crushing out the life (blood) of Babylon. Isaiah 63 informs us that it is our Lord who will trample out the vintage where these grapes of wrath are stored. The process is said to happen OUTSIDE THE CITY. The only cities mentioned by Revelation are the New Jerusalem and Babylon. Outside the New Jerusalem seems to make little sense, and Babylon is the only city in Chapter 14. The logical conclusion is that the city here mentioned is Babylon. So, it appears that the lifeblood of Babylon will be pressed out in a locality which is not affiliated with Babylon. Since God intends to make His holy name known in the midst of His people, Israel (Ezek. 39:7), it seems logical that the trouble from which Israel shall be miraculously delivered (Ezek. 38 and 39) will also be the trouble in which Babylon will lose its life. Hence, events OUTSIDE THE CITY will spell its doom.

The blood (life) comes out even to the horses' bridles. Since a horse represents doctrine, and the bridle represents the control of doctrine, the symbolism is strong: Babylon will no longer have the life to direct teaching.

It is interesting to compare Rev. 14:20 with Zech. 14:20. Both refer to horses' bridles — although in Zech. the marginal translation must be used. In Zech., the bridles are re-dedicated: HOLINESS TO THE LORD — the same dedication worn on the high priest's crown. It is also helpful to note that the Zech. context is following the trouble on Israel which is the same as that mentioned in Ezek. 38 and 39. How wonderful that Babylon's days of twisting doctrine are very numbered.

Verse 20 concludes with a distance of 1600 furlongs. The Sinaitic MS reads 1200 furlongs. Both numbers seem to have significance. If 1200 furlongs be correct, the symbolism is likely the distance from Bozrah to Jezreel. Bozrah is where the winepress was trodden in Isaiah 63; Jezreel is where Jezebel (picturing the harlot church) was slain (II Kings 9). If 1600 furlongs be correct, the symbolism might be something like this: 40 is a number representing complete testing. When a number is squared (like the Jubilee), the symbolism seems to be the finality of finalities. So 40 squared (1600) would represent the most complete and final testing possible. Since furlong comes from the Greek STADION (a race course), we can say by all measurements of the Christian race course (40 squared), Babylon has been judged and found deficient.

In summary, the six angels of this chapter might well be given the following names (remembering that some of them are inanimate, others representing groups):

ANGEL # 1: THE HARVESTING MESSAGE.

ANGEL # 2: THE JUDGMENT PROCLAIMER.

ANGEL # 3: THE PLAGUING ANGEL or THE WARNING ANGEL or the I-TOLD-YOU-SO ANGEL

ANGEL # 4: CHRONOLOGY.

ANGEL # 5: THE GREAT MULTITUDE (in the flesh)

ANGEL # 6 THE CHURCH GLORIFIED

INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAGUES (15:1-8)

A Preface to the Subject of the Plagues

This exposition will treat the plagues as having mostly occurred during the 20th Century. No serious Bible student, or human being for that matter, can deny that this century has been, if not THE most eventful in history, certainly ONE of the most eventful in history. Are we to believe that Revelation has ignored these astounding events while it took the time and space to detail the far less interesting years of the dark ages? If any 100 years in history should be detailed in prophecy for the benefit of the saints, should it not be the 20th Century? Should all of Chapter 10 and most of Chapter 11 with important parts of other chapters be devoted to the time of the French Revolution and then have nothing devoted to the turbulent years since 1914? The thought is incredible to the extreme. It seems very likely, on the contrary, that Chapters 16 and 18 carefully detail this century's many wonders.

The thought that all of the plagues are past is untenable since, if for no other reason, God's wrath is clearly NOT finished (15:1). The thought that the plagues are all future is a carefully thought-out position by superior students of Scripture and is, therefore, not a position to be lightly dismissed. It is our contention, however, that all of the "proofs" for a future view have good answers to the contrary so that a protracted fulfillment during this century is a very tenable interpretation. By this position we do not deny that a future of significant and traumatic events for the saints is likely. We simply do not believe that the totality of plagues must be future to accomplish this.

15:1 — AND I SAW: Three times in this chapter (verses 1, 2, 5) John refocuses our attention. To help understand this chapter, it is good to see these three focuses and their purposes.

- (a) The first focus (v. 1) is on angels which have plagues which will finish God's wrath. (These angels will recur in the third section of this chapter.) The purpose of this verse is to introduce the subject of the plagues.
- (b) The second focus (vs. 2-4) is on the position and activity of the risen saints during this Harvest time when the plagues are to be poured out. The purpose of these verses is to show us that the glorified saints (since 1878 — Rev. 14:13) are participants in the works going on in glory. The question of what they are doing is raised by their "change" (14:13). They cannot yet administer the New Covenant (15:8), but they CAN and DO cooperate in the destruction of the old order — the administration of the plagues.
- (c) The third focus (vs. 5-8) is on two things: The temple and its relationship to the seven angels. The purpose of these verses is to show that the seven angels are in glory and are provided with means (bowls) to pour out God's wrath. It additionally shows that the New Covenant arrangement cannot come into operation until the wrath of God is over — even though the glorification of the saints has begun (1878).

ANOTHER SIGN IN HEAVEN: The only other place we have this expression is in 12:3 where its contrast with 12:1 is obvious. Here, the contrast is NOT obvious. Apparently this expression serves as a connector to the thoughts just considered in Chapter 14. Chapter 14 does not mention a “sign in heaven” as such, but it is clearly FULL of signs in heaven. To summarize the last half of Chapter 14, we could say the “sign in heaven” was the harvesting of wheat and grapes. Now, (15:1), we have “another sign,” and just as in the contrast between 12:1 and 12:3, the signs of Chapters 14 and 15 are RELATED. The harvesting of wheat and grapes will be ACCOMPLISHED in large measure by the plaguing of Babylon.

GREAT AND MARVELOUS: The plagues are GREAT because they end God’s wrath! They are MARVELOUS because they progress and do their work with few even knowing they are going on!

SEVEN ANGELS: The evidence is STRONG that these seven are the SAME seven who blew the seven Trumpets and who, therefore, are the seven angels to the seven Churches of Chapters 2 and 3. The FIRST evidence is that in 17:1, ONE of these seven introduces himself to John and TEACHES John throughout the Harvest period: and THIS angel is a MAN (19:10; 21:9; 21:17; 22:9). See Appendix Item #74b. This angel is Charles Russell. If ONE is identified as the angel to the 7th Church, the other six come by deduction. The SECOND evidence is that these plagues are AIMED at the same targets at which their corresponding Trumpets blew (See. p.26.) Why should the trumpets and their correspondingly numbered plagues have the same objectives? Because the world DIDN’T LISTEN to the Trumpets. The truths of the Trumpets must be forced upon them by the plagues. (See also comments on 8:5, pp. 52, 53.) The THIRD evidence follows:

WHO HAD SEVEN PLAGUES: This again shows that these angels ALREADY POSSESSED these plagues. These plagues are the same truths about which they trumpeted while in the flesh. The idea of seven trumpets-worth of messages ACCUMULATING to become seven plagues is similar to Joshua’s march around Jericho once daily for six days, but seven times on the seventh day accomplishing the collapse of the city. (See Josh. 6.)*

The correspondency to the Egyptian plagues is inescapable except that Egypt had TEN. However, Trumpets five through seven are called “woes” (8:13) and Scripturally (9:18, 20) did plaguing works. They appear to be the first three after which come the seven last plagues. The Egyptian plagues were also thus divided. See Exodus 8:22 where, after the third plague, the Israelites were separate from the Egyptians — even as the saints are to be from Babylon after 1878 (18:4).

WHICH ARE THE LAST, BECAUSE IN THEM THE WRATH OF GOD IS FINISHED: This is a most delightful prospect for those who have been awaiting everlasting peace. Our attitude must be one of great joy as we see each succeeding plague begun, thus bringing us to that day when there will be no more wrath!

15:2 — AND I SAW: John now focuses our attention to something else newly appeared beyond the veil — the glorified saints of the first resurrection (14:13).

A SEA OF GLASS MIXED WITH FIRE: The plagues are one tool of judgment — something ALREADY possessed but given new function. The same is true of this sea of glass — another tool of judgment. The sea of glass makes two appearances in Revelation. (See 4:6 and notes thereon. See also Item #69.) It seems NOT to be related to the “sea” class of mankind, but rather to the great laver of the temple. This symbolism fits so much better in Chapter 4 as to preclude any other interpretation. Here, however, at least on the surface, it would seem easier to use the sea to represent the masses of mankind. Consistency, however, requires a deeper examination which proves a blessing.

* Joshua’s Jericho trumpeting DID NOT represent the trumpets of the Gospel Age, but, rather, God’s messages through the 6,000 years of man’s existence culminating in the triumph of the 7th “day.”

At the outset of the Gospel Age (Chapter 4), God is surrounded by symbols of those things which will accomplish His ends during the age. The laver (“sea of glass”) is one of them. The great body of pure truth will be the cleansing agent for all who approach Christ. But at the END of the age (15:2), God’s truths will take on the additional function of a JUDGMENT TOOL. Thus the sea is now MIXED WITH FIRE — the element of judgment. The VERY TRUTHS promulgated earlier by the seven angels to purify saints will now be FORCED on Babylon to plague it to death.

This concept is not without precedent. Note how in 8:2 and 8:5 we have a golden censer first used to augment the prayers of saints. Its use changes dramatically as it is thrown to the earth in an act of judgment probably representing these plagues. Another similar example is in 15:1. The truths which the seven angels used as blessings in their lifetimes are now turned into plagues.

AND THOSE WHO HAD COME OFF VICTORIOUS FROM THE BEAST AND HIS IMAGE AND FROM THE NUMBER OF HIS NAME: This phrase helps to establish a number of things:

(a) There is little question that the description of verses 2-4 is clearly related to the description of 14:1-3 and the few verses which end Chapter 13. In Chapter 14, the picture is BEYOND THE VEIL. For CONSISTENCY, 15:2-4 should also, then, be beyond the veil. HOWEVER, in 14:1-3 it is the TOTAL CHURCH (ALL 144,000) beyond the veil at the end of the Harvest. In 15:2-4 it is ONLY THAT PART of the body beyond the veil since 1878 at the BEGINNING of the Harvest — BEFORE the plagues begin. These verses are here SPECIFICALLY to show us what the glorified saints are DOING BEYOND THE VEIL — to show us that THEY PARTICIPATE with the seven angels in the plaguing work of Babylon (although more particularly in using the truths of judgment — the “sea of glass”). Those beyond the veil have “power over fire” (14:18) — the fire in this “sea of glass.” They have “authority over the nations” (2:26, 27) to break them to pieces. Therefore, John is seeing the VICTORS; John is telling us that the first resurrection is begun (14:13) and that those who are a part of it PARTICIPATE in the Harvest work of Chapter 14 and in the plaguing work of Chapter 16. There is not much reason for these three verses (2-4) except to show this. Their very inclusion, spliced between verses 1 and 5, testifies to their meaning.

(b) Some contend that victory over the image must await the time when the image has reached its cruelest manifestation, when it receives “breath” or “life.” It is their contention also (as it is ours) that at THAT point the image is called the “false prophet.” This in itself is an argument AGAINST verse 2’s application too late in the Harvest. Verse 2 still calls it the image. The first plague still calls it the image (16:2). It is not called the “false prophet” until the sixth plague (16:13). It is, therefore, possible to have victory over the image ANY time after its initial formation. (See notes on Rev. 20:4.)

(c) It may also be argued (on the basis of 14:8-12) that the victory over the beast and image is the battle for separation from them and that, thus, even the faithful saints IN THE FLESH qualify for this victory. The progress FROM 1878 UNTIL NOW is clearly dated and documented by this section of Chapter 14. The twelfth verse suggests that this long wait, through the smoke and torment of those remaining in her (a period of over a century), shows the long-suffering faithfulness of the true saints. It seems best, however, to treat 15:2 as glorified saints for consistency with 14:1-3 although it is certainly possible to apply it to the Harvest saints in the flesh.

STANDING ON THE SEA OF GLASS: To stand on is to be victor over or in control of. (Cf. Luke 21:24.) The use of truths as judgments on Babylon has been given to the glorified saints. (2:26, 27.)

HOLDING HARPS OF GOD: In 14:2, when the Church is COMPLETE, it is PLAYING the harps. Here they are merely HOLDING them. They are in joyful readiness to harmonize the Divine Word for the world, but they cannot do so until the plagues are finished — even as no one can enter the New Covenant arrangement before that time. (15:8)

15:3 — AND THEY SANG: This is NOT the new, personal song of 14:3. Only the 144,000 know THAT song. But obviously MOSES knew THIS one! This confirms what was stated above: the harp PLAYING and the NEW song must await the completion of the Church and the plagues.

THE SONG OF MOSES, THE BOND-SERVANT OF GOD, AND THE SONG OF THE LAMB: The song of Moses may refer to Deut. 32. If so, it is consistent with this context in that both are primarily about judgment. But it may also refer to the Old Testament writings. There is some reason why the phrase “The Bond-servant of God” is added after Moses’ name. It draws attention to the Law dispensation. It may thus be saying that the faithfulness of these overcomers is due to their having based their lives on the WHOLE BIBLE — Old and New Testament writings. The song of the Lamb is not specified as such in Scripture. But it is most likely the Kingdom and Restitution. This IS implied in verse 4 as part of this song.

THE SONG

This song, while it has many components, focuses on two things: judgment and restitution — the two things which, to some degree, had both begun in the 1870’s as part of the Harvest works of God. This is most appropriate since Chapter 15 is focused on the 1870’s up to the beginning of the plagues.

GREAT AND MARVELOUS ARE THY WORKS: We could guess at which works are meant, or even suppose that this refers to all His works. But the words GREAT and MARVELOUS are a direct quote from verse 1 and, thus, clearly refer to the plaguing works to be done by the seven angels — and entered into by those beyond the veil.

O LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY: Being glorified, these saints join the Lamb in focus on the Father. It is God’s wrath fulfilled in these plagues.

RIGHTEOUS AND TRUE ARE THY WAYS THOU KING OF AGES (THE NATIONS): Two qualities of God are here proclaimed by those privileged to enter into His works beyond the veil: First RIGHTEOUSNESS — i.e., JUDGMENT. Secondly TRUTH — i.e., these things have been PROMISED for a long time. (Cf. 6:10, 11.) Now God is DEMONSTRATING the verity of His promises. He is TRUE to His word. King of NATIONS may or may not be accurate. The best accumulated manuscript evidence reads AGES instead. This latter reading is good in that it shows that the MANIFESTATION of God’s righteousness and truth must await the PROPER TIME. If NATIONS be the correct reading, it would show that the promise of 2:26, 27 is being fulfilled.

15:4 — The AIM of the saints throughout life is that all will glorify God’s name. Now the process is to begin which will insure that goal — ALL NATIONS WILL WORSHIP HIM. The reason is that the REVEALING of His justice, as promised, will accomplish this. Once the plagues have been poured AND UNDERSTOOD, all will praise Him.

A BREAK TO GET OUR BEARINGS

It is easy to get lost in the detail of this chapter. We have, in short, just seen that the plagues are to be poured out and the glorified saints are jubilant in the significance of the beginnings of judgment against the old order in answer to 6:10, 11. The REASON for the break between verses 1 and 5 is to tell us what the glorified saints are doing during this century. It is NOT just the seven angels who are involved.

15:5 — AFTER THESE THINGS I LOOKED: In essence, John goes back to LOOK at what he had seen. His traditional re-focus expression now gives us another look at the plague preparation. We had almost forgotten by this point about the contents of verse 1. It will be re-stated with clarifying detail.

AND THE TEMPLE OF THE TABERNACLE OF TESTIMONY IN HEAVEN WAS OPENED:

or much more literally:

AND WAS OPENED THE SHRINE OF THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY IN HEAVEN: The thought is that the significance of the Most Holy was OPENED IN HEAVEN, i.e., in the religious world (among saints) it would become to be understood.

This verse is a fulfillment of the first part of 11:19 (which see; see also comments on pp. 153 & 154.) The “temple” (or shrine) is the Most Holy. In it is the Ark of the Covenant — a symbol of the glorified Church and the New Covenant arrangement. Thus 15:5 points to the time (the Harvest) when the all-important doctrine of the New Covenant was understood. This entire section (15:5-8) is to show that the great event of the New Covenant’s inauguration must await the completion of God’s wrath — the pouring out of the plagues.

15:6 — AND THE SEVEN ANGELS WHO HAD THE SEVEN PLAGUES: We are thus finally brought back to the opening subject of this chapter and reminded that these angels HAVE the plagues already.

CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE: — out of the Most Holy. Thus they are in their GLORIFIED condition before they function to pour out their individual plagues. (Note that suggestions that the saints in the flesh pour out these plagues is contradicted by this verse.) The first six came to glorified life in 1878. The seventh wouldn’t join them until 1916. But that’s not the point here. The point is that they do this plaguing work as glorified new creatures. (This strongly suggests that all seven made their callings and elections sure.)

CLOTHED IN LINEN CLEAN AND BRIGHT: a sign of their righteousness in Christ and their success in the narrow way.

AND GIRDED AROUND THEIR BREASTS WITH GOLDEN GIRDLES: Like Jesus (1:13), they are VOLUNTARILY, from the heart, in Divine service even after their glorification.

15:7 — AND ONE OF THE FOUR LIVING ONES: — Certainly this one is JUSTICE since this is a judgment scene.

GAVE TO THE SEVEN ANGELS: The thought is that justice will ARRANGE FOR (give) the vehicles to deliver the plagues. Justice is RETRIBUTIVE; In God’s arrangements it is often the NATURAL RESULT of things sown earlier.

SEVEN GOLDEN BOWLS: — one each. Recall that these angels already HAVE the plagues — the truths which will cause the harm to the system of error once given the proper medium of delivery. Thus the bowls ARE those media of delivery — EVENTS which will force certain truths to the attention of the old order. These are GOLDEN because they are Divinely planned and measured — arranged for by Divine Justice.

FULL OF THE WRATH OF GOD: These bowls contain TWO THINGS. They contain the truths (plagues) which are normally BLESSINGS; but they also contain God’s WRATH — His anger in the form of events which will FORCE the world to consider its erroneous ways. Recall that (v. 1) once these plagues are accomplished, the wrath is finished; the retribution is accomplished; the old order is broken, and the way of the kingdom is opened.

WHO LIVES FOR EVER AND EVER: This is a long time! That's the point. Forever and ever. Thereafter there will be no more wrath! What a promise!

15:8 — AND THE TEMPLE WAS FILLED WITH SMOKE FROM THE GLORY OF GOD AND FROM HIS POWER: This verse, among other things, gives a date. This is vital in the interpretation of this chapter. There are several steps needed in determining this date:

(1) It was Bro. Russell's position that this event marked the completion of the Church. This poses great problems in that it places all of the plagues subsequent to the completion of the Church — a sequence NOT held by any brethren and in direct conflict with Bro. Russell's own Fourth Volume explanation of the sixth plague. Therefore, this verse must be re-interpreted.

(2) I Kings 8:6, 10, 11 sets the stage typically for 15:8. The bringing of the Ark into the Most Holy represents the entry of the Church into glory. (This was Bro. Russell's thought also, although he thought it to be the WHOLE Church.) Therefore, the question is, when does the Ark (Church) go beyond the veil? Only two possibilities seem to exist:

(a) 1878, when this work BEGAN, or

(b) AT the COMPLETION of the Church.

The second choice seems impossible, leaving only the first. This is consistent with the context which has been focused on 1878 as the time of (vs. 2-4) the sleeping saints, being raised and (v. 6) the resurrection of the angels who would do the plaguing — the seventh being an exception since he was still blowing his Trumpet and could not precede those who had fallen asleep (I Thess. 4:15).

(3) Ezekiel 9:3 and 10:2-6 corroborate this picture. It has the filling of the temple with the cloud (of smoke) equated with the man with the writer's inkhorn scattering coals on the city. This prophecy begins with the pronouncement against Babylon (1878) to be followed by its plaguing (coals).

(4) Ezekiel 43:2-6 also confirms the picture. Ezekiel himself (v. 3) relates this chapter to Chapters 9 and 10 of his own prophecy. Note that verse 2 says "the earth shown with his glory." Compare this to Rev. 18:1, 2 which we always date as 1878.

(5) The connection with Egyptian plagues also helps. The seven LAST plagues occurred AFTER the separation of the Israelites (i.e., AFTER the 1878 "come out of her"), but BEFORE the deliverance of the Israelites due to the death of the firstborn plague. Antitypically this puts the plagues after 1878 (when the temple is filled with smoke) but before the glorification of the completed Church.

AND NO ONE WAS ABLE TO ENTER THE TEMPLE: No one was able to enter the New Covenant arrangement — the very purpose for the temple in its antitypical sense —

UNTIL THE SEVEN PLAGUES OF THE SEVEN ANGELS WERE FINISHED: — until God's wrath is past and the Time of Trouble over. Until the old order disintegrates, men will not be ready for the new one.

Thus Chapter 15 puts the New Covenant arrangement in place by beginning to raise its mediator and by having the covenant understood. Before it can function, however, two things must transpire: (1) The completion of the Church and (2) the destruction of the old order by a series of events. That series of events is shown in Chapter 16.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES (16:1-21)

— Dating the Plagues —

Besides the reasons stated on page 182, there are basically three reasons for placing the beginning of the plagues around 1914.

- (1) Since the seventh Trumpet is the third woe (or third plague in a series of 10), the 7 plagues should begin **AFTER** most of the seventh Trumpet blowing has ended. Bro. Russell, as the seventh messenger, blew his Trumpet from about 1874 to 1916. (8:13).
- (2) Since 18:4 is understood to represent 1878, and since its message is to come out **LEST** ye receive of the plagues, the implication is quite strong that a **PERIOD OF TIME** will be allowed to come out before the plagues begin. (This will also allow time for the complete sounding of the 7th Trumpet.)
- (3) The “Gentile Times” lease suggests that there would be no active tampering with the church-state system by the Lord until the eviction date arrives. The tampering (1914) is likely the beginning of plaguing the system. By this date sufficient time would have past to allow the sounding of the Trumpet and the exodus resulting from the “come out of her” call.

16:1 — AND I HEARD: John’s traditional section divider now takes us to the vision of the pouring out of the vials (bowls).

A LOUD VOICE FROM THE TEMPLE: The temple represents God’s plan in its many functions and applications. That this voice is specified to be a **LOUD VOICE** could help to date this plague. There are many sounds or voices heard in Revelation, but the term **LOUD VOICE** is always used for very important turning points in history. (See Appendix 74j.) The beginning of the plagues **IS**, by itself, such an important point in history. If, however, the date for their beginning is 1914, the historical import is even more obvious and thus, perhaps, the reason this is a **LOUD** voice. In 1914 the John class **DID** hear a **LOUD VOICE** from the temple (plan). This voice was **SO** loud that it was anticipated decades in advance. 1914 was an **OBVIOUS** part of the plan (temple).

SAYING TO THE SEVEN ANGELS: Once these angels are in glory, they, like Jesus in 14:15, are glad participants in the pre-planned activities of the Divine plan. They, like he, function by Divine chronology.

GO AND POUR OUT: The verb **GO** suggests specified **PLACES** of authority. While the angels are **TOGETHER** with the Lord (15:6, 7), they are given what they need to accomplish their tasks. But here, they must each **GO** somewhere to pour out their vials. Since the plagues are not all aimed at the same **PLACE**, the implication is that each goes to work on his own project.

THE SEVEN BOWLS OF THE WRATH OF GOD: (See comments on 15:7.) There is a clear distinction between plague and bowl in Chapter 15. (Cf. 15:1 and 15:6, 7.) Now, in Chapter 16, the distinction is less important. The plagues apparently are IN the bowls. The event (bowl) forces the truth (plague) on Babylon. Also in the bowls is WRATH. Thus the bowls (events) are carriers of wrath in the form of forced truths (plagues) used for judgment.

INTO THE EARTH: It is important to note this phrase. ALL bowls go to EARTH. Yet each seems NOT to be earth! The second is on the sea, the fourth on the sun, and the seventh on the air! The thought is, ALL of these various seven things CONSTITUTE PARTS OF THE EARTH — constitute various parts of the old social order. Therefore, they are all said here to be aimed at earth (society.)

— The First Plague —

16:2 — AND THE FIRST ANGEL: (See p. 26 and compare the columns for the Trumpets and the plagues.) The question arises as to whether or not this sequence of angels is the SAME sequence as the seven messengers to the Church. It seems almost inescapable that this be so. As we have seen that the first Seal and Trumpet parallel the Ephesus Church and, therefore, that Paul blew the first Trumpet, now we see that these plagues aim at the same targets as their respective Trumpets. It seems most probable, then, that the first bowl was given to the glorified Apostle Paul as his assignment.

WENT AND POURED OUT HIS BOWL INTO THE EARTH: The pouring out is apparently the administration of the details of the EVENT which forces first-plague truths on the establishment. The first bowl appears to be the First World War. (See pg. 63 for the remarkable correspondencies to the events of the first Trumpet.) This bowl was POURED INTO THE EARTH. Note that, unlike other plagues, this one IS on THE EARTH rather than on a specific PART of the earth. WWI was a plague on all society. It changed the world and is now acknowledged to have done so by all historians.

AND IT BECAME A LOATHSOME AND MALIGNANT SORE: This “sore” is probably the inability ever since WWI to find a stable form of government. It is LOATHSOME (concordance = bad or evil) because instability is one of the worst curses to happen to any social structure. It is MALIGNANT because it is incurable and spreadable. WWI put an end to Divine Right of Kings. This doctrine had been the very foundation of governments since Rome. While many kings had been bad, think of the horrors which have in this century replaced them: Communism, Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, etc.

UPON THE MEN WHO HAD THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND WHO WORSHIPPED HIS IMAGE: Note who were particularly affected by this plague — those who had been a part of the old Divine Right structure. It was AIMED AT EUROPE. Those who lost most were those who depended most on the old church-state system.

— The Second Plague —

16:3 — AND THE SECOND ANGEL: — The glorified Apostle John. (See comments on First Angel: 16:2).

POURED OUT HIS BOWL INTO THE SEA: (Sinaitic = UPON the sea. Cf. 18:17) This second bowl seems to have been the events begun in the Bolshevik Revolution. (c. 1918) Note again (See p. 70) the stunning similarities to second Trumpet events. There too, a great mountain falls due to a struggle between religious and non-religious elements. In Russia, however, it is in REVERSE; the non-religious forces triumph. Other plagues will more directly affect the Roman Church. The Russian Revolution began its effect on the Russian Orthodox Church; but as Communism spread in Eastern Europe, the Roman Church was greatly affected.

The bowl was poured into (or upon) the SEA. This is IMPORTANT. The Bolshevik Revolution was a sea-class revolution. But most revolutions ARE! The point is that once the revolution began, there happens to the sea SOMETHING UNIQUE — something unprecedented in history:

AND IT BECAME BLOOD LIKE THAT OF A DEAD MAN: A dead man's blood DIVIDES into serum (liquid) and clot (solid accumulations). This is the plague on the sea: it now contains TWO basic elements. It is not without direction as it used to be. In prior times, the only thing the sea had in the sense of unity was that it was not unified — it was in unplanned fluctuation. Now, one part of humanity REMAINS as it always was — fluid and unconnected, afraid that cooperative actions will only hurt them. But for the first time in history, the OTHER part of restless humanity starts to ORGANIZE — to form little associations (clots) for the accomplishment of their ends — their agendas — the securing of their “rights.” The first plague proved that the church-state monolith could be broken. The second plague proved that the church could be IGNORED, and PEOPLE could organize for their own desires.

AND EVERY LIVING SOUL IN THE SEA DIED: It was one of the points of this revolution to kill religion, “the opiate of the people.” It was (at least in the Soviet Union) remarkably successful. The Bolsheviks were a-religious; all followers were expected to be the same. Non-followers were frightened out of their religious affiliations.

—The Third Plague —

16:4 — AND THE THIRD ANGEL: — the glorified Arius. (See 16:2.)

POURED OUT HIS BOWL INTO THE RIVERS AND SPRINGS OF WATERS: This third bowl appears to be a religious movement which would effectively challenge the sources and outlets of Babylon's “truths.” Perhaps we have been too close to it to notice, but the most active “event” accomplishing this on a worldwide basis has been the “Jehovah's Witnesses” movement. Their organization has been phenomenal. Their system has been extremely effective. They have knocked on almost every door in Christendom leaving behind perplexing questions which have caused many to question their religious leaders and authorities — even though they don't abandon them.

(See pp. 80, 81 to see again how the third Trumpet account has such a remarkable parallel.) Arius' truths caused Rome great difficulties; he and his followers were rejected as dangerous heretics. In this plague, the Witnesses (who are considered apostates — and really are; but who have damaging truths to spread), can and do threaten the establishment.

This third plague affects the dispersal of “water” and its sources so that —

THEY BECOME BLOOD: — undrinkable. How often do we hear people say, “I'm a Lutheran, but I don't believe all my church teaches.” Traditional doctrine is undrinkable and more and more either avoided or repudiated. This plague has, indeed, had its effect.

16:5 — AND I HEARD: Two times during this plague John takes us aside for editorial comments — two focuses on the meaning of the plague, not to Babylon upon whom it is poured, but to the saints on BOTH sides of the veil.

THE ANGEL OF THE WATERS: — glorified Arius giving praise to God for what is happening as well as for the opportunity to be a participant.

SAYING, RIGHTEOUS ART THOU . . . O HOLY ONE: Arius is pointing out that this action is a RIGHTEOUS action; it compensates for what Arius and his followers had to face. THEY tried to impress truth over error and had little success; but NOW, truth over error is having an eating-away effect on error.

BECAUSE THOU DIDST JUDGE THESE THINGS: It would be UNrighteous to have let error continue without judgment.

16:6 — FOR THEY POURED . . . BLOOD TO DRINK . . . DESERVE IT: Throughout the age Babylon has drained the life of the saints as much as possible. False doctrines were used to slay true faith. NOW, the reverse! Now they must try to justify their own doctrinal and behavioral positions, and they are choking on it. How appropriate!

It seems one of those Divine subtleties of humor that the Witnesses make such a point about “drinking blood.” Here their own works are causing others to drink blood!

16:7 — AND I HEARD: This is John’s second re-focus editorial comment on this plague.

THE ALTAR SAYING . . . JUDGMENTS: Why should John re-focus our attention? Because he has just given the feelings of those BEYOND THE VEIL. Now he wishes to give the feelings of those still on THIS SIDE — us. We are yet in the sacrificing condition (the altar). And we agree heartily!

— The Fourth Plague —

16:8 — AND THE FOURTH ANGEL: — the glorified Peter Waldo. (See 16:2.)

POURED OUT HIS BOWL UPON THE SUN: This fourth plague carries us to WWII. The purpose for this plague is stated to be to PLAGUE THE SUN — the GOSPEL! This may seem strange. However, it is necessary to have men DOUBT THE SOURCE of religious profession in order to help further the collapse of Babylon. It must be noticed historically that since WWII the acceptance of the Bible as inspired has diminished greatly. Philosophies like Existentialism have thrived in its place.

See page 93 to see again the remarkable correspondencies between plague and Trumpet. Jezebel smote Waldo’s Bible-based “heresies.” In the fourth plague, however, events make men smite the authority of Scripture and religion, thus further weakening the foundation of the old order.

Events like the Holocaust, atomic warfare, Hitler’s and Mussolini’s agreements with Papacy, etc., all led to the weakening of men’s faith. Thus:

AND IT WAS GIVEN TO IT: — to this bowl (WWII)

TO SCORCH MEN WITH FIRE: (Cf. I Pet. 1:7) — to test the validity of their faith.

16:9 — AND MEN WERE SCORCHED WITH GREAT HEAT: they WERE tested as to the validity of their faith. They failed. There is here again, not humor, but a possible play on words. Two of the major events which burned men’s faith because they couldn’t find answers were the atomic bomb, and the holocaust (literally meaning TOTAL BURNING). Literal fires of bombs and ovens were too much for the faith of most.

AND THEY BLASPHEMED THE NAME OF GOD: They spoke evil of His character. “Where IS God in all of this?” “IF He really exists, why didn’t He DO something?” The “God is dead” movement flourished after the war. Doubts multiplied.

WHO HAS THE POWER OVER THESE PLAGUES: What men (except faithful saints) have failed to see is that GOD IS IN THESE PLAGUES! It is He Who is directing them to FREE men from their hideous captivity.

AND THEY DID NOT REPENT SO AS TO GIVE HIM GLORY: These plagues DO NOT make men know God. They only PREPARE men so that they CAN know Him. They still, at least nominally, support the old order. Four plagues haven’t done the trick; it will take seven.

— The Fifth Plague —

16:10 — AND THE FIFTH ANGEL: — the glorified John Wycliffe. (See 16:2)

POURED OUT HIS BOWL UPON THE THRONE OF THE BEAST: This plague is probably the Vatican II church council. The church had problems and did not look very good once WWII ended. Pope John XXIII wanted to help the situation. But, because the Lord designed a plague on the AUTHORITY (throne) of the beast, Vatican II weakened the church dramatically.

Papacy, remember, is a HORN on the beast, but the seventh head — Nazi-Fascism — was now gone. Thus this prominent horn is the de-facto authority (throne) of the beast.

Again, uncanny parallelisms exist between these fifth plague events and those of the fifth Trumpet (See pp. 104-107.)

AND HIS KINGDOM BECAME DARKENED: The Papacy has been subsequently questioned by its own bishops (as well as by its priests, nuns, and parishioners.) Those with whom it had concordats also look askance at it. It is no longer seen by nearly anyone as an infallible source of light. The church never before publicly questioned its past actions; it now does. Their very foundation (throne) is shaken. All kinds of movements have sprung up within the church which do not have Papal sanction and which continually challenge Papal authority.

AND THEY GNAWED THEIR TONGUES BECAUSE OF PAIN: They do not know what to say. Contradictions are undermining confidence in her. When the Pope tries to be authoritative (on birth control, women in the priesthood, etc.,) most of his subjects think he’s less than capable. Again it appears that God’s subtle humor may enter into this verse. One of Vatican II’s results was putting the mass into the vernacular languages — a change which met with great consternation and resistance. Gnawing their tongues may be a humorous reference. In any case, the Roman Church IS IN PAIN and seems quite uncertain of its next move (at least publicly) — a position most uncharacteristic of it.

16:11 — AND THEY BLASPHEMED THE GOD OF HEAVEN: Note the change from 16:9 where blasphemy was against the “NAME of God” — i.e., God’s character. Verse 11 possibly, even likely, refers to the Pope. He has been ill-spoken of by those throughout his church. He certainly IS the god of the Catholic heaven. (II Thess. 2:3, 4)

AND THEY DID NOT REPENT: Five plagues don’t work; seven are needed. One great phenomenon since Vatican II is the number of priests and nuns resigning their posts. The remarkable thing is that they DON’T LEAVE THE CHURCH. They don’t REPENT. They merely challenge the vows they took.

— The Sixth Plague —

16:12 — AND THE SIXTH ANGEL: — the glorified Martin Luther (See 16:2).

POURED OUT HIS BOWL UPON THE GREAT RIVER, THE EUPHRATES: We are probably in the midst of this plague currently. The former plagues are history (except that their features continue) and are, thus, more easy of discernment. With the sixth plague we are leaving history and entering prophecy — a much less clear road. The bowl, the event which forces the plague upon men, is probably the information explosion — the media, computer networks, etc. The Euphrates seems to represent the people who fed the old order, the reliable source of support for the city of Babylon. The etymology seems to be “the good and abounding river.” This meaning is telling. The masses of mankind long for the good, peaceable life (Rom. 8:22, 19). This etymology of Euphrates suggests strongly that GOOD is still the dominant element in the human character. It is the “beasts” and “dragons” rather than the human race which have so defiled human history.

A comparison of this plague to the sixth Trumpet is fruitful, but much more difficult than previous comparisons. (See pp. 125 - 140.) The sixth Trumpet is a very complex event. The sixth plague is, likewise, more complex than the first five. Both sixth Trumpet and sixth plague have events beginning in the Euphrates. In the Trumpet, they eventuate in the French Revolution — one tenth of the city falling. In the plague, they eventuate in the gathering to Armageddon which destroys the final nine-tenths. It is interesting also to note how the sixth period events melt into the seventh period events. (See p. 109); likewise here, the sixth plague melts into the seventh; they are gathered to Armageddon in the sixth, but the seventh IS Armageddon.

A Brief Detour To See More About Euphrates

Daniel does not record specifically about the turning aside of the Euphrates to conquer Babylon. We rely on secular history for that fact. Taking a clue from history, we can see that one way the Lord plagues Babylon is by turning aside its support. Other clues from Scripture, history, and geography suggest other meanings:

- (1) The Euphrates was the farthest boundary of Israel in its prime. Does this suggest that Babylon's (nominal Spiritual Israel's) BOUNDARIES are being threatened?
- (2) The Euphrates was, in the days of the Caesars, the eastern-most boundary of the Roman Empire. Does this suggest the same thing as above, but under the symbolism of Rome?
- (3) In Daniel 5:28, referring to the fall of Babylon, Daniel uses the word PERES. He is, of course, interpreting based on a play of meanings in the words which Belshazzar saw on the wall. (These weights are SO significant that they numerically equal 2520, the length of years of gentile rule over Israel.) The rabbinical comments (Soncino) point out that this word suggests TWO things — DIVIDED and PERSIA. (Even the Jewish word for Euphrates is not far removed in similarity — which may or may not be a coincidence.) Daniel says “Your kingdom HAS BEEN DIVIDED.” It was actually DESTROYED! But DIVIDED brings us back to the sixth plague. Perhaps we see DIVISION among the people in their support of Babylon; or perhaps we see the people DIVIDED FROM Babylon, i.e., withholding support.

Persia was the conqueror, the INCOMING ruler, representative of Christ's incoming kingdom. The Persians (as represented in this word PERES) conquered by separating the people (Euphrates) from the institution (Babylon). Is it possible that this symbolism is showing that the vast spread of truths from the incoming king since Bro. Russell's day IS HAVING THE EFFECT of separating the loyalties of the people from their institutions?

16:12 continued —

AND ITS WATER WAS DRIED UP: In history, it was DIVERTED. But as far as Babylon was concerned, it was dried up. It is not stretching the point to say that Babylon feels its support slipping — maybe mostly gone. The people have DIVERTED their thoughts and efforts to other concerns.

It is VERY IMPORTANT here, however, to remember that, while all plagues ARE on Babylon, EACH plague is on a SPECIFIC PART. In this plague, the plague is ON THE EUPHRATES — on the PEOPLE. The people are NOT UNITED IN OPPOSITION to Babylon. This is NOT the thought at all. The people THEMSELVES are plagued; they are upset that they cannot support things they used to support without question. Their plague is one of doubt and instability fueled by the constant barrage of information from the ever-present media. The eventual fall of Babylon IS RELIANT ON people (as many individuals) feeling betrayed. In this sixth plague the people are NOT ORGANIZED as opponents of Babylon. They are, rather, feeling sorry for THEMSELVES that nothing is reliable any more. They are thus NOT SUPPORTIVE. This plague affects PEOPLE. It makes them change direction in thinking and in action.

THAT THE WAY MIGHT BE PREPARED FOR THE KINGS FROM THE EAST: Who are these? The traditional Bible student position is that this is The Christ, head and body. This interpretation deserves respect and is most likely the correct answer. In its support are the facts that:

- (1) The defection of the people from the support of the old order DOES prepare the way for a new order. It creates a HUNGER for it.
- (2) The marginal reading for “east” is literally “rising of the sun” — a distinctly good description of Jesus. (Mal. 4:2)
- (3) The Barkley translation reads: “. . . so that the highway of the kings of the east might be made ready” — a phrase sounding much like Isaiah 35 and Isaiah 40.

However:

As we look at the late 20th Century, a remarkable religious occurrence is happening — an occurrence which is THREATENING Babylon’s borders. The incursion of Islam and its problems into western events is a daily news item. It has been well suggested by Bro. Hagensick that the kings of the east MIGHT refer to this threat to Babylon from the Moslem world. This IS an eastern religion. Persia (Iran) itself is dominated by it; and was it not Persia which invaded Babylon in Daniel 5? PERES, according to the rabbis, can mean Persia. Added to this also is the fact that the Euphrates was long the border of Persia. This possible interpretation must be given consideration since today’s history is so dominated by problems with Islam. It is not unlikely that this plague is explaining this to us — that Islam is ONE of the factors which will weaken the old order. IF the people yet supported the old order as they used to, they would go to war with the Islamic threat — as they used to do. This is not the case — an evidence of the drying of the Euphrates, the lack of popular support.

16:13 — AND I SAW: Our focus is now directed elsewhere. In essence, the sixth plague is entirely reported in verse 12. Verse 13 is John turning his head and NOTICING A REACTION to the diversion of the waters. The picture is STRONG. The events of verse 12 cause something to happen — something designed to help to bolster up the threatened old order.

COMING OUT OF THE MOUTH: Interestingly, this phrase is REPEATED so that we have it a total of three times. It must be important! A mouth is a message or doctrines or proclamation — an order from a superior. (It may indicate that it is from the LEADERS — spokesmen or mouth — of these entities that these messages come.) (Please consider Volume 4, pp.307-308.)

OF THE DRAGON: — the civil power. This is the most long-lived of the three entities. The other two (beast and false prophet) will be destroyed in 19:20 — at the end of this age. The dragon, however, is merely BOUND for a thousand years (20:2) to make a final entrance at the end of the Millennium before joining the beast and false prophet (20:7-10).

OF THE BEAST: — apparently the 10-horned beast of Chapter 13 with its notable “little horn” of Papacy — by this time a beast which has lost its seventh head. (17:10)

OF THE FALSE PROPHET: This symbol is of far greater difficulty of interpretation. It is a complex symbol which makes its first appearance in Revelation in this verse as if we should know who it is. THAT is part of the help in identifying it. The appearance as though we already know about it is telling us that we DO already know about it. Looking forward to 19:20 we can learn more. 19:20 tells us that this false prophet is, at least in part, the 2-horned beast of 13:12-14. In 19:20 we see that, for some reason, the “image” does not exist as the image at the end. It does this by showing that “THESE TWO (beast and false prophet) were thrown alive into the lake of fire.” Where is the third part, the image? The implication is VERY STRONG that WHEN the 2-horned beast gives “breath” to the image, the COMBINED AUTHORITY of the 2-horned beast PLUS the vitalized image EQUALS THE FALSE PROPHET. This, in turn, strongly suggests that this “breath” happens somewhere in the sixth plague. The image is STILL called the image in the first plague. Compare Matthew 24:24.

THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS LIKE FROGS: It is not clear whether there are three separate spirits (teachings) or ONE, but coming from each of the three mouths. In any case, COOPERATION is shown between church and state to COUNTER THE THREAT which the DIVIDING of the people is causing. Some attempt will be made to UNITE the “Christian” world against its perceived threats.

It seems clear that this is the likely time for the fulfillment of the Elijah type of the smiting of the Jordan (II Kings 2:7-11). The act of dividing the waters is so very similar to the sixth plague concepts as to make the two prophecies most compatible. The work of 16:13 is clearly an attempt to RE-UNITE or RE-FOCUS the divided waters.

These “spirits” (or teachings — See I John 4:1) are said to be LIKE FROGS. Under the Law, frogs are unclean animals — food no kosher person would approach. Thus, it should be clear to all truly consecrated saints that these directives, when they happen, are beyond the conscience of a Christian. Three characteristics of frogs may help in identifying the fulfillment of this prophecy when it appears:

- They are puffed up (pompous and proud).
- They have inordinately large mouths. (They will speak with too much authority.)
- They have huge eyes. (They will want to appear very wise.)

16:14 — FOR THEY ARE SPIRITS OF DEMONS: The first word here (“FOR”) is important. It means BECAUSE. The thought seems to be that these teachings are unclean BECAUSE they are the work of demons. It is clear from history (Daniel 10:13, 20) that the demons have had a part in the administration of various empires. THEY do not want their powers to pass away and will, therefore, do all in their power (which is great) to prop up and maintain the old order. Thus these “spirits” to maintain the status quo are the inventions of the spirit world bringing on the most dangerous and deceptive time of the harvest.

PERFORMING SIGNS: (See Matt. 24:24; II Thess. 2:9-12; Deut. 13:1-3). It is to be expected that we will see the unexpected — manifestation from the spirit world in support of the old order which, if we were not well-informed, would deceive us. It will not be a time to believe the eyes and ears, but the promises. (Cf. I Cor. 3:13.)

WHICH GO OUT TO THE KINGS OF THE WHOLE WORLD: The Greek is IMPORTANT here = THE INHABITED EARTH — NOT a symbol of society, but a representation of the globe itself. This is saying that this appeal will go beyond the “Christian” world and take in the influential ones of the diverse places on earth. Weymouth translates this interestingly: “spirits that go out to control the kings of the whole earth.” That IS the point. The world is going out of control. The demons want to restrain that tendency.

TO GATHER THEM TOGETHER: Unity (out of necessity) will be the plea. (Cf. Zeph. 3:8.)

FOR THE WAR OF THE GREAT DAY OF GOD, THE ALMIGHTY: This is NOT another world war! This is the battle between the old order and the new, between the kings of the earth and the Lamb. This is the last battle to maintain the old order. It will fail. It is the war OF THE GREAT DAY OF GOD: it is not a war between the nations. It is a welcome war for those who know the results.

16:15 — BEHOLD, I AM COMING LIKE A THIEF: The NAS has this verse in parentheses and in quotation marks. Both are appropriate. Right in the midst of these demonic deceptions comes a warning in the form of a memory — a voice behind us: the words of Jesus reminding us. He is saying, “No matter what you see, remember the MANNER of my parousia (presence). Do not be deceived.” This should tell us the possible nature of some of the deceptions.

Several items are worthy of note here. First is the word BEHOLD. As always, it precedes a thought worthy of much meditation and study. Here we are admonished to study the MANNER of his second coming, the IMPLICATION being that the “signs” performed by these demons will be explicitly designed either to CHALLENGE these concepts or to COUNTERFEIT them. It is not unlikely that an attempt will be made to pretend that a reformed old order is, indeed, the beginning of a new order. After all, has it not been Satan’s policy all along to provide SUBSTITUTES? Instead of Christ, we have had Antichrist. Instead of THE MAN, we have had the MAN OF SIN. Instead of the kingdom, we have had Christendom. NOW, instead of THAT PROPHET (Acts 3:22, 23), perhaps we are to have the FALSE PROPHET. Since we now seem to be in the time of the sixth plague, it behooves us to be watching more closely than ever.

BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO STAYS AWAKE: What a strange remark in light of all that is going on! Who could sleep through frogs, signs, and demons? Apparently we can! We are far into the Harvest, and our expectations have been delayed. It is so easy to slumber, to be numbed by the onslaught of media events, to be thinking it is all still distant. (Cf. Hab. 2:3.)

AND KEEPS HIS GARMENTS: It is a time when insufficient clothing (compromised justification due to too little exercise of faith) is a real possibility. (See 3:18 and p. 145 comments.) The meaning is very likely that at this late time in the harvest, the tendency will be to have INFORMATION more than CHARACTER development — a fatal flaw. We are not justified by what we know. Our garments are kept pure by the exercise of faith — the APPLICATION of truths to our characters.

LEST HE WALK ABOUT NAKED: — insufficiently clothed. This seems much like the insufficient oil in the possession of the foolish virgins. At this point, it is getting too late to buy it in the market.

AND THEY SEE HIS SHAME: Who are THEY? It is difficult to say. Perhaps it is the wise virgins who would have to look at the situation with pity. Perhaps it is the demons who would squeal with glee to see saints fail. After all, this IS the time of their judgment. (Jude 6.)

16:16 — AND THEY GATHERED THEM TOGETHER: The demon-backed croakings gather the influential ones of the world into a temporary unity. (Cf. 17:12, 13, 17.)

TO THE PLACE: Places symbolize conditions. The condition here meant is symbolized by its name —

WHICH IN HEBREW IS CALLED: For some reason the Lord chose to add the two words: “In Hebrew.” It is likely because He wants to draw attention to the fact that the final catalyst for Armageddon will involve the Holy Land. In 14:20 we saw that the wine-press feature of the trouble was to be “outside the city” (of Babylon.) Babylon’s fall will occur in the Middle East. The Ezekiel 39 account of the end also ties the fall of Babylon to the deliverance of Israel. Here, in 16:16, God is with two words reminding us that all of the prophecies relate the fall of the old order to his deliverance of His people, Israel.

HAR-MAGEDON: Armageddon means MOUNT OF DESTRUCTION. The place name represents the CONDITION — the old mountain is to be destroyed (Matt. 21:21). It is now, after six plagues, in a condition READY for that destruction. It has been gathered there with the help of the fallen angels — NOT what THEY had in mind!

It is important to keep in mind what the sixth plague accomplishes. It plagues the people (Euphrates) with a feeling of instability and mistrust — a lack of desire to be supportive of their leaders and institutions. It has, therefore, frightened the leaders into a confederacy of convenience for self-protection and a willingness (knowing or unknowing) to work with the powers of darkness so that they can avert a socio-political crisis. We have TWO SIDES for the battle: The people and the self-interests. They have become irreconcilable. The battle is inevitable. The Lord is THE LORD OF HOSTS; He will fight FOR THE PEOPLE!*

— The Seventh Plague —

16:17 —AND THE SEVENTH ANGEL: — the glorified Charles Russell (See 16:2)

POURED OUT HIS BOWL ON THE AIR: Again there is such exciting correspondencies of plague and Trumpet (See 11:15-19 and pp. 153-154.) What the bowl will be that initiates this plague is yet to be seen. Just as Bro. Russell was allowed to announce the kingdom begun (1874), so he is allowed to pour out the final plague which, once finished, will see the beginning of the visible kingdom. The angry nations of the seventh Trumpet become the destroyed nations of the seventh plague. Revelation 11:19 actually summarizes ALL of Chapters 15 and 16, but its final words reflect the terror of the seventh plague.

The AIR, of course, is a symbol of spiritual control (Eph. 2:2). This plague will DISRUPT and FOIL the plans which the demons instituted in the sixth plague. This plague (#7) IS ARMAGEDDON — the destruction of the mountain. (Cf. Zech. 4:7; Matt. 21:21). What it is specifically is yet to be seen.

AND A LOUD VOICE: (See Item #74j) — an important announcement of an important event.

CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE: — out of God’s plan; out of the Most Holy condition.

FROM THE THRONE: The temple has no throne. The mixed symbolism is apparently to show us how important this announcement is. It is LOUD; it is part of God’s plan (temple); it is from the Most Holy (Cf. 15:5); and it is from THE THRONE — THE Authority, God Himself. This all gives SPECIAL weight to the next three words, the announcement itself:

* It is interesting to note the first several verses of Isaiah 41 in connection with the sixth plague. The correspondencies are strong. It opens with the PEOPLE speaking and the nations having to listen. It continues with one FROM THE EAST. Then there is a collaboration. Following this is the deliverance of Israel.

IT IS DONE: There is only speculation as to what “it” is. But all saints must feel instinctively what is meant. This is so close to Jesus’ own words on the cross when his sacrifice was completed. This “IT IS DONE” is surely the glorification of the last members of his body. What else demands the LOUD VOICE from THE THRONE? Other things (verses 18-21) are NOT DONE at this point. These three little words are among the most blessed in the Bible.

16:18 The things that occur from now on CAN occur BECAUSE the Church is gone. There is nothing in the way now of the peaceable kingdom save the total disintegration of the old order — the blowing of the winds of Rev. 7.

AND THERE WERE FLASHES OF LIGHTNING: This is the first of the collection of symbols portraying the elements, which when combined, will be causing the mass confusion of Armageddon. Lightning is blinding flashes of light. Hence, maddening exposures of truths on many planes will be one of the irritants in the trouble.

AND SOUNDS (or VOICES): All kinds of excuses and explanations will be flying about — all to no avail.

AND PEALS OF THUNDER: Thunder represents controversy. This will be a time when controversy erupts into violence:

AND THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE: Not just an earthquake, but a GREAT one — the end of the one begun in the French Revolution (11:13) and the same as the one of Ezekiel 38:19, 20 — another testimony that Babylon’s fall is inseparably linked to Israel’s deliverance.

SUCH AS THERE HAD NOT BEEN SINCE MAN CAME TO BE UPON THE EARTH: This is to let us know that “great” is an insufficient modifier for earthquake. It worked for the French Revolution (11:13), but the last 9/10ths of the city will be a revolution unprecedented.

SO GREAT AN EARTHQUAKE, SO MIGHTY: Yet MORE is said to make the impression! Those who think that transition to the peaceable kingdom will be gradual or smooth should take note!

16:19 — AND THE GREAT CITY: — Babylon the Great with all of its supporting and component parts

WAS SPLIT INTO THREE PARTS: The implication is the three parts of 16:13. The coalition falls apart. As in most revolutions and/or anarchy, it will be “every man for himself” and every man against his neighbor.

AND THE CITIES OF THE NATIONS FELL: Although the Sinaitic MS makes this singular (city), it is likely that it should be plural. The “great City” has already been mentioned. While it IS, in a sense, the “city of the nations,” there seems little reason to state its fall between its “split” and God’s wrath upon it. However, there IS reason to mention that the various capitals (“cities”) of the various nations fell. We see in the next verse that this loss of rulership (i. e., plunge into anarchy — Cf. Ezek. 38:21-23) will result in the demise of small and great polities. It is Divine Justice that the “cities” (capitals — ruling entities) of the nations should fall. THESE have been the beasts which have (with few exceptions) been the cause of mankind’s woes.

AND BABYLON THE GREAT WAS REMEMBERED BEFORE GOD: At this point she will wish she were forgotten by Him. In 18:5 God “remembers” her in order to BEGIN her judgment. In 16:19 He remembers EVERY grievance. All of these plagues are God’s wrath (15:1), but THIS plague is more:

TO GIVE HER THE CUP OF THE WINE OF HIS FIERCE WRATH: The Greek for WRATH here is different from that in 15:1. The good student will want to be aware that the Harvest period has wrath and WRATH, trouble and TROUBLE, fire and FIRE, and a few other such contrasts which allow us to see the PROGRESSION through this century with CLIMAX at its end.

Cup can mean experience; wine can mean several things, including the RESULTS of doctrine. It is clear that Babylon will drink of something unpleasant. It is closely allied with the traditional cup of hemlock juice with which people were slain for their crimes. Babylon’s cup will not be enviable. It is full of the results of God’s extreme wrath.

16:20 — AND EVERY ISLAND FLED AWAY: Islands represent republics. Fleeing away may, indeed, represent their demise; or it may be that it represents their running from the problems — a flight which will be futile.

AND THE MOUNTAINS WERE NOT FOUND: — as mountains. Having lost their rulership “cities” (capitals — v. 19), they no longer function as mountains. They have been “cast into the midst of the sea” — anarchy will have swallowed up their polities.

16:21 — AND HUGE HAILSTONES: Hail is hardened water — destructive truths.

ABOUT THE WEIGHT OF A TALENT: This phrase is difficult to interpret. There is no question that a talent is heavy (? excess of 100 pounds!). The destructive force is evident. Strong’s #5007 (Gk. Dictionary) says that the word means a balance. This may imply that these truths are JUST RETRIBUTION for the errors of the past. This is very fitting since with this plague God’s righteous wrath is complete. Strong’s #5006 (from which this word is translated) means “talent-like.” Therefore, “hard truths like justice” seems one fitting interpretation.

The Old Testament makes a few references to one talent. They may or may not prove eventually to be helpful. (See II Sam. 12:30; I Kings 20:39*; Zech. 5:7 KJV for examples.)

One particular reference, however, (Exod. 25:39 or 37:24) may provide the best interpretation to Rev. 16:21’s talent. The candlestick and its tools were made from one talent of gold. Since the plagues represent the truths which each of the Church messengers presented, and since the candlestick represents all seven Churches, and since the seventh messenger (and, therefore, the seventh plague) had a compilation of all of the truths of the entire age, it is likely that this hail weighing one talent represents the aggregate of the light of the age being used as a judgment against Babylon’s professing “Christians.”

CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN: — likely meaning as a result of Divine decree.

UPON MEN: Since “men” is frequently a symbol for professing Christians, this is probably the equivalent of the burning of the tares — an event which makes “men” renounce their false professions. Hence:

AND MEN BLASPHEMED GOD: They have little choice. They have lost their faith; their world has fallen apart all around them, and they as yet have no knowledge of good things coming.

*See footnote on p.200

BECAUSE OF THE PLAGUE OF THE HAIL:* How much truth men will learn in the final cataclysm is conjectural. Anarchy is not a good classroom for details. They will have learned enough to destroy their faith in everything. The thought implies that MEANS will still be operational for the spread of information (hail). This plague may be, in large part, televised!

BECAUSE ITS PLAGUE WAS EXTREMELY SEVERE: The implication is that few lies will escape attention. The world will, indeed, be an emptied vessel ready to accept the “Peace! Be Still!”

Thus the account of the plagues leaves us hanging! That is probably on purpose. It will also leave the world hanging. They will be most ready for the kingdom.

*See I Kings 20:39. If one talent equals the worth of a man, perhaps the HARD TRUTH hail of this plague is to teach the VALUE OF THE INDIVIDUAL — something presently not of import, but of supreme import to God.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT HARLOT

(17:1-18)

— Preparatory Notes to the Consideration of Chapter 17 —

Time Settings

At least a part of the understanding of this chapter is reliant upon knowing the times which are referred to. It is significant that the angel can be identified as the seventh angel. (See Appendix Item #74b.) We thus see that the John class comes to understand the history and judgment of Babylon during Bro. Russell's ministry. Accordingly, verses 1 and 2 date from the 1870's to 1916 (— and beyond by his writings.) The 3rd verse specifies the "wilderness" — the 1260 years from 539-1799 about which we learned in Chapter 12. It is this period which is described in verses 3-5 — a look backward at history. Verse 6 brings us back to the Pastor's day. It is from this perspective that we must view the explanation given in verse 8 and following. Thus the Lord LOCKED INTO PLACE the understanding of Chapter 17. Until we understand and accept the place of the 7th messenger in the scheme of things, we CANNOT successfully interpret this chapter.

Symbols

It might well be asked how Bro. Russell (as this angel) explained the details of verses 8-14. We do not find a clear and detailed explanation in his writings — only a generalized one.

As with all prophecy not fulfilled or only partially fulfilled, Revelation 17's key verses were not meant to be fully comprehended in minute detail prior to the time for understanding them. The PERTINENT WORDS from the angel are found in verse 9 — "Here is the mind which has wisdom." These are the words which answer the question posed above. The angel DID NOT SAY that this head is this entity. He explained the symbolism and then said YOU MUST APPLY WISDOM to the symbolic keys that I gave you. It was the COMMISSION GIVEN TO THIS ANGEL to supply the John class with the needed symbols SO THAT the John class could WATCH and RECOGNIZE the fulfillments as they came due. When Bro. Russell (seemingly flippantly) said that someone else would have to write the Seventh Volume (the answers to Revelation), he was, indeed, summarizing his commission to us: He would instruct us in the Divine Plan's OUTLINE, in the METHODS of study of the Divine Word, and in the MANNER of interpreting the MEANINGS of symbols. WE must ultimately apply "the mind which has wisdom." Chapter 17, please note carefully, ENDS (verses 15-18) with the angel's doing this very thing: He explains the meanings of symbols. We must now apply them.

Parts of the Beast

It is immediately noticeable in this chapter that Babylon is portrayed as a harlot SITTING ON a beast. In Chapter 13, church and state were all amalgamated into the beast. The story of the fall of Babylon and of the destruction of the beast, however, requires the SEPARATION of the symbols for church and state.

Note also that this is NOT Papacy riding the beast. Papacy was (Chapter 12) portrayed as the “manchild” and as a “mouth” (13:5, 6; Dan. 7:20). While we cannot EXEMPT Papacy from the fall of Babylon, IT is not the focus of this chapter; the Roman CHURCH is. The change is probably due to several factors:

- (1) Papacy has always (except Chapter 12) been pictured as a horn on the beast — a picture which is ill-suited to the narrative of this chapter.
- (2) The use of a harlot stresses the fornication sin of the church, the Lord thus indicating His MAIN objection to this apostate.
- (3) The Revelator probably wants us to understand the destruction of the CHURCH, not just its leadership.

Bro. Russell provides a very important clue to the interpretation of this chapter in Vol. II, page 354. On this page he subtly hints that, though we’ve discussed heads and horns, we might do well to consider the beast’s BODY — which he suggests is the PEOPLE. Notice how 17:1 ESTABLISHES and EMPHASIZES the import of the PEOPLE in this prophecy: “. . . the great harlot who SITS ON MANY WATERS.” a comparison of 17:1 with 17:3 virtually establishes that the people ARE (at least in part) THE BEAST. Thus we can break down the beastly parts as follows:

- (1) THE RIDER: The apostate Catholic Church which has, indeed, by harlotry controlled the direction of the beast.
- (2) THE BODY of the beast: The People who either have nominally supported, or have by coercion been functionally a part of the arrangement.
- (3) THE HORNS: The supportive powers (nations) which, throughout the age, have fluctuated in identity.
- (4) THE HEADS: The forms of authority which have acted as kinds of umbrella philosophies over this complex entity.

CAVEAT: It seems that KINGS in this chapter have more than one meaning. They are somewhat akin to the heads (v. 9-10) in one application; they are akin to the horns, (v. 12) in another. The reason for this varied application will become clear in the narrative.

Verse-by-Verse Consideration

17:1 — AND: This little conjunction is particularly nice here. Having just read with vibrant symbology how the plagues will complete God’s wrath, we are TREATED by this connective word to a reprieve from the spectacular by a contrast consisting of the rational. It is a breathless continuation of considering Babylon’s fall, but a KIND INTERRUPTION by a voice of reason by an angel who, kindly changing the scene, says, “Psst! Come here and let me explain!” How very welcome!

ONE OF THE SEVEN ANGELS: Bro. Russell during his ministry.

WHO HAD THE SEVEN BOWLS: — eventually. It is NOT that he speaks with us after he has one of the bowls, but that he is one who would eventually have one of the bowls. This phrase is added for purposes of identification. By knowing who ONE of these angels is, we know who ALL of them are. Thus Chapter 17 helps interpret Chapters 15 and 16.

CAME AND SPOKE WITH ME: The John class at the end of the age has the honor of having as its constant companion to the end of the Harvest (in person or through writings) a voice which has the answers. We yet rely upon this voice in our daily walk, and as this angel REMAINS with John all the way to Chapter 22, so Bro. Russell's ministry will remain as a friendly sustenance to us to the end.

(Abraham Lincoln said that man's greatest achievement was the written word. By it we can learn from the dead, communicate with the distant, and leave messages for the yet unborn.)

COME HERE: To GET the benefit of his angel's instruction, we must GO TO HIM. It cannot be overstressed that Rev. 17 CANNOT be understood WITHOUT acknowledging the place of this angel in the plan.

I SHALL SHOW YOU: He did. Of all the messengers to the Church, only Bro. Russell gave a clear, detailed exposition of the identity, history, and fall of Babylon.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT HARLOT: This is the first time (Chapter 17) that the apostate church is called by this name although earlier references cite her "immoralities" (KJV = fornication.) The implication is here very strong that the REASON she is being judged is BECAUSE of her faithlessness — her fornication.

WHO SITS ON MANY WATERS: This phrase helps in several ways. We realize from it that she controls many peoples, who, given a choice, would prefer NOT to be under her dominion. It also shows (by comparison to verse 3) that the peoples constitute the BODY of the beast which she controls. This becomes an imperative ingredient later in the chapter.

17:2 — WITH WHOM THE KINGS OF THE EARTH COMMITTED IMMORALITY: This is her primary sin. The Christian Church is espoused to Christ to be wedded to him at his return. This woman thought that the interval before that return would be more profitable to her if she lured the world's leaders into a cooperative union. It would make life easier. Perhaps this is why, of all the denominations, the Roman Church (and its few "orthodox" companions) is the least interested in the subject of the Lord's return. The event has to be most embarrassing!

AND THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH: — people with a vested interest in retaining a stable society, no matter how corrupt. (See Item #69.)

WERE MADE DRUNK: — both a mood of unwarranted lack of care, and a disability to discern clearly.

WITH THE WINE OF HER IMMORALITY: — her doctrine of approval of church-state union.

17:3 — AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY: Bro. Russell was the first to understand clearly the 1260-year prophecy of Daniel and its applicable dates. He carried us back in history to lay the historical background for understanding this harlot's power and characteristics.

THUS VERSES 3-5 ARE A HISTORY OF BABYLON'S GLORY DAYS

IN THE SPIRIT — in our minds. The Greek has no article. It best reads "in spirit."

INTO A WILDERNESS: The only other place Revelation mentions wilderness is the two times in Chapter 12 where the woman (true Church) flees to escape persecution for 1260 “days.” These are clearly the same period. The wilderness (place) represents the **CONDITION** existing (for the saints) when Jezebel ruled supreme.

AND I SAW: This is John’s traditional change-of-focus expression. It might seem out of place here; but its purpose is to denote a **DIFFERENT FOCUS** from the last time (Chapter 12) we saw the wilderness. At **THAT** time, our focus was on the true Church; **THIS** time it is on the apostate church of the same period.

A WOMAN: the harlot: The Roman church.

SITTING ON: controlling.

A SCARLET BEAST: We often (and correctly) ascribe scarlet to sin. It is noteworthy, however, that this color (along with purple) is frequently used to represent splendor of royalty. (See Matt. 27:28 and Rev. 18:16.) The next verse so uses it for this “royal” harlot. While Chapter 13 represented the great Babylonish church-state beast as being like certain **ANIMALS** in order to show its true characteristics, 17:3 instead represents this beast as scarlet — a totally different viewpoint. But how was the beast viewed during the 1260 wilderness years? Was it not viewed as the **DIVINELY**-righted, royal, governmental entity by mankind in general? **BOTH** uses of scarlet seem appropriate. The John class would see the **SINFULNESS**; the world would see the **GLORY**.

FULL OF BLASPHEMOUS NAMES: Only here and in 13:1 is the beast so described. Its blasphemies are mentioned elsewhere, but only these two places say it has blasphemous **NAMES**. This **COULD** be **SYMBOLIC** of blasphemous characteristics. But it is more likely that it refers literally to names or titles which this beast assumed which are by their very nature blasphemous. **CHRISTENDOM** would be only one of many examples.

HAVING SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS: — seven forms of government and ten supporting powers or nations. (See Item #74g for details — particularly the last page of the item.)

17:4 — AND THE WOMAN: She is an integral part of this beast until the very end of the Harvest as verse 16 shows.

WAS CLOTHED . . . PEARLS: These words are also found in 18:16. Whether or not each item of apparel is to be analyzed is difficult to say. The total effect of her clothing — a wealthy monarch’s clothing — may be all that is intended. The point is strong when **THIS** woman is contrasted to the **OTHER** woman in the wilderness who is being fed by an eagle.

HAVING IN HER HAND: Hand represents actions or deeds. An item in the hand is a tool of those deeds.

A GOLD CUP: — usurped from the true temple (even as Belshazzar used the temple vessels in his party the night in which Babylon fell.) Babylon “contained” (i.e., in a cup) its nefarious schemes packaged in the guise of the Lord’s vessels. She **USED** the Bible, and she **USED** her historic connection with early Christianity to give poison to those who would drink.

FULL OF ABOMINATIONS: — the mass being one of the worst, but only one in a vast array of abominable lies, hypocrisies, misrepresentations, and blasphemies. Nearly **ALL** that she taught corrupted human behavior and standards.

AND OF THE UNCLEAN THINGS OF HER IMMORALITY: This phrase and the one just preceding it divide Babylon’s sins into two groups: (1) the religious falsehoods and (2) the church-state cooperation for the suppression of liberties and truth.

17:5 — AND UPON HER FOREHEAD: — written into her very character and plain to see for all who are looking with understanding.

A NAME: — a character

WRITTEN: — inscribed indelibly into her every deed and word.

MYSTERY: What a well-kept secret! Here in the name of CHRIST is ANTICHRIST! How could it happen? Mystery of mysteries!

BABYLON: — originally meaning “Gateway to God,” but coming to mean “Confusion.” — This is part of that mystery.

THE GREAT: The implication is clear: there are lesser Babylons, and the rest of this verse says so. They are all clearly typed by that evil empire of old.

MOTHER OF HARLOTS: There are others! — lesser Babylons; but they all have THIS one as their ancestry.

AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH: She is not only “mother” of the harlot daughters, she is the one who gave birth to society’s aberrations, abominations, and disgusting defects. This places much that is wrong with society directly at her doorstep. It is a weighty load.

17:6 — AND I SAW: John “saw” this woman back in verse 3. As is traditional to the form of Revelation, John uses these three words as a section divider and focus changer. This verse brings us back to the Gospel Age Harvest when John “sees” in the sense of understanding. The angel has shown John things not clearly seen before the Harvest. When the John class “sees,” his understanding results in his great wonder or astonishment as is stated later in this verse.

THE WOMAN: The John class finally fully understands the historical and prophetic import of this harlot — the Roman Church. It is important to note that the younger harlots ARE an important part of the story, but the MOTHER is singled out by the Lord and should be also in our minds.

DRUNK WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS: Notice that SHE is drunk. Her success in suppressing the true Church has gone to her head. She really thinks she is invincible — and THAT will probably contribute greatly to her downfall. Blood is life. She was not able to take the spiritual lives of the saints, but she was able to take or make miserable their physical lives. (Please see next phrase for possible complications from this application.)

AND WITH THE BLOOD OF THE WITNESSES OF JESUS: This phrase can pose a problem. In the Greek, witnesses = martyrs. But how do these differ from the saints? Is it possible that “saints” refers to the prophets which she misused, Old Testament Saints, — squeezing the life (blood) out of their testimonies? The martyrs, then, would be the Gospel Age saints. Then again, the martyrs may refer to actual martyrs (a word the Roman Church loves) because she built her strength on the testimony of those willing to die for the name of Christ (which name she claims). She usurped (as is her wont) the glory of Christian martyrdom to herself. Compare 12:10, 11 where The Roman Church does this very thing. (“AND” can be translated “EVEN.” This would equate saints and witnesses.)

AND WHEN I SAW HER: — When the John class eventually understood all that this “church” had done —

I WONDERED GREATLY: The John class could be no less than astonished at the usurpations, abominations, counterfeits, lies, intrigues, conspiracies, secrets, and all other evils perpetrated with impunity on mankind by this harlot. Once Bro. Russell assembled the indictments against her, we all looked aghast at the history of the Gospel Age.

17:7 — AND THE ANGEL SAID TO ME: This is a curious interjection from the angel, but reflection indicates that the following part of the verse is VERY MUCH Bro. Russell's treatment of the subject —

WHY HAVE YOU WONDERED?: This would be a strange statement under the circumstances. All that we have learned about Babylon's past (the 1260 years) could do nothing other than create amazement. But THAT is not what this question is asking. It is a rhetorical question. It is a question which CONNECTS to the next thought. The IDEA is: If you have been amazed at learning about the PAST, just wait until I tell you about the future! Thus:

Why do you wonder at that? Just look at THIS:

I SHALL TELL YOU THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN: — the COMPLETE mystery — not just her past, but, MORE AMAZINGLY, her future! The "mystery" (begun in verse 5) has only BEGUN as Bro. Russell begins to teach us about Babylon. Its CONTINUATION and ENDING are the genuinely fascinating parts for the harvest saints; and Bro. Russell was not negligent to tell us "things which must shortly come to pass" — things which would happen after he would leave the scene physically.

AND OF THE BEAST THAT CARRIES HER: This CONTINUING mystery involves not only the apostate church, but also the world that "carries" her — gives her the support and encouragement she needs to survive.

WHICH HAS THE SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS: It was important here to re-establish the identity of this beast — to connect it to the thoughts of Chapter 13 and to name the two parts (heads and horns) which are needed in understanding Babylon's downfall. Remember that this chapter, for purposes of describing the demise of Babylon, HAD TO separate church from state. They are NOT separate in actuality; they are pictured as separate to show how they cooperate until one part will turn on the other.

— A Digression for Understanding —

The Details of Decline and Fall

— A Preliminary Look at the Players —
(See Last Page of Item #74g for a Listing of Heads)

All students of Revelation know the enormous complexities of verses 8-13. These verses will remain complex no matter what we do to simplify them. Nevertheless, it is important to try to identify the players in this saga as clearly as possible, and the Revelator supplies enough clues to make certain conclusions secure. By identifying the players, a great deal of the difficulty of interpretation is eliminated. Therefore, before continuing with a verse by verse examination in detail, we here pause to consider this list of players.

In verse 8 we are introduced to a BEAST which we are told we "saw" earlier. But we must here resort to the lessons discussed under "Parts of the Beast" at the beginning of this chapter's notes.

POINT #1. The beast here spoken of is NOT the ENTIRE 7-headed, 10-horned beast.

How do we know this? Because verse 8 says that THIS “beast” (which we saw) IS NOT, while (at the same time in history) we learn from verse 10 that the WHOLE beast IS — it EXISTS at this same time WITH ONE HEAD (the 6th) which it CLEARLY STATES “IS” (in existence).

THEREFORE: This beast IS (v. 10) and IS NOT (v. 8) AT THE SAME TIME!

This seems like double-talk, but it is not. The expansion of POINT #1 is this:

SOME FUNCTION (some characteristic, some form, some aberration, some historic identity or peculiarity) of the beast USED TO EXIST, but does not CURRENTLY exist — EVEN THOUGH THE BEAST AS A WHOLE DOES CURRENTLY EXIST. (By currently, we mean at the time of the angel’s ministry.)

Verse 8 gives a further clue. When it says “The beast that you saw,” it clearly refers back to verses 3-5 — the “wilderness” period (539-1799). THEREFORE, whatever aberration of the beast we are looking for should be found DURING THAT TIME (539-1799).

NOTE:

There WAS one particular and peculiar (and Scripturally noted) instance during that period when the BODY of the beast had an UPRISING. During the French Republic, the PEOPLE (body of the beast) rose up against head, horns, and harlot rider. This is when 1/10th of the “city” fell. Apparently this beast (NOT a WHOLE beast, but only the people constituting its body) will ONCE MORE appear for the destruction of the other 9/10ths of the “city.” (Vs. 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17). (Consider Rev. 11:7-11 CAREFULLY, along with the notes thereon.)

An Aside

The French Republic IS NOT A HEAD! It DID NOT work with or under the Roman Church (which all the heads do; thus she “rides” them.) It was contemporaneous with the yet-existing Holy Roman Empire which was the contemporary head. Napoleon’s overthrow of the Holy Roman Empire (1806) created the NEXT head — the Napoleonic Empire which was the 5th head which DID work with Papacy.

POINT # 2. The PARTIAL beast (of verses 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17) is THUS SAID to be “of the seven,” but NOT “ONE of the seven.” (We should not look for a definition of this partial beast prior to the first head since verse 11 says that it is “of the seven.”)

This aberration of the people’s rising up, (the BODY of the beast rising up) happened DURING THE TIME of the WHOLE beast’s continuing to function with its head and horns.

Thus this PARTIAL beast WAS (but not for long) during the Fr. Revolution.

It WAS during the “wilderness” period.

It WAS while the WHOLE beast continued to function in the other 9/10ths of the city.

But, in Bro. Russell’s day, it was appropriately said that this beast “IS NOT” because the uprising of the body was in the past. The prophecy shows, however, that this aberration (uprising of the body, the people) will AGAIN manifest itself — “it is about to come up and go into destruction.” (V. 8)

POINT # 3. The PARTIAL beast is a “king,” but NOT a new head.

When we look at verses 9 and 10, we are asked to apply wisdom — to interpret the symbols the angel

gave us. We encounter an interesting and important SWITCH of symbols. First we are told that the heads (forms of government) ARE mountains (kingdoms.) This is not too difficult to conceive of as each of the seven heads, while in existence, was considered AN EMPIRE (kingdom.) The next statement is the tricky one:

AND (THEY) ARE SEVEN KINGS.

Some translators word it:

AND (THERE) ARE SEVEN KINGS.

The fact is, the Greek does NOT have “they” or “there.” Both words are supplied by the translators according to their understandings. As we can see, the choice MAKES A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE! Which is correct?

There is evidence in the context that the first example is the correct idea, i.e., the seven heads and/or the seven mountains ARE seven kings. Because we KNOW the basic sequence of heads from history, we KNOW that in Bro. Russell’s day FIVE heads (and/or mountains) were in the past. It says the SAME THING about the kings — FIVE are past. It seems MOST LOGICAL, then, to EQUATE heads, mountains, and kings. If we say the kings are different from and in addition to the heads, we are faced with an interpretation seemingly beyond possibility. But this leaves one big question:

WHY DOES THE SYMBOLOGY CHANGE FROM HEAD TO KING?

THE ANSWER: It changes BECAUSE the beast ONLY HAS SEVEN HEADS — never any more! BUT, the Partial Beast (the one which was, but isn’t, but will be) WILL BE A KING but NOT A NEW HEAD. This is why the symbology HAD TO CHANGE. Hence:

“The (partial) beast . . . is himself also an eighth (king), and is of (related to the history of) the seven (kings or heads)” which the beast had in the past.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HEAD AND A KING? This is CENTRAL to interpretation. The harlot sits on the beast with seven heads. This means that all the heads are in collusion with the harlot. BUT THIS EIGHTH KING does NOT work with the harlot. She does NOT sit on or control this beast (body of people) any more than she controlled the French Republic. It is, therefore, NOT an eighth head; it is an eighth king. It will rule, just as the French Republic did. The change of symbology from heads to kings was NECESSARY in order to make this point.

With this much established, it will now be easier to take a verse-by-verse look at the rest of this chapter:

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING IS DEPENDENT ON THE PRECEDING FOR CLARITY:

17:8 — THE BEAST: — its body, the people

THAT YOU SAW: — in verses 3-5. We “saw” it historically during the “wilderness period” of 539-1799.

WAS: Only during the French Revolution did this particular aberration of the beast occur. The body (people) rose up against its leaders (head, horns, harlot.)

AND IS NOT: It “was not” during the days when this angel was alive in the flesh and explaining Babylon’s fall to the saints.

AND IS ABOUT TO COME UP: — show itself again: another uprising or revolution of the people against their rulers as in the French Revolution when 1/10th of the city fell. The 9/10ths of the future will be much more severe.

OUT OF THE ABYSS: — out of a condition in which power is not exercised.

AND GO TO DESTRUCTION: — This will be history's final revolution.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE: Was the contents of this verse not what Bro. Russell taught? It was distinctly his point that the French Revolution was a PROTOTYPE of the final trouble which would destroy Babylon. He said in the plainest of terms: The Trouble began in France. It now is abated. But it will come back and do the final work. It WAS, IS NOT, AND WILL BE. These difficult words have been a clear part of the Harvest message for over a century.

AND THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH: — those with a vested interest in the current order of things

WILL WONDER: What a wonderful contrast to verses 6 and 7. The tables are turned! Now the saints WON'T wonder; the astonishment will be on the part of the establishment.

WHOSE NAME HAS NOT BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD: Only the spirit-begotten will comprehend what is happening. This phrase clearly excludes "those who dwell on earth" from spirit-begetting.

WHEN THEY SEE THE BEAST: — the partial beast; the uprising of the people (the body of the beast). This will not be a pleasant experience for those trying to sustain the old order — although they will cooperate with this partial beast hoping to preserve their interests.

THAT HE WAS: People KNOW about the French Revolution, but they try to suppress its meaning from their minds. It is just fine with them in their memories to consign this "beast" to history — to the "WAS" condition.

AND IS NOT: — while the angel explains the matter, the beast is yet in his "NOT" condition.

AND WILL COME: The Greek is "AND IS PRESENT." The thought is that "those who dwell on earth" will wonder when the beast is again present — in their midst.

17:9 — HERE IS THE MIND WHICH HAS WISDOM: The angel now invites the saints to reason. He does NOT explain to us the meaning of the following verses. He merely LISTS SYMBOLIC EQUIVALENTS. This was very much the thrust of Bro. Russell's work in regard to Revelation. He constantly reasoned with us on the symbols but stated clearly that "someone else" would have to write the "seventh volume" (the explanation of Revelation.) He thus indicated to us that we have the tools. We must apply them.

THE SEVEN HEADS: The successive forms of umbrella government over the beast historically

ARE SEVEN MOUNTAINS: All seven forms were empires (kingdoms.) This is the first of TWO EQUIVALENTS. Heads = Mountains. (Later, Mountains = Kings, or Heads = Kings, is added to the equation.) These 3 words are very important. They are the FIRST lesson in correct interpretation. If we have tried to NAME the heads and we have come up with a conclusion in which not all are kingdoms or empires, this phrase is telling us we are wrong. Thus, if we have guessed that Papacy is a head, we are wrong because Papacy is not a Mountain. Rome, of course, is known as the city on seven hills. All seven of these empires are remnants of Rome.

ON WHICH THE WOMAN SITS: This is no passing phrase of minor import. It is placed here to further the understanding of the previous phrase. Not only must we identify each head as an empire (mountain), but whichever empires we choose, the Roman Church must have “ridden” (sat upon) them. (See suggested listing of heads in Item#74g, last page.) The harlot DID sit upon (control the direction of, to some extent) all of these heads. She will NOT do so on the coming “eighth” arrangement. It, therefore, cannot be called a head upon which she sits. So, a CHANGE IN SYMBOL IS REQUIRED; and the VERY NEXT phrase makes that change. It gives us our second EQUIVALENT to the heads:

17:10 — AND THEY ARE SEVEN KINGS: The switch is accomplished. The heads are now called kings so that an EIGHTH can arise without being thought of as a new head or empire. Kings here, of course, are not individuals, but kingdoms — although in most cases a strong individual (Justinian, Charlemagne, Otto the Great, etc.) can be equated with the founding of these empires. (See page 208 for a discussion of “THEY” are seven kings.)

FIVE HAVE FALLEN: (All of these reckonings are from the standpoint of the days of the seventh angel. A correct interpretation of this chapter is impossible without realizing and accepting his part in this narrative.) The fifth head, mountain, or king was the Napoleonic Empire. It was now gone.

ONE IS: The Victor Emanuel Dynasty was functioning — the sixth head, mountain, or king.

THE OTHER HAS NOT YET COME: — the Nazi-Fascist Empire — the seventh head, mountain, or king.

AND WHEN HE COMES: — after the angel’s “change”

HE MUST REMAIN A LITTLE WHILE: — 1930’s to 1945.

17:11 — AND THE BEAST WHICH WAS AND IS NOT: — that peculiar aberration in the beast’s history: the uprising of the body of the beast to form the French Republic and thus destroy 1/10th of the city.

IS HIMSELF ALSO AN EIGHTH: — NOT an eighth head, but an eighth KING. This (partial) beast WILL RULE (therefore a king), but not as a head — not with the harlot riding it as she is said to have done on all the former heads. There ARE NOT eight heads on the beast — ONLY SEVEN! (See pp. 206 -208 for details of this concept.)

AND IS OF THE SEVEN: — is to be found in the history of the seven “legitimate” heads, but IS NOT ONE of the seven heads. The wording would then be “and is one of the seven.” This is not the case. The angel is trying very hard to make clear that this eighth “thing” is not a reappearance of one of the old heads. Had that been the thought, he would merely have said, “one of the seven will come back to rule again.” The (to us) AWKWARD wording is the angel’s specific attempt to lead us away from that wrong conclusion.

AND HE GOES TO DESTRUCTION: This eighth king (the reigning body of the beast — another French Revolution-type government) does not have a good prognosis! His rule will be a disaster. He will be destroyed. There will NEVER AGAIN be an uprising of the people. Hallelujah!!!!

17:12 — AND THE TEN HORNS WHICH YOU SAW: “Which you saw” is important. The Revelator is mopping up details. He has disposed of the heads, the eight kings, and the body of the beast in his predictions to this point. He realizes that we also “have seen” horns and a harlot. He will, from this point on, tell us how these end up in this story of Babylon’s fall. The ten horns, of course, have been the supporting powers (nations) which have cooperatively sustained the great heads (empires) through the age. They have not always been the same ten, but they have always been there to bolster up the system. As we continue the narrative, we are looking at the supportive powers of the 20th and 21st Centuries.

ARE TEN KINGS: — ten nations yet on earth FORMERLY supportive of the beast. Remember that the beast has been “down-sizing” since Napoleon. By the time Victor Emanuel rules, it has shrunk so that, functionally, only Italy remains. The Nazi empire TRIED to return a more continental size to the beast, but failed. By 1945, the beast lost its seventh head. Thus these 10 kings are no longer horns on a beast because the beast is not now being supported. They are, thus, functionally KINGS, not horns, now. Thus, note with interest this other CHANGE IN SYMBOLISM: in verse 10, the heads became kings. In verse 12, the horns become kings — and ALL FOR THE SAME REASON. There is now no head to support. But these “horns” have NOT VANISHED. They are not now horns, but kings — nations not currently supporting a beast.

WHO HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED A KINGDOM: Note carefully that it DOESN'T say they haven't received kingdomS. They ARE kingdoms (nations). But they have not COLLECTIVELY received A kingdom — an overall beast-type of empire. They DO eventually receive one as is proven by verse 17. When they DO receive this kingdom, they give it to the beast — the PARTIAL beast which made its first appearance as the French Republic.

BUT THEY RECEIVE AUTHORITY AS KINGS WITH THE BEAST: Thus, eventually, they COLLECTIVELY have some kind of authority in cooperation with this re-emerged body of the beast. The thought seems clear. For a while they are merely ten different nations (kings). Eventually they COOPERATE (“in unity is strength”) and support (sort of like new horns — which they are again called in verse 16) the beast that “was” and which will have made its comeback. This gives them a collective “authority” they could never have enjoyed individually.

FOR ONE HOUR: An hour is a non-specific time with a specific characteristic. (See Item #70.) The addition of the word “one” intensifies the peculiar nature of the time. Thus, this will be ONE UNUSUAL time in history. It is likely that the first half (or maybe the “middle half”!) is the period of time referred to in the seventh Seal. (See page 152.) While, Scripturally, an hour can be long or short, the nature of this time and the description here given suggests that it will, in this instance, be quite short.

The thought seems to be that Europe's nations will collectively support some new continent-wide republic — perhaps one which comes into existence (as in France) from an uprising. And for a time (one unusual time, indeed,) this arrangement will have great power through shared authority.

17:13 — THESE HAVE ONE PURPOSE (MIND): Their purpose is not stated, but it likely will be self-preservation. It is probable that this is in some way connected to the ideas of the sixth plague.

AND THEY GIVE THEIR POWER AND AUTHORITY TO THE BEAST: Note the contrast to verse 12. In verse 12 the kings RECEIVE authority. In verse 13 they GIVE authority. It is very clear that this is a two-way cooperative arrangement. “You scratch my back; I'll scratch yours.” It is also clear by comparing these verses that each (kings and beast) retains his own individuality while cooperating. This is not a United States of Europe. This is independent European nations COOPERATING with a larger system.

17:14 — THESE: kings and beast

WILL WAGE WAR AGAINST THE LAMB: There are two thoughts here, one far more important to us than the other. The first is that, by trying to bolster up the old order through their confederacy,

this unholy alliance is warring against the incoming kingdom. The second thought, and personally most important to the saints, is that this alliance will be an enemy of saints — probably (as in France) of religion as a whole. Whatever final experiences are in store for Church and/or Great Company, this will be the time they will occur. It is not unlikely that the Church will be gone in the early part of this time.

AND THE LAMB WILL OVERCOME THEM: There is no question that the alliance will fail — to the good of the incoming kingdom.

BECAUSE HE IS LORD OF LORDS AND KING OF KINGS: (Cf. 19:15, 16.) It is impossible to prevail against him whom God has established as judge of all — once the time has come.

AND THOSE WHO ARE WITH HIM: — the completed Church.

ARE THE CALLED, CHOSEN, AND FAITHFUL: Having gone through all, these are on Zion with the Lamb. (Cf. 14:1.) This phrase demonstrates the glorification of the Church prior to the end of the “hour”.

Verse 14 ended one part of the narrative. The story, in a sense, is complete at this point. The Lamb has overcome the enemy. But we need more detail; so, in the following verses, the angel supplies it.

17:15 — AND HE SAID TO ME: From here to the end of the chapter we again have evidence of the angel’s commission toward us. He is saying, “Here are the symbolic tools for interpretation. I can’t give you the answers directly, but I’ve given you all you need.”

THE WATERS WHICH YOU SAW WHERE THE HARLOT SITS: (Cf. v. 1.) Here is the first ingredient for the final revolution. The harlot controlled the people and the people (consciously or unconsciously) didn’t like it. These people (waters) will be the multitudes who form and constitute (as they did in France) the beast which comes up out of the abyss.

ARE PEOPLES AND MULTITUDES AND NATIONS AND TONGUES: — the sea-class of humanity. (See Item #69.) It will not be “those who dwell on the earth” which form the ascending beast. They will be with the “kings” and will cooperate with the beast only for expediency.

17:16 — AND THE TEN HORNS WHICH YOU SAW: In verse 12 they were re-named “kings;” But now, they have something new to support and can again be called “horns” on the “beast” which they support.

AND THE BEAST: This is the correct reading. Remember that the ten horns and the beast cooperate but do not amalgamate. (See notes on verse 13.) This is the beast (a people’s revolutionary republic) which has ascended out of the abyss of inactivity.

THESE: The nations and the odd “republic” with which they are in league

WILL HATE THE HARLOT: — even as the (partial) beast of 11:7, 8 hated her (along with all religion!) **WHY?** Isaiah 23:15-17 may answer this. The woman will TRY to MOUNT THIS BEAST as she did mount the beast with seven heads. But, apparently, this beast won’t want to be ridden!

AN IMPORTANT ASIDE: Having studied Chapter 13 and having studied the 6th Plague (16:13 in particular), we are all aware that RELIGION will have some sort of part in the persecutions on the final members of the Church and Great Company. Chapter 17 seems NOT to be focusing on this factor. We must read between the lines to see the connection between the

confederacy of 16:13 and the confederacy shown in Chapter 17 which seems NOT to include the beast and false prophet of 16:13. But reading between the lines IS ENCOURAGED by the context of 17:16. It does NOT SAY why the horns and beast HATE THE HARLOT. The fact is, however, that we KNOW why they hate her because we have the prototype of this hatred in the French Revolution when the first tenth of the city fell. We can justly reckon thus: When ten horns and people's revolutionary republic form their cooperation, the apostate church will "volunteer" to assist. She will go too far and wear out her welcome by showing her old schemes, characteristics, and intrigues. But the people's revolution will be tired to the bone of political and ecclesiastical lies. When the harlot tries to mount, ride, or "sit on" THIS beast, she will get the surprise of her life! She will be trampled to death! Thus, Chapter 17 only "suggests by way of memory" the inclusion of apostate religion in the confederacy which will oppose the saints. It is more interested in focusing on how the people and rulers will turn on religion and destroy it even as the French did.

AND WILL MAKE HER DESOLATE: — empty, without form for expression (even as the house of Israel was in A.D. 33 — See Matt. 23:38, 39.)

AND NAKED: — exposed for what she is.

AND WILL EAT HER FLESH: — consume her polity; take away any power or influence she might have.

AND WILL BURN HER UP WITH FIRE: — cause events which totally destroy her.

17:17 — FOR GOD HAS PUT IT IN THEIR HEARTS: Somehow God will so arrange matters that the desires of men will be so strong toward this confederacy that it will be easy of accomplishment.

TO EXECUTE HIS PURPOSE (MIND) — (See Psa. 76:10 KJV.) God's plan WILL be accomplished. The instrumentalities are always there, willing or not.

BY HAVING A COMMON PURPOSE: (Literally = "even to do one mind.") This, in today's world is remarkable, indeed! All ten kings agree!

(It may be of interest to us to note the recent agreement of U.N. and NATO forces in Bosnia to take united action to try to stem the slaughter going on there. This action is basically unprecedented. Perhaps it is setting the stage for future ideas of international cooperation.)

BY GIVING THEIR KINGDOM TO THE BEAST: Note carefully: the kings of verse 12 have, by verse 17, received the "kingdom" which they did not earlier have. They will share their federated alliance with the people which have risen up. This, according to this verse, executes God's purpose. We KNOW what His purpose is: it is the burning of the tares, the crushing of the grapes of wrath, the destruction of Babylon. Seeing the kings and beast cooperating should be, in a sense, a great joy for all saints who behold it! Unfortunately, (v. 14) they will also be waging war against the Lamb. It is important to us to remember this TWO-FOLD work of this confederacy: (1) It is against the spirit-begotten and the spirit-born. (2) But it is also against Babylon. This same beast in Chapter 11 had the same indiscriminate hatred of all things religious.

UNTIL THE WORDS OF GOD SHOULD BE FULFILLED: The confederacy will not last a moment longer than is necessary.

17:18 — AND THE WOMAN WHOM YOU SAW: — the harlot who had controlled the age.

IS THE GREAT CITY: — antitypical Babylon, the capital of Christendom.

WHICH REIGNS: (Literally = “has a kingdom”) She is an apostate church. She reigned too early and improperly. It is in the present tense because it is the angel speaking in his day.

OVER THE KINGS OF THE EARTH: — a church over the state: harlotry.

One Final Repetitive Thought

“One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls” who came and spoke with John COULD HAVE BEEN introduced earlier in Revelation with some benefit. There seems, however, a very special reason why the introduction was postponed to 17:1. Chapter 17 concentrates on the subject of the judgment of the great harlot. It was through Bro. Russell that we learned the great particulars of this subject and the great emphasis which Scripture places on it. The fact is, Chapter 17 opens with this angel because this chapter cannot be interpreted without knowing who this angel is and without having had the benefit of his counsel. Just as Bro. Russell wrote in THE TIME IS AT HAND, prophecy has a combination-time lock, like a vault. Until the set time has arrived, it is useless to try to open the door. The COMBINATION of symbols MAY well have been available before Bro. Russell. But the TIME setting (five are fallen, one is, etc.) can be understood from one standpoint ONLY. We MUST KNOW when the angel is speaking. To know WHEN, we must also know WHO. We are blessed, indeed, to be privy to the knowledge of the Harvest message which helps us unlock the mysteries of this chapter. We NEED the information contained herein for our soon-to-come experiences. We are grateful to God for providing it and for opening our eyes so that we can accept the messenger who delivers the information. We do not in any way wish to be inappropriate in our use of the messenger. (19:10; 22:8, 9) But we DO want to know who he is so that we can receive what he has to deliver.

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THE DECLINE AND FALL OF BABYLON (18:1-24)

Introduction to This Chapter

It should be said from the outset that Chapter 18 of Revelation has an uncanny resemblance to Volume IV of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES. (See chart on left) It seems most probable that the “voice from heaven” in 18:4 is the Seventh Messenger to the Church, Charles T. Russell — the same as is symbolized in 17:1 as “one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls.” It is not stretching the edges of faith to come to this conclusion. After all, WHO historically DELIVERED the “Come out of her” message? Then note the structure of verses 4-20:

Verses 4 -5: A statement of Babylon’s unredeemable condition along with the accompanying GOOD ADVICE TO ABANDON HER.

Verses 6 -8: A statement (either as an encouragement to saints, or as a prayer to God) to give to Babylon the things she deserves as a result of her sinful history.

The first three chapters of Volume IV accomplish the above.

Verses 9-10: A statement of how the KINGS react to their collapsing old order along with a lament that “JUDGMENT” has come to the ecclesiastical paramour.

Chapters 4 through 6 of Volume IV deal with this NATIONAL weakness question as well as the “judgment” of ecclesiasticism.

Verses 11-17: A statement of how the CAPITALISTS attempt to adjust to the loss of the old order (called “merchants” in 18:11).

Verses 17-19: A statement of how others down the economic chain mourn because the reliability of the old order is “laid waste.”

Chapters 7 through 10 of Volume IV deal with the economic forces and their results on all levels of society.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE HERE: Chapter 18 is mostly ABOUT economics. So is Volume IV. (Please consider Item #74L in Appendix B.)

Verse 20: A statement about how the saints rejoice because they know the good that is to follow.

Chapter 13 in Volume IV covers this. Only here does the order of Volume IV differ from the order of Revelation 18. Whether Bro. Russell was cognizant that his Volume IV was a detailed explanation of Revelation 18 is questionable. What does not seem questionable is that God, through the Revelator, prophesied eighteen centuries in advance that this “voice from heaven” would detail these things.

Verses 21-24: A statement detailing the final, total collapse of the apostate church.

Chapter 11 of Volume IV (along with the 1916 Foreword) covers this event.

— When Do Some of These Verses Apply? —

Verses 9 - 19 detail the disappointments of several classes. Do these disappointments PRECEDE or FOLLOW the final overthrow of Babylon? It seems beyond credulity to say that they follow the final overthrow. Once Babylon has gone through the winepress (14:20; 16:19; 17:16) NO ONE will be mourning for her. God's wrath will be ended, and that "Be still and know that I am God" will have been proclaimed. (Psalm 46:10.) Therefore, verses 9 - 19 certainly come BEFORE Babylon is destroyed. Are these disappointments PROLONGED since 1914 (the beginning of the plaguing), or are they JUST PRIOR to the final overthrow? Both interpretations work. But the prolonged disappointments of kings, merchants, and others fit better with the Scriptural evidences as well as with the philosophy of Volume IV which shows and predicts the gradual economic collapse of Babylon and the nations. Note the following parallels:

Chapter 18 seems well to parallel the plagues (Chapter 16). As each plague is added, the ability of the old order to function as it used to is severely curtailed. That seems to be the reason for the mourning of the various groups in 18:9-19 — the way things used to work is now gone. This is the SLOW BURN of Babylon, taking the greater part of the 20th Century and part of the 21st.

Chapter 18 seems also to parallel Chapter 14. Indeed, 14:8 is a virtual duplicate of 18:2. In 14:10, 11 we have the SLOW BURN documented. This slow burn tests the "patience of the saints" (14:12). Finally, (14:19-20) we have the RAPID BURN — the total destruction of Babylon as happens in 16:19 and 17:16 and 18:21.

Chapter 18 also has a fascinating parallel to Isaiah 23. Isaiah deals, likewise, with ships and merchants. Isa. 23:8 refers to Babylon's being the "bestower of crowns" — a function which meaningfully ended in 1914. It is at this time (23:14) that the "ships" WAIL because their stronghold is "destroyed." But, IS IT DESTROYED? Not at all! It is "forgotten" for 70 years (23:15). Bible students now comfortably acknowledge the fulfillment of this 70 years in the period from the late teens to the late 1980's when Communism dominated Eastern Europe, and the Papacy was no longer able to stimulate the economic interchange with that part of its old dominion. Now, however, she begins again to "play the harlot" (Cf. Rev. 17:16-18) until (Isa. 23:18) the Lord will take doctrinal control from her and write "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" on the bridles. (Cf. Zech. 14:20 margin and Rev. 14:20.)

These parallels seem to confirm that 18:9-19 refers to the SLOW BURNING of the old order since about 1914 — ever increasing in intensity. It destroys the confidence of the kings and the "merchants" of the world who long for the old-time stability of the pre-1914 world. This gives Revelation 18 a very logical construction. It begins in 1874 and 1878, proceeds through the century, and ends with Babylon's total destruction. If one reads from verse 4 to the end of the chapter, this smooth flow of prophetic history is evident. Nothing needs to be forced.

With this background, a verse-by-verse consideration is now made easier.

PART I (Verses 1 - 3)

18:1 — AFTER THESE THINGS I SAW: This is one of those places that CLEARLY proves that “After these things” refers to when John saw the vision and NOT to when the vision takes place. Chapter 18 clearly does not take place after the events of Chapter 17! We simply now are ready to share ANOTHER of John’s visions (another perspective) of Harvest-time events.

ANOTHER ANGEL: The last angel we saw was the one in 17:1 — Bro. Russell. “Another” distinguishes this angel of 18:1 from the one in Chapter 17 and from the “strong angel” of 18:21. The angel of 18:1 is our returned Lord.

COMING DOWN FROM HEAVEN: (See Item #74c) This phrase seems consistently to mean something coming literally from the spirit realm or from Divine ordination. Here it represents the literal return of Jesus at the Times of Restitution (Acts 3:20, 21).

HAVING GREAT AUTHORITY: — the authority of judgment (Matt. 28:18)

AND THE EARTH WAS ILLUMINED WITH HIS GLORY: (See Ezek. 43:2 and Psalm 97:4.) It is VERY CLEAR from the next verse that THIS lighting of the earth is AT JESUS’ RETURN — prior to the casting off of Babylon. Sometimes we fail to appreciate the EVIDENCE of the supernatural IN THE NATURAL. This phrase tells us without apology or without qualification that Jesus’ GLORY has been evident in the earth for over a century. No matter how much some of us may wish to postpone the “glory” until it meets OUR standards, we cannot do so. This text says we cannot. We are here forced to acknowledge that the seemingly “natural” increase of knowledge is not natural at all; it is the reflection of HIS PRESENCE. (Dan. 12:1, 4.)

18:2 — AND HE CRIED OUT: There is no mistaking the cry toward the end of the 19th Century which questioned the legitimacy of Babylon’s claims. It came from science, from philosophy, and from thoughtful theologians who could no longer swallow dark-age superstitions. But THEIR cries were not so loud as the prophecies behind them:

WITH A MIGHTY VOICE: (Compare verse 4 carefully.) The voice in verse 4 (the 7th Messenger’s) REFLECTS the proclamation of Jesus’ MIGHTY voice. The “mighty voice” he used was the prophecies (time prophecies as well as non-chronological prophecies) which condemned Babylon greatly.

SAYING, FALLEN, FALLEN IS BABYLON THE GREAT!: (Cf. 17:5.) “FALLEN” is stated twice. This, in itself, may be symbolic of the fact that this is a partial fall — a fall from favor, but not a total ruin. Totality is usually expressed by a three-fold expression as in 4:8 and 6:13.

The emphasis is on the Roman church system. There ARE daughters, and they are an important part of the picture. But we must never lose sight of the Lord’s emphasis on the GREAT HARLOT. The fall from favor here is much like Israel’s fall as recorded in Matt. 23:37, 38. In both cases, the destruction comes later.

AND SHE HAS BECOME A DWELLING PLACE OF DEMONS: Note the gender. The beast of 13:3 is masculine. The strange beast of 17:11 is masculine. But the woman of Chapter 17 and “Babylon the Great” are feminine. We frequently refer to the church-state COMBINATION as Babylon. We have some reason to do so in that separation is not always clear. Nevertheless, the Scriptures ARE clear that, strictly speaking, Babylon IS THE HARLOT CHURCH. When we begin to interpret detail, this kind of distinction is important.

The condemnation of her as the “dwelling place of demons” is both sobering and scary! Paul (I Tim. 4:1) clearly identifies DOCTRINES of demons (immortality, hell-fire, etc.) of which we are all well aware. This, however, seems to go beyond just demonic doctrines. It suggests strongly the active participation of demons in the governance of the Roman church. Perhaps this is what brings about the

dramatic climaxes mentioned in 16:14 and in places like Matt. 24:23-25 and II Thess. 2:9-12. “Dwelling place” seems to indicate a comfortability — an at-home-by-choice kind of feeling — for these demons. If demons feel comfortable there, Christians surely should not!

AND A PRISON OF EVERY UNCLEAN SPIRIT: We encountered “unclean spirits” in 16:13. They were teachings — demon-inspired teachings. Why are unclean spirits IMPRISONED in Babylon? Apparently the teachings of Babylon have become so irrational, so out-of-touch with the real world, that NO OTHER PLACE is willing to house them! Therefore the spirits (teachings) are CONFINED TO (imprisoned in) Babylon — i.e., without the ability to function elsewhere.

AND A PRISON OF EVERY UNCLEAN AND HATEFUL BIRD: Again, Babylon is a PRISON because these birds cannot find anywhere else to function. They are held (captive, imprisoned) in Babylon because it alone satisfied their needs. Unclean birds represent selfish profiteers — just like buzzards which constantly search for “easy” meals, food already killed for them. Thus Babylon provides ready “customers” for those “Christians” who build their business schemes on their fellow parishioners. The birds are described as “hateful.” Their attitude is hatred, the very opposite of the true Christian. Jer. 5:23-29 provides an additional understanding for this verse. “Men” (5:26) are the trapped and caged birds. The poor race of nominal Christians have been made into birds of prey, skeptics who selfishly feed on whatever will get them through life comfortably and profitably.

18:3 — FOR: This little word, meaning BECAUSE, connects the second and third verses. The implication is that demons, unclean spirits, and hateful birds have made their homes in Babylon BECAUSE:

ALL THE NATIONS HAVE DRUNK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF HER IMMORALITY: Note that this sentence is the first of THREE entanglements between Babylon and three differing entities. Here it is the NATIONS — the peoples of earth. They have experienced (drunk) of (of the results of) the wine (the intoxication resulting from) of the wrath (the anger engendered by or) of her fornication. In other words, the people have suffered by all of the evils caused by her church-state entanglements. (This phrase is a quote from 14:8 where the meaning is the same.) NOTE: Wrath might be better translated “passion.” There has been a somewhat universal passion for the advantages Christendom has provided for the peoples.

AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH: This is the second group involved.

HAVE COMMITTED IMMORALITY WITH HER: — church-state union. This has probably always been to their detriment, whether or not they knew it.

AND THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH: This is the first time “merchants” appears in Revelation, and it appears only in this chapter. Because Chapter 18 so closely resembles the contents of Volume 4, it seems most likely that “merchants” is a symbol for capitalists. (The economic factor of Babylon’s fall is a main focus of this chapter.) It seems not to be coincidence that the philosophy of capitalism originated in Italy.

HAVE BECOME RICH: There seems no reason for this not to be a literalism and a direct connection to James 5:1-7.

BY THE WEALTH OF HER SENSUALITY: — more literally: by the POWER of her luxury. Here we have a key phrase which sets up the entire context of Chapter 18. We are looking at how Babylon’s insatiable appetite for earthly luxuries and her exercise of power to obtain them created a system of vast wealth for those who cooperated with her. Once 1914 arrived, this power structure took a nose-dive which makes all “wail.” Surely the money-structures of today are trying to find new ways to fill their coffers. But James says it will all rust. Revelation 18 says the old ways of wealth are all past.

The first three verses of Chapter 18 are a unit in themselves. The Lord has returned and proclaimed his judgment. Beginning with verse 4, another “voice” picks up the message and explains what this judgment will mean to kings, the wealthy, the workers, and the saints, and, ultimately, to Babylon herself.

PART II (Verses 4 - 20)

— An Introduction to Part Two —

Part II deals with how the “fall” of Babylon (v. 2) will progress to its culmination in its destruction. Part II is entirely narrated by the “voice from heaven” (v. 4) who is the 7th angel who did, indeed, in the great detail of Volume 4, predict all of these trends leading to Babylon’s final, total collapse.

Verses 4-8 tell the saints to desert her and to participate in cooperating with God in paying her back.

Verses 9-19 explain, group by group, the effects of Babylon’s deterioration. It is important to note the groups in advance as well as to note their LAMENTS and the REASONS for their concerns.

The Groups:

Verses 9-10 = KINGS OF THE EARTH (Political leaders)

Note THEIR lament: The “city,” the GREAT city. City is a symbol of government. THEY are worried about GOVERNING ABILITY. The first plague (WWI) made all have fear of the inability to find stable forms of government.

Notice the REASON for their concern: “JUDGMENT HAS COME.” Those in power fear exposure (judgment). If Babylon is being exposed, will it also happen to the kings?

Verses 11-17 = MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH (Capitalists)

Note THEIR lament: (v. 11) No one BUYS THEIR GOODS. THEY are worried about profits. The world wars and communist revolutions ruined a century of commercial potentialities.

Note the REASON for their concern (v. 17): “GREAT WEALTH HAS BEEN LAID WASTE.” They want a stable economic world. It is gone! Great wealth is their only concern.

Verses 17-19 = SHIPMASTERS (Major businessmen), PASSENGERS (Minor investors; stock-owners), SAILORS (small businessmen), AND THOSE MAKING A LIVING BY THE SEA (laborers).

Note THEIR lament: (V. 19) “all . . . at sea BECAME RICH.” THEY are worried about their jobs and about sustaining their incomes — things which a secure capitalism guaranteed. The old system of securely entering your father’s trade and expecting a reliable, life-long living from it IS GONE. Work now does not guarantee a comfortable life.

Note the REASON for their concerns: (v. 19) “SHE has been LAID WASTE.” This is only slightly different from the capitalists who see WEALTH laid waste. Those profiting from the system see the SYSTEM laid waste. In other words, they don’t see secure jobs in their futures.

Verse 20 is the 7th angel (the voice from heaven) saying that Zion should be glad. (Psalm 46:4, 5)

18:4 — AND I HEARD: The first three verses totally summarized the condemnation of Babylon. The picture was complete. John now uses his traditional section-dividing words to look at the results of that condemnation.

ANOTHER VOICE FROM HEAVEN: — a messenger sent who will deliver the Lord's previously-stated condemnation to His people. This is C. T. Russell, the 7th messenger. The voice is in and from heaven — the ecclesiastical world. (See comments on 19:9.)

SAYING, COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE: This was, indeed, a large part of Bro. Russell's ministry. The message is FROM God; thus it says, "My people;" but it is delivered by this "voice" which will speak with us now through verse 20. The Lord's people DID respond and begin to "come out" and have continued to do so as they hear this important call.

THAT YOU MAY NOT PARTICIPATE IN HER SINS: Christians, by their very nature, must engage in works for the Lord. But Babylon's works are all tainted by her abominable doctrines and her compromises with the state and world. This phrase encourages the Lord's people to come out so that they may engage in works acceptable to God, not works which promote and perpetuate the lies and sins of Christendom.

AND THAT YOU MAY NOT RECEIVE OF HER PLAGUES: In Bro. Russell's day the plagues were yet future. Those who came out prior to 1914 escaped the plaguing. In our day, the plagues are in progress so that escape from Babylon is more difficult — but just as necessary so that participation in her sins can be avoided.

18:5 — FOR HER SINS HAVE PILED UP (Literally = JOINED TOGETHER) AS HIGH AS HEAVEN: The thought seems to be that heaven (God) can no longer overlook the accumulation of sins. They are past excusing or cleansing.

AND GOD HAS REMEMBERED HER INIQUITIES: God tends to forget iniquities if things are going in the right direction. (See Ezek. 18:21, 22.) The fact that God is here said to be remembering the iniquities is proof that Babylon is incorrigible.

18:6 — PAY HER BACK: Verses 6-8 are from the "voice." Are they a prayer to God to do these things? Or are they an encouragement to the saints who have "come out of her" to enter the work of her judgment? It is likely BOTH. The distinction might be unimportant since the saints are SUPPOSED to be doing whatever God is doing at this time. Bro. Russell knew what God was doing and would be doing to Babylon. The end of verse 8 gives God the credit. But the saints beyond the veil and in the flesh have the honor of cooperation in this judgment. Those beyond cooperate in most powerful ways. We who remain spread the words which eat away at the error. (Psa. 149:5-9) Let us all participate in the PAYBACK.

EVEN AS SHE PAID: How did Babylon historically "pay" the saints? Many ways. There were words; there were actions; there was spiritual isolation; there were tortures; there was death. All of these things are and will be the lot of Babylon in its "payback" period.

AND GIVE BACK TO HER DOUBLE ACCORDING TO HER DEEDS: Double to some means to give the same amount (i.e., duplicate). However, the lexicons seem of one mind that this means twice as much. This could be a difficult concept except that we know of certain important "doubles." For instance, Babylon paid out DEATH; but she will be paid back SECOND DEATH — a much worse fate. Whatever Babylon paid to the saints did not destroy their faith if it were true. On the contrary, her payback will destroy her "faith" — and the faith any have in her. She gets a "double whammy" in retribution for everything she gave out. PEOPLE in her don't get it; SHE gets it. The addition of the phrase "according to her deeds" seems to say, "She deserves it." All in all, this sentence seems to have no mercy. (See Ezek. 9:5) To those beyond the veil participating in this work, their judgment as to what this means will be directed by Jesus. To us on this side of the veil, it is imperative that we not see

this as a license for vindictiveness or vengeance. Rather, it seems to say to us not to have any sympathy whatsoever for Babylon, its teachings, its ways, its works, or its adherents.

IN THE CUP WHICH SHE HAS MIXED: The “mixed” cup here does not refer to Babylon’s mixing of truth with error because THAT cannot be what she gets back. This symbolism seems more like a statement that she PLANNED experiences to frustrate the faith of those with whom she did not agree.

MIX TWICE AS MUCH FOR HER: Give her back the experiences which destroy faith in her. PLAN ways of letting people know of her errors. Send a cup mixed with tracts, books, television, radio, public witnessing, private conversations, computer programs, videotape, mailings, computer internet, etc., etc. In a few months, we can MORE THAN DOUBLE what she sent out over the centuries. Don’t let up! Those saints on the other side can add to the mixture some economic, political, and social woes. It is a wonderful mixture! It will eventually poison her — See 16:19.

18:7 — TO THE DEGREE THAT SHE GLORIFIED HERSELF AND LIVED LUXURIOUSLY: Clearly she exalted herself to the top and spared no expense for her comforts or in bragging about her wisdom.

TO THE SAME DEGREE GIVE HER TORMENT AND MOURNING: Truths are tormenting her; losing power and prestige causes her to mourn. These seem the opposites of Glory and Luxury. 14:10 says that her torment is fire and brimstone — judgment and poisoning leading to extinction. She, like mankind, is subject to “dying thou shalt die.” The gradual death will have the fire of judgments and the brimstone of nausea. Her past luxuries have been fading; mourning is setting in.

FOR SHE SAYS IN HER HEART: She “says” this (present tense) in the days of the “voice from heaven” — the 7th messenger. This claim is not now made — even if an attempt may be made to revive it (Isa. 23:17).

I SIT AS A QUEEN AND AM NOT A WIDOW: No king now claims her as his bride. She IS now a widow. Even in Bro. Russell’s day when she made this claim, it was starting to ring hollow. The great, continent-wide beast was then down only to Italy under the sixth head of Victor Emanuel. She tried a new marriage with the Fascists, but that didn’t last long. Thus, her next words are particularly pathetic:

AND WILL NEVER SEE MOURNING: It is not wise to contradict a message from God which this verse just predicted. Her mourning began in 1914 and has been increasing. It will only grow worse — except for her momentary joy during her final fling as a harlot (Isa. 23:17).

18:8 — FOR THIS REASON: — the reason of non-repentance and absolute pride.

IN ONE DAY: (See Isa. 47:8-15 for a wonderful and detailed description of this “day”.) This is NOT a chronological symbol. Her plagues do not come in one year. Her widowhood is now some 50 years old — a fulfillment-proof that this does not refer to one year (Isa. 47:9). Famine, for instance, takes more than one year’s crop failure. Day IS used elsewhere in Revelation without chronological application: See 6:17, 8:12, and 16:14. The application in 18:8 is much like that in 6:17 — The Day of Wrath = the general time of troubles. The addition of the word “one” here is to give emphasis to the peculiarity of the time. (See Item #70.) Note, too, that the lamenting ones call the same period “one hour:” 18:10, 17, 19.

HER PLAGUES WILL COME: The plagues here mentioned are, no doubt, the same as those of Chapter 16, but, instead of seven specific plagues, we here have the plagues summarized by four characteristics or results:

PESTILENCE (lit. = DEATH): The NAS translators evidently could not conceive of death as the

FIRST plague! (This IS amazing since they seem to think that death in a human STARTS the subsequent torturing!) But a comparison to Isaiah 23:14 and 15 helps us understand. 1914 brought a “destruction” which ends up actually being a 70-year “forgetting.” 1914 WAS a “death” (at least a death knell) for Babylon — the old order would never again “live” as it had in the past. This prophecy alone INSURED that Hitler would be a failure.

AND MOURNING: — which she said she would not see! Mourning is a response to loss — not to one's own extinction! Babylon has suffered continual loss since 1914; she feels it. This is part of her “dying thou shalt die” process; this is part of her SLOW BURN during which the saints must have patience. (14:12.)

AND FAMINE: Babylon, of course, never hungered for truth, so this is not what her famine consists of. But the things for which she always DID hunger (money, power, influence — the “last word” on any subject) have been continually denied her in this century. She DOES have a famine of reasonable explanations also.

AND SHE WILL BE BURNED UP WITH FIRE: — both gradually (14:10, 11, 12) and, eventually, totally (17:16).

FOR THE LORD GOD WHO JUDGES HER IS STRONG: God said that vengeance belonged to Him. While He has committed all judgment to the Son, it is His vengeance, His wrath (15:1) which is being exercised. No earthly power could successfully contend with the demon-dominated Babylon. It takes Divine Power and planning.

AT THIS POINT, the “voice from heaven” (v. 4) switches from his admonition to saints and his prayer to God to the delineation of the experiences of Babylon's advocates — a delineation he detailed in Volume 4:

— THE KINGS —

18:9 — AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH: — not necessarily crowned kings, but those in the political seats of the mighty.

WHO COMMITTED IMMORALITY: — who had cooperative agreements with Babylon.

AND LIVED LUXURIOUSLY WITH HER: — because their cooperation brought them temporal advantages.

WILL WEEP AND LAMENT: Lamenting here is Strong's 2875 and denotes a powerful emotional reaction. This is not just crying over spilled milk. It is more like weeping, wailing, and gnashing of the teeth. These kings are SORELY disappointed. (Contrast 18:11) Ever since 1914, the political establishment has had the problem of finding a stable system of government to replace the old church-state arrangement. This is the “malignant sore” of the first plague.

OVER HER: — over their lost cooperative advantages with her.

WHEN THEY SEE THE SMOKE OF HER BURNING: (Cf. 14:11) The burning (SLOW BURN) began in 1914. The kings were too busy with the war to know that God had lit the fire which would eventually consume her. Once the war was over, the smoke of her burning (the evidence that her destruction had begun) began to be noticed.

18:10 — STANDING AT A DISTANCE BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF HER TORMENT: Is this not the way of all flesh? The disciples stood at a distance as Jesus was dragged to judgment. Here the kings disassociate themselves from their former partner because their former partner has an element of shame in the world's eyes. While some people say they are religious, they hesitate to talk about their religion. This is not a sign of commitment and support! The kings FEAR her torment; — they fear that it might contaminate themselves.

SAYING, WOE, WOE, THE GREAT CITY BABYLON, THE STRONG CITY: This shows their fear and their priorities. If she who was so strong for a millennium is now undergoing judgment (“BABYLON ARRAIGNED”), exposure, weakness, loss, torment, and mourning, how can the kings feel secure? Note their stressed word: the STRONG city. Kings respect power and fear its loss. Two “woes” indicate incomplete destruction.

FOR IN ONE HOUR: (See Item #70) — in one very unusual and unique period in history.

YOUR JUDGMENT HAS COME: Note that they address her personally: “YOUR judgment . . .” They still talk with each other. They may be talking over old times: they may be planning for the future. But they do their talking clandestinely — “at a distance.” This demonstrates that she yet exists.

— THE MERCHANTS —

18:11 — AND THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH: This is the second group affected by the SLOW BURN of Babylon. Merchants are probably capitalists — people whose product is money — usually gained through usury or by being “arrangers” of contracts, market-openings, trade agreements, etc. Capitalists have money in great amounts. We are not talking about normal rich investors here. Capitalists are not much different from kings except that kings control politics while capitalists control economics.

WEEP AND MOURN OVER HER: Note the contrast of this to verse 9. While the kings weep and lament (NAS) — lament being an emotional physical reaction — the merchants weep and mourn (Strong’s 3996) — a word which means mourning in the sense of longing (like a wistful looking back.) It is apparently more of a blow to the political kings than to the economic kings to have lost the old order. During this century, capitalists have had much more success in finding alternatives (though less stable) to the old economic order than kings have had in finding alternatives to the old political order.

BECAUSE NO ONE BUYS THEIR CARGOES ANY MORE: The old trading empires of Babylon were shattered in 1914. The subsequent rise of communism shattered it even more. The instability of currencies and commodities has been a century-long plague.

It is important to note here that “no one buys their cargoes” is their claim. They have indeed, lost the OLD markets, but have made great success in finding new ones. Before 1914, capitalists lent their monies to kings. But after 1914, the kings were a bad risk. Therefore, capitalism started to lend money to the “little man.” When Nixon opened China to trade, who went with him? It was David Rockefeller — a capitalist’s capitalist! Did he go to sell China on marketing Coca-Cola? NO! He went to introduce CREDIT to the billion people who live there. Here he and his kind can make new vast fortunes. In mourning the old cargoes lost, they have found wonderful new ones!

18:12, 13 — These verses are perplexing to the interpreter. Many who see the merchants as the clergy have attempted to apply a spiritual symbolism to each of these items. A comparison with verse 16, however, suggests that these are not symbols of spiritual things, but symbols of wealth, splendor, and luxury in which greater Babylon trafficked. Based on this comparison, it seems logical that verses 12 and 13 are merely making a point that capitalists went near and far (these items are from distant lands) to make profits by arranging the trade of everything from gold to the bodies (slavery) and souls (minds) of men. Nothing was exempt from their greedy trade. No place was too distant for profit. Now (as mentioned above), they tantalize the common man with luxuries which he can have with only “modest interest.” Nixon and Rockefeller were in China to intoxicate the Chinese with an easy way to have what they desire but cannot afford.

18:14 — AND THE FRUIT OF YOUR SOUL’S DESIRE (margin): Just as the kings directly addressed Babylon in verse 10, so also the merchants directly address her, but NOT regarding judgment. The capitalists don’t care about moral issues like judgment! They pity Babylon’s loss of loot: — “the fruit of your soul’s desire.”

HAS GONE FROM YOU: Babylon, which used to have all the money, art, talent, manuscripts, jewels, and everything else of worldly worth it desired during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, is now concerned with more practical matters: how to survive! This is why Jezebel is in the face-painting (II Kings 9:30) and harlot-playing mode. (Isaiah 23:15-17)

AND ALL THE THINGS THAT WERE LUXURIOUS AND SPLENDID HAVE PASSED AWAY FROM YOU: Note the mind of the capitalists’ woe. All they want is wealth; nothing else is of concern. They loved Babylon because she reflected their own selfishness and greed. Their interest in her wanes quickly when she loses these ornaments. Their addressing her personally (as “you”) shows that she continues to exist.

AND YOU WILL NO LONGER FIND THEM: The capitalists seem quite sure that Babylon’s glory days are gone. This disturbs them BECAUSE they must invent new channels for their greed. The reliable old order has crumbled.

18:15 — THE MERCHANTS OF THESE THINGS: SOMEONE had to supply Babylon’s appetite. The capitalists were more than willing to have her as their primary client. What other international concern kept them so well in business?

WHO BECAME RICH FROM HER: Read history! Cooperation with the harlot brought great temporal advantages. Those who reliably supplied her fond desires reaped great rewards.

WILL STAND AT A DISTANCE: — for the same reason as the kings in verse 10.

BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF HER TORMENT, WEEPING AND MOURNING: The NAS is awkward here. “Weeping and mourning” is NOT being done by Babylon, but rather by the merchants. Compare 18:11. The merchants fear her torment. They have abandoned a sinking ship. Though they loved her for what she brought them in the past, they DON’T love a loser. They weep and mourn the LOSSES, not the institution.

18:16 — SAYING, WOE, WOE THE GREAT CITY: Note how this differs from the Kings in verse 10. The Kings add “the STRONG city.” THEY appreciated invincibility. The merchants see its greatness instead as:

SHE WHO WAS CLOTHED IN FINE LINEN AND PURPLE AND SCARLET AND ADORNED WITH GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES AND PEARLS: While these items are symbols of and counterfeits of spiritual things, THAT is not what these merchants mourn! They mourn the loss of the control of WEALTH.

18:17 — FOR IN ONE HOUR: — one very unique and special period in history.

SUCH GREAT WEALTH HAS BEEN LAID WASTE!: Again, contrast this with the Kings in verse 10. The focus is entirely different. The merchants mourn the loss of a secure economic system.

— **SHIPMASTERS, PASSENGERS, SAILORS, LIVING-MAKERS** —

AND EVERY SHIPMASTER: These are not capitalists. These are MAJOR businessmen — the ones who run the “ships” of commerce. They might be called profiteers. They handle the capital which the capitalists have invested.

AND EVERY PASSENGER: These are people who go along for the ride — minor investors, small stockholders, people who hope to get somewhere by following the flow.

AND SAILOR: These are probably small business owners. They rely on being supplied from the larger suppliers. They don't own the ship, but they manage the sales — (oops! SAILS!)

AND AS MANY AS MAKE THEIR LIVING BY SEA: The sea, of course, is the bulk of mankind who are dependent upon and often fleeced by the business world. Remember (17:1) that the harlot SAT upon the waters. This group is those who build the boats, make the sails, work the docks — i.e., LABORERS: the class here symbolized as making its living by sea. Usually they are one paycheck away from economic distress.

STOOD AT A DISTANCE: Note the difference here from verses 10 and 15. Those with greatest power fear her torment — lest it spread to their own realm of power. But these lesser people in the economic scheme don't see the connection as clearly between Babylon's torments and their own livelihoods. This is very significant. The Kings and Capitalists were in a position of privileged information. They had the "inside track" of how things worked — which they did not publicize. These lesser people only have a second-hand relationship with Babylon. They KNOW the stability is gone, and it troubles them greatly. They stand at a distance because you just don't get close to fire! But "fear of torment" is exclusive to the powerful insiders.

18:18 — AND WERE CRYING OUT: — in distress

AS THEY SAW THE SMOKE OF HER BURNING: The smoke became visible after WWI. Perhaps Germany (the old seat of the Holy Roman Empire) was the first to feel the loss. But the economic instabilities of this century spread rapidly, and the distress of business and workers all over the world is now heard clearly. Oh, how they long for a stable economy!

SAYING, WHAT CITY IS LIKE THE GREAT CITY?: This MAY be a longing for the old order. Or it MAY be a legitimate question: IS THERE A VIABLE SUBSTITUTE? "Is there ANOTHER city like the great old one?" The answer, unfortunately for them, is NO! (Although they MAY try to recreate one in the near future. Chapter 17 seemed so to indicate.)

18:19 — AND THEY THREW DUST ON THEIR HEADS: — the traditional sign of grief, deep trouble, and especially LOSS. (Cf. Josh. 7:6; Job 2:12; Lam. 2:10, etc.) Those reliant on others for sustenance are very sensitive regarding the source of their livelihoods. They feel the LOSS greatly.

AND WERE CRYING OUT, WEEPING AND MOURNING: These "weep and mourn" as did the merchants, but don't "weep and lament" as the kings. The "mourning" seems to have more of the thought of sad acquiescence.

SAYING, WOE, WOE: All three groups have this reaction. It is a statement of portending trouble. Curiously, it is NOT woe, woe, woe as in 8:13. Three statements seem to symbolize totality (as also in 4:8). Only TWO woes seem to be a subtle statement that they still have hope of survival — even without Babylon.

THE GREAT CITY: Again, all three groups acknowledge how great the old arrangement was. This they all have in common.

IN WHICH ALL WHO HAD SHIPS AT SEA: This seems to refer to the capitalists — the ones who supplied the jobs, supplies, and paychecks for these lesser people. These who are lower on the economic ladder know — at least instinctively — that the welfare of the capitalists will determine their own futures. This is why a government will "bail out" Chrysler Corporation, but not the corner drug store.

BECAME RICH BY HER WEALTH: This lesser group of economic recipients echoes the sentiments of

the merchants (v. 15) who control all of the lower-level economy. THIS is appropriate. It is very noticeable in today's economy that workers constantly look at economic trends to see the likelihood of lay-offs, production cuts, etc.

FOR IN ONE HOUR: — one very unique and peculiar time in history. (See Item #70) It is true historically that the world was not prepared for the shock it received when WWI changed not only politics, but also economics. Suddenly, in one hour, it was a different world.

SHE HAS BEEN LAID WASTE: This group stresses the “SHE” has been laid waste. Contrast verses 10 and 17. These workers and businessmen see the SYSTEM — the way of doing things which gave jobs and income some stability — as being damaged. This is what is important to this group. This group never addresses Babylon directly. They have never been insiders.

— THE SAINTS —

At this point the “voice from heaven” (v. 4) — the seventh messenger — turns to the saints to rejoice with them over what is happening. The parallel of Chapter 18 to Volume 4 is most remarkable. Even in that volume, after having described the economic woes to come on Babylon, Bro. Russell turns at the end (P. 620 and following) to tell the saints of their part in all of this. The saints, among other things, are to rejoice, not express woe. Now, 18:20 does likewise:

18:20 — REJOICE OVER HER: This rejoicing is the PRE-DESTRUCTION rejoicing — the rejoicing which has been done by the saints during this century WHILE the rest of society has been saying WOE! What a contrast!

O HEAVEN: — singular: The True heaven, the incoming “third heaven.”

AND: — could well be translated “even”

YOU SAINTS: The Church

AND APOSTLES: The foundations of the New Jerusalem (21:14)

AND PROPHETS: This is probably New Testament prophets — the “angels” to the Churches.

FOR GOD: — Whose wrath is being fulfilled in the plagues (15:1)

HAS (Lit.) JUDGED YOUR JUDGMENT OF HER (or) PRONOUNCED JUDGMENT FOR YOU AGAINST HER: In either translation, the thought is clear that God is giving a judgmental answer to Babylon for the Gospel Age experiences of the Church in fulfillment of 6:10, 11 — a text which chronologically points to 1878 (the central date of Chapter 18.)

PART III (Verses 21-24)

Verse 21 seems no longer to be the “voice from heaven,” but a continuation of John's vision. The third and final section of this chapter shows the final and total destruction of Babylon AFTER the “smoke of her burning” — the SLOW BURN since 1914. There will be NO MOURNING for her after THIS total FINAL destruction. This is the seventh plague, the winepress, the burning her up with fire (17:16), Armageddon — the END OF ENDS.

18:21 — AND A STRONG ANGEL: There are only three “strong angels” in Revelation. (See also 5:2 and 10:1.) Each one represents a time of revolution —a major upheaval in the affairs of men. (Whether or not a literal angel was in charge of each of these events seems not important.) The first is the fall of Israel at the time of the establishment of Christianity. The second is the French Revolution and the beginning of the “Time of the End.” Now, this strong angel (18:21) is the trouble which becomes Armageddon. It is the revolution which Chapter 17 pictures as the beast out of the abyss which devours the harlot.

TOOK UP A STONE: How fraught with meaning is this little group of words! The prophecy of Isaiah 23 is such a strong parallel to Rev. 18. How much more meaningful, then, to learn that Tyre (Strong’s 6865) means a stone or a rock! The Roman church claims to be the rock on which Christ built. It claims Peter (stone) as its first Pope. It is the counterfeit of the true rock which is Christ.

The angel TAKES UP a stone. Rev. 13, 16, and 17 all suggest a brief RISE for Papacy before its fall. Isaiah 23 shows the same when, after the 70 years (after 1989), she again goes to play the harlot.

LIKE A GREAT MILLSTONE: This stone (Tyre) is not just like any stone, but like a GREAT MILLSTONE: the world’s largest and oldest grinder of “food” for Christendom. (Cf. Matt. 24:41.)

AND THREW IT INTO THE SEA: A millstone is a very large and heavy rock. It does not fall or sink slowly. The sea (the people, the strange beast of 17:16) swallows her up with one big gulp.

SAYING, THUS: There is no mistaken picture here. The angel wants to be certain that we get the simile. He’s not talking now of a slow consuming like Daniel 9:26 (KJV) suggests. He says “Thus” — just like the plunging stone.

BABYLON, THE GREAT CITY: — the one the kings (v. 10), the merchants (v. 16), and the lesser economic forces (v. 19) all acknowledge as the epitome of their former respect.

WILL BE THROWN DOWN WITH VIOLENCE: The angel is still being graphically specific. “Thrown down” seems bad enough; but he adds “with violence.” The Greek means RUSHING IMPETUOSITY. It should be an awesome display!

AND WILL NOT BE FOUND ANY LONGER: This day is yet (hopefully soon) to come. It is the fulfillment of 19:20. No one will need to ask if it has been fulfilled. Isaiah 23:18 shows the transition. All of her wealth and influence will be transferred to the rightful ROCK. It will be re-dedicated as “Holiness to the Lord” (KJV) — the same re-dedication as the “horses bridles.” See Zech. 14:20 (KJV margin) and Rev. 14:20.

18:22, 23 — It is interesting to note that Isaiah 24 parallels 18:21-24 even as Isaiah 23 paralleled the earlier verses.

These two verses describe desolation. Jeremiah 7:34 and 25:10 use the same expression to picture Israel during the 70 years of desolation. It has been unfortunate that brethren have selected parts of these verses and applied them to the past. It neither fits the context nor proves the points they wish to make. It is important to note that Bro. Russell, while he consistently applied “the voice of the bride and bridegroom” (v. 23) to 1881, DID NOT hold to that interpretation in the end. His very last recorded thoughts on the matter look to a future fulfillment. (See Q.B. 720.)

Verses 22 and 23 look back to what USED TO BE available when the Lord allowed wheat and tares to grow together:

18:22 — SOUND OF HARPISTS: — those who harmoniously interpret the Word of God.

MUSICIANS: — those who sing (proclaim) the messages = witnessing Christians.

FLUTE PLAYERS: This symbol is a little obscure. Luke 7:32 might suggest an answer. If a flute was played to get the response of dancing, it may symbolize the application of doctrine. Thus (as Bro. Burns suggests) these may be character teachers.

TRUMPETERS: Because of the 7 trumpet sequence, trumpeting suggests dispensational-truth proclaimers.

NO CRAFTSMAN: — people who put things together — thus teachers. (The last part of this verse is spurious.)

18:23 — LIGHT OF A LAMP — the truths of the Bible

VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM: Voice = message. The bridegroom's age-long message was the Kingdom.

AND BRIDE: — the message of the bride has been joint heirship in the administration of the kingdom.

Thus ends the list of THINGS WHICH WERE — a sad
condemnation of mis-use ending in destruction.

WILL NOT BE HEARD IN YOU: Note first that in the middle of verse 22, and through verse 23, John directly addressed Babylon even as each of the groups (except the last one — vs. 17-19) had done. It is almost like a judgmental finger-pointing. Perhaps the lesser “shipmasters, passengers,” etc. don't do this because they don't know how much responsibility (fault or guilt) rested on Babylon. Most of the world has been and will be in ignorance of Babylon's true colors until after her final destruction — when they poke around in the ashes and find the horrible remnants of her true self (v. 24.)

ANY LONGER: — because she's GONE — OFF THE SCENE. Thus the O. T. references to Jerusalem with the same language as these verses; the total effect of all these words is: this city NO LONGER FUNCTIONS.

FOR: — because. Here comes the REASON why Babylon lost all of the precious things that were once available to her:

YOUR MERCHANTS WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE EARTH: One reason for her rejection, loss, and destruction is her collusion with the great men of the earth (rather than the great men of “heaven.”) Her temporal interests made her lose her spiritual riches. This HARLOTRY is the MAIN STATED reason for Babylon's rejection.

BECAUSE: The REASON the men of the earth worked so closely with her is because:

ALL THE NATIONS WERE DECEIVED BY YOUR SORCERY: She resorted to “mysteries of faith” by which she DRUGGED the people into believing that church and state were God's arrangement and the way things should be. Thus she could MANIPULATE the peoples of the earth. She mixed faith with money and reaped thus a Judas reward. (Cf. John 17:12 to II Thess. 2:3)

18:24 — AND IN HER WAS FOUND: once it is all over, people will probe her ruins — investigate her history and her secrets.

THE BLOOD: — the spilled blood, the mis-used life and merit

OF PROPHETS: — of Old Testament teachings

AND OF SAINTS: — of the Gospel Age faithful

AND OF ALL WHO HAVE BEEN SLAIN ON THE EARTH: — all throughout society, who have been ostracized, excommunicated, discouraged, stunted in spiritual investigation, etc. ANYONE who opposed her was the object of her wrath. Babylon, as Satan wanted, was a remarkably effective tool in destroying and discouraging faith. God used it, however, for His own ends of TESTING FAITH; then He disposed of the one who did the testing.

NOTE: The first 10 verses of Chapter 19 are
a natural sequel to Chapter 18. In one sense, they
belong in Chapter 18.

CHAPTER 19 (IN TWO PARTS)**UNIVERSAL REJOICING****(19:1-10)****— Introductory Remarks —**

Chapter 19 divides clearly into two sections.

The first 10 verses are an extension of Chapter 18 showing the rejoicing following the destruction of Babylon and the glorification of the Church and Great Company. Its impact would probably be more powerful had the editors of the Bible placed the chapter division after verse 10.

Verses 11-21 are significant in that they provide the LAST descriptive picture of the destruction of Churchianity — this time clearly INCLUDING Protestantism. In one sense, these verses might have a clearer impact if they formed the beginning of Chapter 20 since we would then have the destruction of beast, false prophet, and dragon ALL IN ONE CHAPTER. Visually seeing that connection is very helpful. Not seeing it has led many to think that the dragon of Chapter 20 is the personal devil rather than the symbol already encountered in 12:9 and in 16:13. Believing Chapter 20 to refer to the personal devil has led many to have problems with understanding the events which open the thousand years.

CHAPTER 19, PART I, 19:1-10
— The Universal Rejoicing Following Babylon's Total Destruction —

19:1 — AFTER THESE THINGS I HEARD: John again re-focuses our attention. This time he takes us away from the destruction of 18:21-24 to the celebration following that destruction.

AS IT WERE: This is clumsy in English. The Greek merely says “AS.” Therefore, the phrase should read:

AS A LOUD VOICE: What John hears, he hears NOT as a subtle message; he hears it as a GREAT PROCLAMATION.

OF A GREAT MULTITUDE IN HEAVEN: This has traditionally been viewed as the Great Company class having been released from Babylon by its fall. This, however, poses great problems. Once Babylon is totally gone, it seems inconceivable that the Great Company will yet be on earth. If this were to refer to the Great Company in heaven, one would have to question why they are singled out as the ones rejoicing. This multitude is apparently THE HEAVENLY HOSTS (Church and Great Company included.) “In heaven,” thus, is quite literal here. The OLD heaven (the religious world of the earth) is by this time PASSED AWAY. “In heaven” cannot then refer to the religious world on earth.

SAYING, HALLELUJAH! Hallelujah is Hebrew meaning PRAISE YE JEHOVAH! This begins a series of FOUR Hallelujahs (plus one hidden one.) There are, in one viewpoint, actually SEVEN hallelujahs if verse 4 is counted as two groups and verse 6 is counted as three groups. If there are only four, the symbolism is still very potent since four is a symbol of universality. The object seems to be to tell that

everything and everyone, heaven and earth, will rejoice and praise the Father once Babylon is gone. The magnitude of the celebration is staggering to the imagination. Isa. 14:7.

SALVATION: God has saved the race from its oppressors (epitomized by Babylon.)

AND GLORY: This word is so hard to define, yet we all FEEL its meaning. Everything that SHOULD be attributed to God WILL BE. This is Glory!

AND POWER: — the necessary and formerly feared ingredient which allows God to accomplish His plans.

BELONG: (This word is not in the Greek) The thought is nice: it's saying that these things are God's RIGHTFULLY.

TO OUR GOD: It is no less than heartwarming to notice that in this narrative (19:1-10) all of the spoken references are PERSONAL: OUR God! While few TRULY so claimed Him in the past, ALL will be anxious to do so after Babylon's fall.

19:2 — BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS: This is the lesson for all creation — including that part of the heavenly host which has watched history as spectators. (I Cor. 4:9)

FOR (because) HE HAS JUDGED THE GREAT HARLOT: This has had to be a question in the minds of angels for centuries — “How can God let this go on without intervening? With natural Israel He intervened. He's kept His silence SO long during these injustices!” The destruction of Babylon demonstrates to all that God keeps His justice and His plans — but in HIS due time.

WHO WAS CORRUPTING THE EARTH WITH HER IMMORALITY: The angels saw God act against corrupting influences in the days of Noah. They waited patiently to see the same action against Babylon.

AND HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER: This is the second of two injustices the heavenly hosts witnessed. Babylon had BOTH corrupted the earth (society) AND spilled the blood (the lives, reputations, etc.) of the saints. The vengeance was total and appropriate.

19:3 — AND A SECOND TIME THEY SAID HALLELUJAH!: Why? (It DOES help make a total of four or seven to help make the numerological symbolism complete. But that is not the likely answer.) The FIRST hallelujah was for the past (as stated in verse 2); the second is for the future because:

HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER: Not only has God been praised for destroying the offender and, thus, for carrying out justice, but, as He had prophesied (Isa. 34:10), He will never let the lesson be forgotten. All eternity will benefit from this horrible period of permitted injustices. The second Hallelujah is for the ETERNAL BENEFITS of the permission of evil.

19:4 — AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS: — all of the testimony of God's pre-written plans

AND THE FOUR LIVING ONES: — the personifications of God's own attributes

FELL DOWN: — the visible action representing total respect, dedication, and worship

AND WORSHIPPED GOD: — by having been fulfilled and understood

SAYING, AMEN. HALLELUJAH!: — This is the third and fourth Hallelujahs (two because two entities are saying it.) These hallelujahs are impersonal; but ideas and inanimate things can also

praise Him. It is notable that this hallelujah is preceded by AMEN — “Thus it is,” or “Truly.” This word is very appropriate for these inanimate witnesses. THEIR praise comes BECAUSE their predictions and characteristics are seen to be FULFILLED; therefore: “Thus it is!”.

19:5 — AND A VOICE CAME FROM THE THRONE: This is clearly not God because it praises God. It is the one ALSO on the throne — Jesus, or Jesus and his Church. Rev. 3:21

SAYING: This voice is not specifically praising God, but INSTRUCTING OTHERS to do so. Is this not the work of the Great Mediator?

GIVE PRAISE TO OUR GOD: This is the “hidden” (Hallelujah) in the form of instruction to others. Hallelujah means PRAISE GOD. This, therefore, is Hallelujah in GREEK rather than in Hebrew — a hint that the one speaking is a product of the Christian Age rather than of the age of the prophets.

ALL YOU HIS BOND-SERVANTS: This MAY refer to the Ancient Worthies. It may refer to all the world as they become bond-servants in the Millennium as was the Church in the Gospel Age.

YOU WHO FEAR HIM: This will be the beginning lesson of the New Age — even as it has always been the beginning lesson. See Prov. 1:7.

THE SMALL AND THE GREAT: — from the Ancient Worthies on down.

19:6 — AND I HEARD: Here is another minor re-focus from John. What he hears coming from earth is the RESPONSE to the voice from the throne (V. 5).

AS THE SOUND OF A GREAT MULTITUDE: It is difficult to interpret the details of this verse. It is POSSIBLE that only ONE GROUP is meant with a three-fold description. However, the layout of the language seems to imply three groups. Having three groups also makes a total of seven Hallelujahs — although four may be all that is intended. This verse seems to show all on earth responding to the voice from the throne and doing as he requested. The CUMULATIVE effect of multitude, waters, and thunderings is that this is a wonderfully large and enthusiastic response! However, it is needful to TRY to separate the three “sounds” — the three groups responding. The following is quite speculative:

The GREAT MULTITUDE (not the group we traditionally call the Great Company) is possibly that group formerly known as “those who dwell on earth.” They are finally ready to plant their roots in the New Earth.

AS THE SOUND OF MANY WATERS: — the group formerly known as “every tribe and tongue and people and nation” — the sea class of humanity. Now they have the prospect of stability so that “there will be no more sea.” (21:1)

AS THE SOUND OF MIGHTY PEALS OF THUNDER: This is possibly the Ancient Worthies. (The thought has also been interestingly offered that it is the repentant fallen angels.) Thunder, of course, has symbolized controversy. The Ancient Worthies were controversial in their lifetimes even as the saints have been in theirs. Since the Worthies will be princes in the earth (Psa. 45:16), they will be the arbiters of all controversy. This concept is strengthened by Job 39:25 which refers to the thunder from captains — those who issue orders which the troops may not initially understand and which, therefore, may be controversial. Also (Mark 3:17) Jesus named two disciples SONS OF THUNDER presumably because of their willingness to stand out front and be heard though their positions might be controversial — as the Ancient Worthies must also do.

SAYING, HALLELUJAH!: Since three classes are represented in this verse, 7 hallelujahs have been

issued — from heaven and earth. If we prefer, FOUR have been issued representing UNIVERSAL PRAISE.

FOR THE LORD OUR GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, REIGNS: While this particular message will mean much in heaven, its meaning to those on earth will be incalculable. Free at last! The prayer of ages is finally visibly answered. This message (of the reign) was given MANY years previously (11:15-17), but was then only understood by a few. Here ALL know it!

19:7: Those of verse 6 continue to acknowledge what has happened since the “voice from the throne” in verse 5 told them to praise God. These are rejoicing in the fulfillment of Romans 8:19. The world will have great cause to focus in on the Christ after praising Jehovah. The Christ is its mediator, its “saviors.” (Obad. 21.)

LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD: The Mediator will understand and sympathize with the world (Isa. 35:10). This is REAL cause for rejoicing.

AND GIVE THE GLORY TO HIM: — To God. This is ALWAYS the appropriate thing to do. He is, and will ultimately be, functionally the ALL IN ALL (I Cor. 15:28.) Bringing glory to God in the eyes of the people is virtually the work of the Mediator.

(The Sinaiitic has an alternate reading of “glory to THEM.” This could be explainable if directed toward bridegroom and bride; but “Him” seems a better reading in the context, referring back to the end of verse 6.)

FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME: — the completion of the Body of Christ is a reality. This is the “manifestation of the sons of God” for which all creation has waited (Rom. 8:19.)

AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY: Here is the acknowledgment from the world that the ones they despised and overlooked are, indeed, “READY” to function in this noble office. (Rom. 8:19)

19:8 — This verse may be John’s commentary on the words of the world as just recorded, or it may be the world’s realizing the Church’s victory and right to glory. The former fits the context better because of the next verse where John is clearly the speaker and the angel instructs him further.

AND IT WAS GIVEN TO HER: — an acknowledgment of her victory and right to claim the mantle. (See notes on p. 159 regarding “GIVEN”)

TO CLOTHE HERSELF: seems better translated TO BE CLOTHED. The meaning seems to be that she receives the honor.

IN FINE LINEN, BRIGHT AND CLEAN: — actual righteousness as her justification for her new office, The world now “sees” her righteousness.

FOR FINE LINEN IS — represents

THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS: — now rewarded with the ability to have actual righteousness for the “works (which) follow with them.” (Rev. 14:13)

19:9 — AND HE SAID TO ME: This “he” comes out of nowhere! BUT, if, as suggested, 19:1-10 is actually a part of Chapter 18, the reference does NOT AT ALL seem disconnected, but is a natural reference back to 18:4. THIS voice is the angel of 17:1 which again appears in 18:4 and continues with John throughout the remainder of Revelation as companion and instructor. He is C. T. Russell, 7th Messenger (angel) to the church, via his writings.

WRITE: = take note of; don’t forget; publish it. With all of the emphasis on the true Church in verse 7, and with John’s commentary in verse 8, the angel wants us to take a mental note that we not forget

that Great Multitude of spirit-begotten ones, by-products of the Gospel Age — the “Great Company Class.” They are the ONLY ones not mentioned thus far in this rejoicing narrative although they are, no doubt, included in the heavenly hosts of verse 1.

BLESSED: Indeed, they are! Once their tears are wiped away, they will be a blessed and important factor in carrying out the Divine Plan. Never again will it be possible to develop a spirit class sympathetic to all the ills that mankind experienced during the permission of evil.

ARE THOSE WHO ARE INVITED: — A Divine invitation, the greatest of honors!

TO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB: — not to be part of the bride, but to be those blessed virgins which follow her (Psa. 45:14, 15). The Marriage Supper represents the taking part in the APPLICATION of the benefits of the marriage — i.e., the blessing administration of the mediatorial kingdom. What better way is there to “feast” on the event of the “marriage.” Just as the Church, during the Gospel Age, “celebrated the feast” of Passover (I Cor. 5:7, 8) representing APPLYING the benefits of the crucifixion, thus the Great Company participates in the WEDDING SUPPER by APPLYING the benefits of the wedding — an age-long process.

AND HE SAID TO ME: WHO taught the John Class the truths about the Great Company Class? The reference is unmistakable.

THESE ARE TRUE WORDS OF GOD: The doctrine of the Great Company class is an obscure teaching. But that does not make it untrue! The fact is, understanding this doctrine has vitally enhanced our appreciation of the standards for the bride and the legally-binding nature of consecration and spirit-begetting. The doctrine is a magnificent complement to the doctrine of the “little flock.” It takes most of the objection away from a Church class of only 144,000 when so very many have been striving for a heavenly reward. They are true words of God!

19:10 — AND I FELL AT HIS FEET: (Cf. v. 4) — the visible action of total respect and dedication; but here, IMPROPER.

This is the first of TWO instances (See also 22:8, 9) when the John class attempts to worship the messenger rather than the message-Sender. Why this occurs twice is a matter of speculation and concern. In both cases it is at the end of John’s having learned wonderful things at the hand of the angel (the 7th messenger; see Item #74b.) Perhaps there is an implication that parts of the John class in Bro. Russell’s day, and parts now, need this special reminder. Safety in Jesus will not come from improper estimation and use of Bro. Russell and his writings.

TO WORSHIP HIM: There is something imbalanced in our natures that makes it so easy for us to mistake the difference between appreciation and acceptance of the messenger’s message on the one hand, and idolization and reliance on the individual who delivers the message on the other. It is vitally imperative that we make this distinction.

AND HE SAID TO ME: Bro. Russell, in the clearest of terms, both spoke and wrote regarding his observations of the preaching of Bro. Russell over the preaching of Jesus Christ. How hard we are of hearing sometimes!

DO NOT DO THAT: If we DO, we deny BOTH the Lord who sent the message AND the man who delivered it. BOTH said, “DO NOT DO THAT.”

I AM A FELLOW SERVANT OF YOURS AND YOUR BRETHREN: “Ye are all brethren and One is your Master.” “Yours AND your brethren” may refer to the John class (the Church) and its companion (the Great Company Class.)

WHO HOLD THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS: This is an important point. Bro. Russell, in essence, does

not really serve anyone who is not HOLDING ONTO the testimony of Jesus — the Scriptures. He is no “Bible student” who does not study the Bible — regardless of how many helps he has in doing so.

WORSHIP GOD: The advice is priceless. These two words are worthy of hours of meditation.

FOR THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS: — telling about him, applying his words to our hearts and our ways.

IS THE SPIRIT OF (THIS) PROPHECY: Here we have the point of it all. The spirit of prophecy — the thing which gives prophecy life and breath, makes it live — is its application to character: the testimony of Jesus in our lives and words.

CHAPTER 19, PART II, 19:11-21
The Spirit-Begotten View of the Harvest Judgments
or
The Destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet

— Introduction to Part II —

It is important to repeat here that these following verses functionally belong to the beginning of Chapter 20. It is not that the subject matter is all the same, but rather that 19:11-21 deals with two-thirds of the characters (beast and false prophet) introduced to us earlier which must be destroyed. The third character (20:1-3, 7-10), the “dragon, serpent, devil, and Satan,” is the third part of that triumvirate we met in 16:13 and earlier in 12:9, 13:1, and 13:11, 15. Failing to see this connection makes it easy to fail to see that the dragon of Chapter 20 IS NOT THE PERSONAL DEVIL (although he is included in the symbol.)

19:11-21 is one more (the final) look at the destruction of the old Babylonish order. It is an encapsulated view of the many detailed views which have come before it. It also introduces other prophetic connections to aid our understanding of Babylon’s collapse.

It is very clear that 19:11 opens a new chapter. The trouble described here obviously does not follow the rejoicing of 19:1-10! 19:11-21 divides into three scenes as marked by John’s traditional re-focus words, “And I saw” — verses 11, 17, 19. It is always important to note these divisions. They are there for our understanding. For convenience, we can name these three sections:

- (A) The King.
- (B) The Birds
- (C) The Beasts.

PART II, Section A
(11-16)
— THE KING —

19:11 — AND I SAW HEAVEN OPENED: These words are important in being able to interpret this section. When did the John class see heaven opened (spiritual enlightenment occur)? It was at the beginning of the Harvest. Thus this encapsulated review of Babylon’s destruction begins in Bro. Russell’s day.

AND BEHOLD, A WHITE HORSE: “Behold” is a word which suggests some serious consideration. Why are we to consider the white horse carefully? For the first time since Ephesus (6:2) we have the white horse of pure doctrine! What a thing to behold! It is the restoration of this pure doctrine at the end of the age which allows (1) the completion of the Church and, (2) truth as the tool of judgment against Babylon. It is no accident that at this end of the age we freely refer to what we have received as “THE TRUTH.” We have beheld the white horse.

AND HE WHO SAT UPON IT: We have ALSO beheld the ONE who sits upon (controls) the Truth. The returned Jesus is in total control of the direction and uses of the newly restored doctrine. Not only do we behold his presence, but we behold his name and purposes:

IS CALLED FAITHFUL AND TRUE: Here is more to behold. WHERE was he called this? The ONLY reference to him by this combination of terms is 3:14. — the OPENING OF THE LAODICEA message. Thus, the opening of heaven, the white horse of pure doctrine, the returned Lord astride it, and the appellation of “faithful and true,” ALL tell us that this verse takes place in the 1870’s.

AND IN RIGHTEOUSNESS HE JUDGES: This is the first work — a 40-year judgment (1874-1914). 40 always symbolizes a complete period of testing or judgment; it is NOT synonymous with Harvest, and should not be so confused. The first part of the Harvest is this judgment. The second part follows:

AND WAGES WAR: This began in 1914 and has been continuing since. Babylon failed the judgment and is, therefore, exposed to the war (plagues). The wine-press feature will conclude the hostilities.

19:12 — AND HIS EYES ARE A FLAME OF FIRE: Eyes are wisdom; fire is a judgment symbol. The testimony, then, is that he has the wisdom of perfect judgment.

AND UPON HIS HEAD ARE MANY DIADEMS: While the “kingdom (singular) of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord (Jehovah) and of His Christ” (11:15), it is also clear that Jesus claims the crowns of others as they fall during the warfare. He has authority over all kingdoms.

AND HE HAS A NAME WRITTEN: — a character recorded.

WHICH NO ONE KNOWS EXCEPT HIMSELF: One person has suggested that this refers to the fact that the world does not know who is behind the judgments and trouble of our day; thus this unknown name would be unknown only until its eventual revealing. However, this phrase is such a parallel to 2:17 as to have, almost certainly, the same meaning as that passage. In 2:17 the thought is presented that immortality (and the privileges of office connected with it) are received because of successful overcoming. Thus, this judge has the authority to judge because he is one of those who has overcome and has that personal character relationship to God (the unknown name) which each member of the 144,000 has. It is an intimate, unshared, relationship. It is interesting to compare verses 19:13 and 16. Those names, among the MANY he possesses, are apparently NOT the personal name of verse 12.

19:13 — AND HE IS CLOTHED WITH A ROBE DIPPED IN BLOOD: A robe, as an article of clothing, represents some sort of justification or identity. This blood-splattered robe is probably NOT a reference to Isaiah 63 because that Isaiah text has him RETURNING from the press, whereas this and following verses have him ON THE WAY to tread the winepress. The robe’s being DIPPED in blood might suggest that the meaning of this garment is his justification (his COMMISSION) to exterminate (as Bro. Burns suggests.) It is also possible that some blood spattering occurs PRIOR to the wine-press feature. Isaiah 34:6 may well represent a pre-wine-press blood-letting. It seems quite likely that damage by the sword (Isa. 34:6; Rev. 19:15) is very different from slaughter by stomping out the vintage (Isa. 63; Rev. 14:20; 19:15.) For SOME REASON, both symbols are present in Rev. 19.

AND HIS NAME IS CALLED: Our Lord has many names. There is some reason for choosing THIS one in THIS context. 3:14 suggests strongly that the heresy of the trinity might be an important factor in Laodicea. How many people KNOW that Jesus is currently plaguing and destroying Babylon? Not many. And those who DO are those who know him as:

THE WORD (LOGOS) OF GOD: Those who understand the current trouble, its reasons, and its outcome, are those who “call his name The Word of God.” This verse-13 description should warm our hearts in confirming our understanding. WE know who is dipped in blood; WE know WHY he is; and WE know him by his TRUE identity. All of these intelligences are a rarity in the Christian world. We also know that LOGOS means more than a mere word; it means a SCHEME OF THINGS — a PLAN; and because we have seen heaven opened and beheld the white horse, we understand that plan (by Divine mercies and grace!)

Verses 11-13 introduced us to the new King, his characteristics, his mission, and his historical identity. The narrative now continues to show us (verses 14-16) those with him, his ultimate objectives, and his place in the plan.

19:14 — AND THE ARMIES WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN: Heaven here is BOTH the actual and the symbolic (the earth’s religious world). Armies is plural because verses 11-16 are about the entire Harvest period — over 140 years — during which saints are working with the Lord from BOTH sides of the veil. (Contrast 19:19 where our Lord’s army is singular because, in that picture, it is all beyond the veil.)

CLOTHED IN: — justified, either (for those in the flesh) by Christ’s imputed robe of righteousness, or (for those glorified) by their actual attained righteousness (19:8).

FINE LINEN, WHITE AND CLEAN: — pure. The participation of the saints with their head is not a personal vendetta against Babylon, but a righteous and appropriate doling out of Divine Justice. Their motivations are white and clean.

WERE FOLLOWING HIM — accompanying him

ON WHITE HORSES: Pure truth is the ultimate judgment tool against errors. It is not that each of these saints has a separate white horse. There is ONE white horse of pure doctrine. But each of us rides it individually. IT is our tool of judgment. All of the prophecies show that EXPOSURE of wrongs will be what sinks Babylon’s ship.

19:15 — AND FROM HIS MOUTH: (In fulfillment of II Thess. 2:8) Note it is from HIS mouth. It is NOT our message; it is his. It is the message which is paramount. He, as king, issues forth the most powerful of proclamations, denunciations, directives, and judgments possible.

COMES A SHARP SWORD: Even though it is, in a sense, truths on ALL SUBJECTS that lead to the instability of Babylon, this phrase is here as a potent reminder that it is BIBLICAL TRUTH which will judge and destroy Babylon. The sword is the Bible — though its truths may not always be in the form of direct quotes from it.

SO THAT WITH IT HE MAY SMITE THE NATIONS: This is probably not a reference just to Babylon’s being smitten by truths. This probably extends the meaning to the peoples of earth who, likewise, will be greatly affected by the spread of truths. The very plagues which weaken and destroy Babylon will also shake the foundations of thought held by all peoples. The next phrase (in its proper translation) enhances this thought.

AND HE WILL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON: Literally, “He will SHEPHERD them.” This word is helpful in realizing the Master’s ultimate intent. He is not beating up on the peoples of the

earth; the poor lost sheep of the human race have a shepherd who, although forceful in getting their attention, has in mind their ultimate blessing. But before that blessing can come, he must remove the counterfeit religions which have poisoned their minds. Hence:

AND HE TREADS THE WINEPRESS OF THE FIERCE ANGER OF GOD, THE ALMIGHTY: This feature will conclude the Harvest. With its accomplishment Babylon will be gone. He has waited until her “grapes are fully ripe” (14:18) lest anyone find an excuse for questioning his actions. It is clear from 17:16 that, by this time, the people themselves will have been fed up with the corrupt vintage. This action is Isaiah 63. It is done in the name of GOD’S anger. It is the last feature of that anger (15:1). Anger is modified with “fierce” because God’s anger is progressive — it grows and intensifies during the Harvest — during the plagues — until His face turns from red to white! (Ezek. 38:18; Isa. 42:14.) The final plague, the wine-press, is the fiercest of troubles.

19:16 — AND ON HIS ROBE AND ON HIS THIGH HE HAS A NAME WRITTEN: “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS”: This verse has some obscure meanings. It is clear from the name itself that ALL authority which exists (save Jehovah’s) is SUBJECT to this new king. That is a thought of primary importance in this picture since this one on the white horse is clearly attempting the judgment of all that opposes him. Why is the name on the robe and on the thigh? Since clothing represents the position of the wearer, the thing he is justified in doing, it seems reasonable to show that this blood-dipped robe has special authority behind it. Thus the blood-letting commission is justified because it is being done by him who is King and Lord over all. The robe represents his OFFICE. But his name is not just on his office, but also on his PERSON. This seems to be saying that the wearing of the robe is justified by the identity of the character who is wearing it. Since a leg seems to represent the POWER of an individual (See Psa. 147:10; Lev. 7:32, 33; 8:25, 26; 9:21), the symbolism might be saying that Jesus’ POWER is derived from the office he has won. There is possibly an additional thought. The thought of passing on the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant is linked to the thigh. See Gen. 24:2, 9 and 47:29. Since Jesus comes as the messenger of the covenant (Mal. 3:1-3), his name as KING OF KINGS might show the fulfillment of that promise made to Abraham. Related to this might be the account in Gen. 32:25, 31, 32 and on into Chapter 35. Jacob wrestled with the angel. He DID receive a blessing, but his hip was thrown out of joint. Could this picture the Law Covenant’s failure — but NOT the failure of the Abrahamic Covenant which Jacob never forgot? The etymology of Jacob’s name seems to imply someone who gets somewhere due to his own efforts. His new name, Israel, on the other hand, implies strength BECAUSE of a relationship to God. Thus the thigh may represent the strength of the covenant fulfilled in Jesus as the new king.

PART II, Section B (17-18)

— THE BIRDS —

Section A (11-16) introduced us to the whole picture from Bro. Russell’s day to the wine-press treading. It also introduced us to the incoming King and his armies. Section B (17, 18) introduces one other potent factor: the Great Company Class — those who (14:17-19) help to put the grapes into the vat. They do so by using their “sharp sickle.” We KNOW the Great Company Class will go out in glory — with washed robes. How do they do this? The implication in 14:17-19 and here in 19:17, 18 is that they SPEAK LOUDLY the truths at their disposal, thus igniting the rampage of others who will be fed up with Babylon.

19:17 — AND I SAW: Here again is John’s traditional re-focus words. This time he wants us to see the additional players who will be instrumental in the hands of the Lord and his armies. (19:13, 14)

AN ANGEL STANDING IN THE SUN: This is the Great Company Class once the Church is beyond the veil. The sun is the light of the Gospel — something that shines on earth. Who is left to “stand” (take action) in the Gospel light (the sun)? The “tribulation saints” (7:14) are an imperative part of God’s plan as details wrap up the old age. We should not have forgotten about them; 19:9 had just so recently reminded us about their blessedness.

AND HE CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE: There will no longer be “silence in heaven” (8:1) once these tribulation saints have found their voices. This part of this verse states clearly that the final defense of the truth will be vigorous — a LOUD VOICE.

SAYING TO ALL THE BIRDS WHICH FLY IN MID-HEAVEN: (See Item #74c) These are not the birds of 18:2 which were imprisoned in Babylon — although some of those birds may also hear and respond. These birds (19:17) are those unconsecrated people who comfortably thought themselves Christians. They profited easily, but not maliciously, from association with churchianity. When they learn (from the angel in the sun) the MALICIOUS TRUTHS about Babylon, they will have an unbridled kind of righteous indignation. These birds are TARES. Burning them will help burn their surroundings. They are part of that strange beast (17:16) which “eats her flesh” as the next verse states.

COME, ASSEMBLE FOR THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOD: This invitation parallels that in Ezek. 39:4, 17-20 because it is somewhat the same event. Remember (14:20) that Babylon meets its doom at the same time and place as Gog does — OUTSIDE THE CITY — outside Babylon, in the Holy Land. It is no coincidence that the descriptions are parallel even though one focuses on Babylon, the other on Gog’s invasion of Israel.

These words seem to epitomize what will be the Great Company’s final message: “Babylon will fall; all you who have legitimate complaints against her, line up to file your claims. God has provided a meal to satisfy your hunger for revenge.”

19:18 — IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY EAT THE FLESH: 17:16 had made this prediction. Flesh is muscle — that which allows a being to move and function. The symbolism of this verse is thus strong: the preying upon Babylon’s various parts will take away all of its ability to function; note the component parts which make her work —

OF KINGS: rulers; thus taking away their ability to rule. Anarchy results.

AND THE FLESH OF COMMANDERS: Literally = chiliarchs (rulers of a thousand), i.e., LEADERS; thus taking away their ability to lead. Thus respect for authority is gone.

AND THE FLESH OF MIGHTY MEN: — men of renown, prominence, or influence; thus taking away the power of POSITION. Hence the “fear of men” will vanish.

AND THE FLESH OF HORSES: — doctrine; thus taking away the ability of teaching and reasonings to control the people.

AND OF THOSE WHO SIT ON THEM: — ministers, ideologues, dogmatists, people with agendas; thus taking away their ability to maneuver ideas and “isms” to sway the masses.

AND THE FLESH OF ALL MEN: “Men” is probably used here as elsewhere as a symbol of professing (but not necessarily actual) Christians. Thus the ability to function as a nominal Christian will be taken away. This is the burning of tares.

BOTH FREE MEN AND SLAVES: The implication seems to be that ALL of Churchianity, the kind you are captive in (slaves) because you were born into it and held there by family tradition, and the kind you have chosen (free men) for yourself as you left one part of churchianity for another, will ALL be fleshless — functionless. No part of churchianity will remain.

AND SMALL AND GREAT: Whether the “man” was influential or uninfluential will make no

difference. No “Christian” will have what it takes to function. Thus are the tares totally burned.

PART II, Section C (19-21)

—THE BEASTS —

Section C summarizes the battle and conclusively defines the fate (oblivion) of the two great “Christian” counterfeits. It brings back the symbols of Section A and B to show us the inter-relationship of parts in this Part II (11-21) of Rev. 19.

19:19 — AND I SAW: John sees one more diarama, separate from, but related to the two previous ones.

THE BEAST: — the remains of the 10-horned beast of Chapter 13 which, at this point, is mostly just its prominent horn — Papacy.

AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH: — the temporal rulers of the old order. It is clear from this verse that Papacy will, indeed, SOMEHOW be in cooperation with the Kings of the Earth against what the Lord is trying to do.

AND THEIR ARMIES: These are plural because they are varied. They could mostly, however, be characterized as “those who dwell on the earth.” It represents those who will refuse to let the old order pass at any cost.

ASSEMBLED TO MAKE WAR: “assembled” is a very important word. It is prophesied in Zeph. 3:8 and Rev. 16:16 to mention but two references. The Lord is able by this assembly to pull everything down at once. The word is additionally important because it gives us a TIME REFERENCE for Section C. Since 16:16 is the very end of the sixth plague, and since the Church “goes home” at the very beginning of the seventh plague (16:17), this verse and those which follow apparently refer to the time when the Church is glorified (as did 19:17, 18.)

AGAINST HIM WHO SAT UPON THE HORSE: They don’t like him, and they don’t like his horse. Truth is a terrible threat to an erroneous way of life.

AND AGAINST HIS ARMY: His army is now singular because it is all beyond the veil. (Cf. 19:14.) But he and his army are the incoming new order, and the old order cannot abide the thought of a change. The Great Multitude will carry the brunt of this “war.”

19:20 — AND THE BEAST WAS SEIZED: Exactly what this seizure will be we must wait to see. Perhaps it is the people who seize her (17:16) and throw her into the lake of fire.

AND WITH HIM: — apparently at the same time.

THE FALSE PROPHET: — the combination of the 2-horned beast and image. (See notes on 16:13.)

WHO . . . HIS IMAGE: This is here to remind us that we are now seeing the culmination of events begun in 13:11-17. This is an important reminder. The two beasts (with assimilated image) were big factors in the sixth plague along with the dragon. Here, however, we see the total destruction of only two of those three entities. Chapter 20 will deal with the third.

THESE TWO WERE THROWN ALIVE: Note well! The destruction of apostate Christianity will be sudden and complete — no fading into the sunset! They are ALIVE when they meet their doom. They are THROWN to their doom. We saw this already in 18:21 — “Thus . . . with violence!”

INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE WHICH BURNS WITH BRIMSTONE: — the second death; oblivion. (20:14.) There they will be tormented forever in the sense that no one will be able to refer to them without disgust. (20:10)

19:21 — AND THE REST: Apparently the kings and their armies are “the rest.” If we recall them from 19:18, all of these have their flesh eaten as the result of the “loud voice” — the proclamation of truth instituted by the Great Company Class.

WERE KILLED WITH THE SWORD: The truths which destroyed Babylon will topple all existing institutions based on the same lies. These truths create ANARCHY — See Ezek. 38:21.

WHICH CAME FROM THE MOUTH OF HIM: — back in verse 15

WHO SAT UPON: — controlled

THE HORSE: The body of pure truth now due.

AND ALL THE BIRDS: — which were invited to the slaughter (See 19:17)

WERE FILLED WITH THEIR FLESH: — have a sufficiency of vengeance and are ready for the glorious kingdom which will now replace the old order.

Chapter 20 now continues this narrative to show the fate of the dragon.

**REVELATION,
PART THREE
Millennium and Conclusion
Rev. 20:1— 22:21**

Five Views of the Millennium and Their Purposes

Picture Number:	Description of the Picture:	Inclusive Verses:	Purpose of the Picture:
1.	The Millennium and the “Devil”	20:1 – 10	This view explains the “binding” of the deceptive powers of <u>civil government</u> during the reign of The Christ and the final re-appearance of deception via civil power to test the perfected race.
2.	The Throne of Individual Judgement	20:11 – 21:1	This view shows how the <u>judgement of individual humans</u> will progress during the period described in View #1.
3.	The New Order Summarized for the Benefit of the John Class Yet in the Flesh When the Reign Has Begun	21:2 – 8	These verses (given primarily as an aside to aid the understanding of the Church in the flesh) describe the various <u>factors and objectives of the reign</u> of Christ in a very general, overview way including a statement to the John class yet in the flesh that Restitution Times HAVE BEGUN
4.	A Picture of the Bride – The New Government	21:9 – 21	This picture shows the glory, function, purpose, and scope of the glorified body of Christ, <u>The New Jerusalem</u> .
5.	Food, Water, and Light in the Kingdom	21:22–22:5	This picture shows symbolically <u>how life will be attained and sustained</u> in the new order.

— INTRODUCTION TO THE MILLENNIAL AGE CHAPTERS —

As was the case with the Harvest chapters (See Item #56a, p. 174a), the five views of the Millennium are also given so that we have several perspectives of the age. Each view allows us to consider the Millennial Age with a different objective in mind. Each view begins at or near the beginning of the age. Each seems to cover the entire age.

(1.) 20:1-10 might be entitled THE MILLENNIUM AND THE “DEVIL.” It is the only perspective among the five which specifically mentions the length of the age. These verses deal with the temporary binding and final destruction of the “devil” (or dragon, or Satan, or serpent) — a symbolic reference to the civil power introduced first in 12:9 and then coupled with the beast and false prophet in 16:13. By 20:10, all three symbols have met their doom.

(2.) 20:11 - 21:1 could well be called THE THRONE OF JUDGMENT. This scenario deals with the judgment of individuals.

(3.) 21:2-8 summarizes THE NEW ORDER. In these verses we are introduced to the joys awaiting the resurrected and the doom to which the incorrigible are destined. It is spoken to the Harvest Church yet in the flesh.

(4.) 21:9-21 is devoted to THE BRIDE — the New Jerusalem, the governing body (or “city”) of the Millennium.

(5.) 21:22—22:5 focuses on symbolic FOOD, WATER, AND LIGHT — the sustaining elements for all who are fully resurrected. With these sustaining strengths, they “reign forever and ever.”

—THE THOUSAND YEARS —

CHAPTER 20

Chapter 20 divides visually very easily by the phrase “AND I SAW . . .” which begins verses 1, 4, 11, 12 and, thus, clearly marks the four separate sections of this chapter. However, before beginning the examination of each of these sections, it is helpful to note a few general items regarding the thousand years.

Our entire chronological reckoning is based on the concept that the seventh creative day is seven thousand years in length. This is pictured in type by the Jewish sabbath system (each week being 6 days of labor and one day of rest, etc.) When Genesis reports creation, it says of each of the first six days, “the evening and the morning were the ___ day.” It does not say this of the seventh day, of course, since the seventh day is, even now, not over. We know the length of the seventh day partly because of Rev. 20. Jesus said he was “Lord of the Sabbath.” (Matt. 12:8; Mk. 2:28; Luke 6:5.) He particularly took advantage of healing ON THE SABBATH in order to demonstrate pictorially that on the GREAT SABBATH he would do his healing of the world of mankind. Rev. 20 is one of the clearest explanations of that antitypical Sabbath. By clearly stating that it is a thousand years in length, it indicates by deduction that the six days of “labor” under sin and death which come before it are also a thousand years each. Adding the Biblical statements of genealogy and history, we find clearly that we now live at the end of six thousand years of man’s history and have entered the seventh thousand years or Sabbath in which the restitution of all things (Acts 3:21) is promised and before which the heaven must retain Jesus. Without Rev. 20, we would be left to GUESS about how long man’s misery would have to continue.

The thousand years (millennium) is mentioned specifically only two other times in the Bible: Psalm 90 and II Peter 3. In both cases the subject matter is the same — man’s restoration. Lessons can be learned from each of these texts which aid the understanding of Rev. 20.

PSALM 90 — Read the entire Psalm for content. Then note verses 14 and 15. Here we have a promise reserved for the MORNING (NAS). The joyful singing will begin. This is the times of restitution of all things (Acts 3:21). The 15th verse stresses the doctrine of the permission of evil; the Psalm ends with the joy of life replacing the agonies of sin and death. The third verse summarizes the 7000 years, the FALL and the RETURN. Here appears the subtle but imperative information about the chronology which Jesus will later draw on for a lesson to his disciples. The lesson: the whole episode of death and restoration is, in God’s timing, a matter of days — days of a thousand years’ length. And these days of a thousand years are likened unto watches in the night — the night BEFORE the morning of blessing in verse 14. The very FIRST of these “yesterday (s) when it is past” was the “day” in which Adam was

promised he would die if he disobeyed (Gen. 2:17). He did. His 930 years were within that first thousand-year day. The prophet Hosea (6:1, 2) uses the same time-keeping method when he looks forward to the Lord's restoration of Israel after their having been cast off in Jesus' day. Jesus lived in the 5th 1000-year day of man's history. Here we see that "after two days" he would revive Israel; "On the third day" he would raise them up. The "third day", of course, is the 7th thousand years — the same as Rev. 20 outlines. Jesus, himself, uses this symbolism in John 2:19-21. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up . . . He was speaking of the temple of his body." Many apply this to Jesus' resurrection from the tomb. But it cannot be. His fleshly body was not raised. He did not raise himself; God raised him. He was speaking of the Church as his body. He IS the one who raises the saints, and he explicitly calls us his body. He promised he would raise the saints AT THE LAST TRUMP. The last (7th) trumpet sounds in the Harvest — in the 7th 1000 years. The destruction of his body began on the 5th day. He will have it raised on the 7th.

Jesus uses the terminology of the WATCH IN THE NIGHT in Luke 12:37, 38 where he speaks regarding his return. Clearly, at his return, the Church is not complete because (verse 37) he FEEDS them — the last meal of the age, the Harvest message. He says his return date must be secret lest the "head of the house" (Satan) know of it and take preventive measures. But he suggests that the SECOND OR THIRD WATCH would be probable. By the symbol of Psalm 90 and the lessons from Hosea and John, the 2nd and 3rd watches would correspond to the 6th and 7th thousand-year periods. As we NOW know, he returned AT THE JUNCTURE of the two — 1874, the end of 6 thousand years from Adam's fall.

II PETER 3 — Peter's testimony on the thousand years is in perfect harmony. The context again is the return of Jesus for "the DAY of judgment" (verse 7). It is clear that IN THIS DAY (verses 10-12) the old order will pass away because his righteous new order (new heavens and earth) will replace it. In the very midst of this, Peter makes a comment on the side (verse 8) to make certain that we comprehend the length of this judgment day. He clearly sets forth that this day is not like Israel's 40-year day in the wilderness; it's not like Jesus' 40-day Day of temptation in the wilderness; it's not like the 7000-year day in which God rests; THIS DAY IS 1000 YEARS. This day is the morning of Psalm 90; this day is the third day of Hosea 6 and of John 2; this day is the Sabbath Day of which Jesus is Lord.

WHY ISN'T IT 1000 DAYS?

We have found in Revelation and in all Biblical symbolic time that a day equals a year. Why is Rev. 20 a LITERAL statement saying a thousand YEARS and not a symbolic statement saying a thousand DAYS? That it IS literal and not symbolic is manifest in that 1000 years in symbolic time would be 360,000 years! — a figure entirely out of line with all Biblical standards. If Rev. 20, however, said 1000 days there would be NO CONNECTION WITH PSALM 90 OR WITH II PETER 3. How strange if Peter had said, "A day with the Lord is as a thousand days." The same problem would exist with the 90th Psalm. Those two locations NECESSITATED saying A THOUSAND YEARS for the sake of clarity and for the sake of showing us the CONCEPT of the thousand-year day in regard to the Sabbath system. BECAUSE the Psalm and Peter NEEDED to be literal, the need came for Rev. 20 likewise to be literal SO THAT WE COULD EQUATE IT WITH THE OTHER TWO TEXTS WHICH TEACH US THE CONCEPT.

It is important to explain any and all exceptions to established rules of interpretation so that we do not delude ourselves by making things literal or symbolic at our own whims.

— THE QUESTION OF A AND THE —

Bible students make much of the use and non-use of the definite article in the Greek text in certain contexts. This is a legitimate part of Bible study. In Rev. 20 this is also an important consideration. When we introduce a subject in English, we introduce it with an indefinite article. Immediately thereafter we switch to the definite article in order to refer to the thing we have just introduced. For example, we would say: “I saw A cat. THE cat was in a tree, and THE cat was after a bird.” The same construction applies here in Rev. 20. (REMEMBER that each section beginning with “AND I SAW . . .” is, indeed, a new story. Therefore, it is re-introducing the subject as if we’ve never heard of it before and will, therefore, begin again with the indefinite article for the first usage of the noun.) Thus, according to the best manuscript information available, the thousand years uses articles as follows:

SECTION I (vs. 1-3):	{	v. 2 <u>A</u> thousand years
		v. 3 <u>THE</u> thousand years
SECTION II (vs. 4-10):	{	v. 4 <u>A</u> thousand years
		v. 5 <u>THE</u> thousand years (spurious)
		v. 6 <u>THE</u> thousand years

Some have questioned that the Sinaitic MS omits “for a thousand years and cast him” from verse 2 and 3. Since it is the only MS to do so, it is likely that this was merely a scribe’s error. The information above corroborates this conclusion since the first mention of the thousand years in either section should have no article in the Greek. If verse 2 did not contain this phrase, the first mention would have a definite article — incompatible with the pattern in the second section.

SECTION I — VERSES 1-3

WHO IS THE DRAGON?

In verse 2 appears the four-part name “dragon, serpent, devil and Satan.” This four-part name appears only in one other place: 12:9. In our study of Chapter 12 we determined this phrase to be a symbol of the civil empire with Satan as its invisible backer. Pagan Rome was a valuable tool to Satan. With it he

managed to control the world for two centuries without any major outbreak of hostilities. Satan DOES like peaceable control over the earth. However, as Pagan Rome became challenged by the growth of the new religion called Christianity, Satan was not caught short. He absorbed (12:4) the newly born religion and, ultimately, as Paganism declined, and the civil became subject to the religious, Satan had something new with which to rule the world: The Holy Roman Empire. The lesson for Rev. 20 is clear: the remains of civil power are yet around. Their old ruler is too. This name — dragon, serpent, devil and Satan — represent PRIMARILY the civil power, but not without its unseen spiritual head, the personal devil.

There were THREE symbols given to us in 16:13. These symbols had their origins in Chapters 12 and 13: DRAGON, BEAST, & FALSE PROPHET. The fact that all three are mentioned in 16:13 is a clue that we are to FOLLOW all three to their ends in the book of Revelation. It is very important to note that TWO of these three (the beast & false prophet — the ECCLESIASTICAL two) meet their end in 19:20 where BOTH are thrown in the lake of fire. This happens in the Harvest of the Gospel Age. But where is the THIRD? Where is the DRAGON (civil power)? He is the subject of Chapter 20. Notice how carefully 20:10 details that this third enemy joins the other two in the lake of fire — but A THOUSAND YEARS LATER! It is based on this that Bro. Russell suggests that the challenge at the end of the Millennium (20:7-9) would be Satan's attempt to start a new civil government at the close of the reign of the Christ. Civil government (with the personal devil behind it) will have been "bound" for a thousand years. It will make one final reappearance and then meet its eternal end — along with its instigator.

THE BINDING

Bible students, for convenience, refer to the "binding of Satan" — both the literal and the symbolic Satan. The term is fine as a short cut as long as we remember that it IS a short cut. Revelation 20:2 & 3 are specific in telling us that there is a FIVE PART restraint — something which apparently takes a period of time. Note that the dragon is FIRST "laid hold of," SECONDLY "bound," THIRDLY "cast," FOURTHLY "shut," and FIFTHLY "sealed." This may or may not reflect the FIVE-PART PRIDE of Satan shown in Isaiah 14:13, 14. In any case, the binding process is a symbol for making the personal devil and his civil government deceptions POWERLESS for that part of the thousand years in which individuals will be judged. It thus makes plausible the "binding of Satan" as having begun in the past as long as we remember that it is CIVIL POWER being bound here — not the personal being we call the Devil.

WHY 1000?

Bible students have, upon occasion, felt that there are two one-thousand year periods: one being the chronological 7th millennium since the fall of Adam, the other being the peaceable or mediatorial kingdom. It seems inconceivable that this dual meaning is implied here. Ignoring all other arguments, it is wise just to meditate on the meaning of the number 1000. How is it used in the Bible? As we have seen from II Peter and from Psalm 90, it is used CHRONOLOGICALLY. It is not used to symbolize the kingdom because of some inherent symbology in the number 1000. It is STRICTLY a chronological number. As such it is rightly used ONLY in the chronology; hence, its use outside of its 1874 connection seems forced.

Verse 1: The angel here seems universally to be accepted as Jesus. This seems correct as his parable suggests that he would be the binder of the “strong man” (Matt. 12:29). The abyss represents a condition of powerlessness (as in 17:8). A chain, of course, is a device of restraint. The suggestion is that the strong man is first restrained before becoming entirely powerless in the abyss. Because Satan is the prince of darkness, it is likely that light is the device which binds him. It seems obvious enough that the chain would be in the angel’s hand; so why specify it? Hand is a symbol for action or works. It is clear that one of the primary works of the returned Lord is to bind or restrain the darkness. (Please keep in mind that, while this paragraph speaks of the personal devil, he is not the focus of these verses. It is his tool, civil government, which is the primary subject of the binding. While this hampers the personal devil, it is not about him.)

Verses 2 & 3 have mostly been covered in the previous remarks. It is interesting, however, to note the REASON the dragon is bound and cast into powerlessness. It is so that he would be utterly incapable of deceiving the nations during the period of man’s restoration. This is the echo of the Isaiah 35:9 promise. “No Lion will be there. Nor any vicious beast . . .” This section of Chapter 20 ends with the warning that the dragon must be released for a short time once the thousand years are ended.

— BEFORE CONTINUING, A LOOK AT THE LAYOUT —

Verses 1 - 3 look at the thousand years in terms of ruler replacement. Their whole purpose for being is to state that the old ruler who had made life so very difficult will be inoperative.

Verses 4 - 10 look at the thousand years in terms of WHO WILL RULE INSTEAD and the final challenge to their rulership. These verses conclude with the destruction of BOTH the institutions and the individuals which conform to the released power of Satan at the end of the age.

IN ONE SENSE Verses 11 - 15 **WITH** 21:1 form a final picture. These verses deal with the judgment of INDIVIDUALS.

IN ANOTHER SENSE there are THREE sections from 20:11 through 21:1 as is visually obvious from the three “AND I SAW . . .” beginnings (verses 11, 12, and 21:1).

The REASON for this three-in-one section will be explained as the section is discussed.

SECTION II — VERSES 4 - 10

Verses 4 - 6: Beginning with verse 4 we have another complete view of the thousand years — this time to show who the new rulers are and to show the release and destruction of the adversary’s power and person.

THRONES symbolize the authority of judgment — not just kingship. At times the millennial rule is shown by a single throne (as in 20:11 and 3:21.) At times (here and Matt. 28 for example) it is shown by multiple thrones. The concept and harmony is this: there is ONE RULE but shared by many in harmony. It is very much the thought of John 17:21.

The first sentence of verse 4 poses a translation problem. It reads (NAS), “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them” The KJV is similar. The Bible does NOT DO THIS TO US! We have pronouns here without antecedents! Any time this MIGHT appear in the scriptures, something is wrong with the translating. Clearly, when we read this sentence, our immediate response is “WHO is on the thrones? To WHOM is judgment given?” The translators in both KJV and NAS then begin by ADDING “. . . I SAW.” (The “AND” is a part of the MS. The “I SAW” is not.) This does not clarify the matter. Their solution is no solution; it is confusion! The answer to the problem is to translate the Greek “and” (Gk. = KAI) as “even” — a correct and acceptable translation of the word. The result is as follows:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them,
and judgment was given to them — even the souls
of those who had been beheaded . . .”

This way we KNOW who is sitting and judging.

“SOULS” (as in 6:9) is a Revelation symbol for the remembered lives of saints who are dead. This is an important point and will help us to understand the end of verse 4.

The thrones we see are present as the thousand years begin in 1874. They are not yet actually occupied by new creatures. They are ASSIGNED to those who have made their election sure; hence, they (the “souls”) are said to SIT on these thrones and have the occupation as judges assigned to them.

Skip the middle of the verse temporarily — those things which describe the character of these “souls.”

Now the NAS excels the KJV in its translation:

“ . . . judgment was given to them, even the souls of those,
 . . . AND THEY CAME TO LIFE and reigned . . . ”

This is an accurate translation. “And they lived and reigned” (KJV) is NOT the thought. This verse is talking about the FIRST RESURRECTION. These saints have been “under the altar” (6:9) since making their election sure. They are dead in 1874 when the thousand years commence; but they DO have these thrones of judgment promised to them and assigned to them. In 1878 they COME TO LIFE and begin their reign with him. As verse 5 says (without its spurious part): **“THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION.”**

A NOTE ON THE SPURIOUS NATURE OF VERSE 5:

“The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed” is not in the best manuscripts. Unfortunately Lamsa is the only readily available translation to omit these words. The context, however, makes plain their counterfeit character. First of all, note how clear the message is without the offending line: “They came to life and reigned. . . This is the first resurrection.” How clear! WITH the fake words we have: “The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. **THIS** is the first resurrection.” HOW LUDICROUS! Additionally, note WHY the dragon is bound (vs. 3): “ . . . so that he should not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed.” Now, IF the saints are all in heaven on thrones, and IF the rest of the dead don’t return until the end of the thousand years, WHO IS LEFT FOR THE DRAGON TO DECEIVE? Why bind him?

Before going back to the middle of verse 4, note the wonderful progression of the experience of the saints in verses 4 through 6 without the spurious words in the way:

Thrones are assigned to the faithful dead. They come alive to inhabit them and reign with Christ. THIS (coming alive and reigning with Him) IS the first resurrection. There is a SPECIAL blessing for those in the first resurrection: They are immortal; death can never again be a threat to them. On top of this PERSONAL blessing, there is the collective blessing of being priests (mediators between fallen man and perfect God) and of reigning for the entire judgment period.

Note carefully the switch from “he” to “they” (KJV) or “one” to “they” (NAS). The PERSONAL blessing of immortality is to “the ONE” who has part in the first resurrection. The COLLECTIVE blessing is that THEY reign with him. THIS IS A VITAL PART OF UNDERSTANDING THE REIGN FOR A THOUSAND YEARS. A personal thousand years IS NOT GUARANTEED to any individual. CHRIST is guaranteed the thousand year reign. Those who arrive beyond the veil after the thousand years have begun reign WITH HIM for whatever years are left. The BODY reigns the whole period; an individual does not.

BACK TO VERSE 4: The description of those to whom judgment is given is in TWO PARTS. First we have what they DID do. They were beheaded — they gave up their own wills to accept the total headship of their master (Cf. Col. 2:19). They did this BECAUSE OF the testimony of Jesus and BECAUSE OF the Word of God. Their faith in Scripture and in the life and work of Messiah was adequate to make them deny their own wills. Secondly we have what these DID NOT do. In their foreheads (their crystallized characters) and their hands (their deeds) they did not reflect the character (mark), nor did they serve the plans of (worship) the beast or his image (apostate Christianity).*

Thus in verses 4 - 6 we have the description of the new rulership, their character, their authority, their jobs, and their personal glory. The details of the history of their reign are omitted for verse 11 and following. Verses 7 - 10 show only the END OF THE AGE.

Verse 7: The release is AFTER the thousand years. That the abyss of verse 1 was powerlessness is here strengthened by calling his condition “prison.”

Verse 8: Here is a wonderful parallel to Matthew 24:31. Both locations have their roots in the Abrahamic promise. The seed of Abraham was to be as the stars of heaven and the sand of the seashore. The Matthew text deals with the star class — although it does not call it by this name. Matthew is dealing with the Harvest of the Gospel Age. Revelation is dealing with a false harvest of the Millennial Age. Matthew gathers the elect from the four winds of heaven; Revelation gathers the deceived of the nations from the four corners of the earth.

* This verse also seems to show that the entire Church (the 144,000) is considered to have the victory over the beast and image. Since many of the 144,000 lived before there even was a beast or image, the reference is clearly not to a literal victory over these, but a victory over what they have stood for.

Notice that Satan (through his end-of-Millennium agency) does just what he was bound in order to prevent: DECEIVE. How did he deceive during the 6000 years? He did it through false religion and through civil power. False religion, of course, meets its end at the BEGINNING of the Millennium (19:20). The only deceiving agency left is civil power. The dragon of this chapter (and Chapter 12) REPRESENTS SATAN'S CIVIL POWER DECEPTION. It is his only remaining tool at the close of the thousand years. The thought seems to be that the Ancient Worthies (the SEEN government) and the Church (the UNSEEN government) will be challenged at the close of the age with the establishment of a new government initiated by "the people."

GOG and MAGOG are names with the apparent etymological meaning of mountain and great mountain. Just as these two symbolic names represent a challenge to God's new government through Israel at the end of the Gospel Age (Ezek. 38), they also represent a challenge to God's new order at the end of the Millennium. A mountain is a kingdom. (Gog appears to be a symbol of the visible part of the arrangement; Magog symbolizes the invisible participants.)

Verse 9: This new organized effort at deception, along with its individual leaders and followers, meets its end in God's swift judgment of its error. It seems that verse 9 most specifically refers to the INDIVIDUALS who meet their ends — including the PERSONAL DEVIL who is behind all of this.

Verse 10: The organization (GOG & MAGOG), the civil power as an entity, the DRAGON, — not the individuals — meets its end in this verse. This symbolic dragon joins the beast and false prophet in the lake of fire where they had preceded him by a thousand years. (Cf. 19:20 and 20:10) The Lake of Fire is explained as a symbol of the second death in verse 14. Lake and fire do not seem to go together — fire and water do not mix! But there is no water here. Lake is probably used to show the concept of total immersion (as in baptism). These institutions are IMMERSED IN DESTRUCTION.

Much has been made of the word tormented. It is probably best to take it at its face value. Individuals are not being tormented; institutions (or the memory or mention of them) are. Never again will mention be made of civil or false religious power without mankind's revulsion at the memory.

Section III

REVELATION 20: 11 - 15 & 21:1

This section finally deals with the judgment of individuals.

Verse 11 is set off from the rest of the section because BOTH it and verse 12 begin "And I saw . . ." It is not so much that verse 12 begins something new, but rather that verse 11 says something so very imperative that the writer wanted us to notice its content. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to begin a fair trial for

individuals of the fallen race while the old institutions of judgment (symbolic heaven and earth) remain. Thus verse 11 is set apart to tell us that the total passing of the old order is accomplished so that the new work of individual judgment, which verse 12 begins, can begin without disruption. Verse 11 carries us back to the beginning of the thousand years again — a great (it will cover all the earth!) white (pure) throne (authority of judgment) is established. BUT BEFORE IT CAN BE USED TO JUDGE MEN AS INDIVIDUALS, heaven & earth (the old order of things) completely pass and NO REMNANT of them is found.

Now that heaven & earth have passed, a new story can begin — the story which begins to be told in verse 12: the judgment of individual men.

It is of value to notice that the thousand years is NOT MENTIONED in this section. This is on purpose. THIS section is focusing in on the mediatorial reign — the judgment of individuals; THIS PERIOD (the mediation) IS NOT A THOUSAND YEARS.

Verse 12: “And I saw . . .” begins the time AFTER the heavens and earth are passed away. The “dead” are everyone who has not been taken to heaven. They are yet dead in Adam until the resurrection work will have restored them to worthiness for life. They are “great and small” showing that no preference is made. This echoes the promise of Jeremiah 31:33-34 that “they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.” The new covenant takes men as equals — all dead. The opening of the books (plural) is the opening of the eyes of understanding as symbolized in the books of the Bible. Judgment without knowledge is injustice. The book (singular) which is also opened is the symbol of the acknowledgment that any name written in it is one who has been resurrected — brought back to perfection and worthy of life. The dead then go through the process (this is the PURPOSE of the age) of being judged by how they develop as they learn and apply the information from the “books.” They are judged according to their deeds (works). The new covenant, like the old before it, will require absolute perfection of works. This will, of course, be attainable because the new law will be written in hearts, not in stone.

Verse 13: Why is the SEA singled out here? There is a very good and important reason. Revelation is a “mop-up” book. It accounts for all of the “loose ends” which the Bible has mentioned. Society has been consistently symbolized by three parts: heaven, earth, and sea. Verse 11 told us the outcome of the old heaven and earth. But the sea class remains yet. What happens to it? It gives up its dead. How? Isaiah 60:5 explains that the “abundance of the sea shall be CONVERTED unto Thee. . .” The sea gives up its dead because those who have been the sea class become the new earth. This is the point of mentioning 21:1 in this section. 21:1 shows there is a new heaven and new earth, BUT THE SEA HAS DISAPPEARED, having become part of that new earth. The restlessness which has plagued mankind will disappear. The rootlessness which so many have felt will be a thing of the past. All will have roots deep in the new earth.

DEATH & HELL are also two conditions which the Bible has used in its many pages. Their fate is here documented. Death is the condition of walking around but under the death penalty — the condition of facing actual death as an inevitability. Hell is the condition of nothingness which we usually simply call the grave. So all mankind start coming out of the conditions they have occupied in their first lives — some have been forced out of heaven and earth because the old heaven and earth have disappeared (verse 11); some are coming out of their restless, mooringless existences; all who are yet walking the face of the earth start coming out of their dying (sickness, weakness, etc.); and some will be awakened from their sleep in the tomb. They all will walk up the highway of judgment, and every one of them will be measured by his works of progress and eventual perfection.

Verse 14: As the old heaven and earth disappeared, so will death and hell. They will disappear because they will no longer hold anyone in their clutches. They will be immersed in destruction (the Lake of Fire) which is called THE SECOND DEATH — death from which there will never be a release. This death will hold its captives forever. The second death is never destroyed. But, thank God, it also will never grow larger.

Verse 15: Anyone not reaching resurrection (complete re-standing) will be condemned to the second death. Its name obviously derives from the fact that most who inhabit it (all, in a certain sense) will have been dead once already.

21:1: This verse has been covered above under verse 13. It is a summary of the entire age in that it shows a total replacement of society (earth), religious rulership (heaven), and a doing away with any restlessness which humanity had to fear in the past.

The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2 - 22:5)

21:2 — AND I SAW: John now receives his next vision — the beginning of the mediation with its rules and objectives.

THE HOLY CITY: The replacement for the UNHOLY one of 18:21. City symbolizes a ruling government.

NEW JERUSALEM: Jerusalem in Hebrew is a PLURAL word. (Cf. Gal. 4:25, 26.) This NEW Jerusalem is the product of the Sarah Covenant. The name includes the meaning of peace. (Isa. 2:3)

COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN: (See Item #74c.) Coming down implies the objective of communication with men. Out of heaven may be literal or may mean of Divine ordination.

FROM GOD: The new arrangement is by Divine design and decree.

MADE READY: — by 2000 years of searching and testing.

AS A BRIDE: — a co-heir

ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND: (Psa. 45:13, 14) It was for the specific purpose of complimenting and reflecting her bridegroom that the Church was selected and trained. She is NOT adorned for her own works, but for his. Hence 20:6, she reigns WITH HIM for the thousand years. It is NOT her reign; it is his.

21:3 — AND I HEARD: Again John redirects our attention to another factor in this new order — a proclamation from the ONE for whom the bride was adorned:

A LOUD VOICE: Even as 19:1 was a loud voice — an unmistakable proclamation of praise — so, here, we have an all-important proclamation announcing the great change in the affairs of earth.

FROM THE THRONE: This is the voice of the Great Mediator's Head. He better identifies himself in verse 6.

SAYING, BEHOLD: This little word "BEHOLD" is always the precursor of great things. We must dig deeply when we see it.

THE TABERNACLE OF GOD: Note that it does not say temple. The Millennium for the world is much like the tabernacle arrangement for Israel. They both require priests to **MEDIATE** between God and mankind. The tabernacle represents something **TEMPORARY**. In this case, man's relationship to God through the Mediator is temporary until man is turned over to God for a permanent relationship. (I Cor. 15:24)

IS AMONG MEN: PLEASE NOTE, God is not what is among men, His tabernacle is. By the **END** of this verse (which is stated in the future, "shall be") God shall be among them. The point of the tabernacle of God being among men is that, during the mediatorial phase of the kingdom, man has a **MEDIATED** access to God.

AND HE SHALL DWELL (TABERNACLE) AMONG THEM: Thus the voice from the throne, the Mediator, promises the presence of God among men **NOT** directly, but through the tabernacle arrangement, through the Mediator Priesthood. But man needs this assurance of God's presence even in its mediated form. Man needs to know of the authority and stability which come from God's over-rulings which will change their lives. This association with God (even though mediated) will give the confidence all need to reach perfection.

AND THEY SHALL BE HIS PEOPLE: There has been a change of tense. The first phrase of the Mediator's proclamation said the tabernacle **IS** among men. The second phrase promises a continuation of this temporary arrangement: He **SHALL** TABERNACLE among them. As the proclamation narrative progresses, "they **SHALL**" (future) becomes more and more dependent upon **COMPLIANCE**. Here, their being "HIS PEOPLE" (the New Israel) will depend upon their continuing obedience.

AND GOD HIMSELF SHALL BE AMONG THEM: By the time we reach this phase, the Mediator's proclamation is looking **TOWARD** the time when mediation is complete and all things are turned over to the Father. Once the Mediator steps aside, God, **HIMSELF**, will be there as their unmediated God. (This ignores the "little season" of Rev. 20:3. The little season is a necessary piece of information, but not a detail which fills every description of the change from the Millennium to the Eighth Day. In **EVERY** account, save Rev. 20, the little season is ignored.)

Note that **AMONG** appears three times in this verse. In the first instance, His tabernacle (the Mediator arrangement) **IS AMONG** men. In the second phrase, God (Gk. =) "tabernacles" **AMONG** men; He deals with them, but only via the Mediator. The third time, God **HIMSELF** shall be **AMONG** them; the arrangement shall have been turned over to the Father as stated in I Cor. 15:24. This last arrangement is **PERMANENT**.

21:4 — **AND HE**: The reference is to God. While the Millennium wipes away tears in a special, accommodated sense, this verse is apparently about **AFTER THE MILLENNIUM** (despite how much we love to use it as a kingdom text.)

SHALL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES: It is when the world is turned over to the Father that all sorrow — all remnants of the old order — will be past. While the little season is not here considered, it will be a period of some stress even for the faithful. This stress is included in what is wiped away by the Father.

AND THERE SHALL NO LONGER BE DEATH: It is a **LIVING RACE** which Jesus has turned over to the Father. Death will have ended once the Father has finished His little season testing. It will have ended in **TWO WAYS**:

1. Adamic Death will have been eliminated by the Mediator by the time the hand-over occurs. (I Cor. 15:26)
2. While "second death" never ends in that its inhabitants are never freed, the process of

entering second death will no longer be functional subsequent to the “short time” of 20:3, 7-10.

Thus it can truly be promised that no one CAN DIE ANY MORE (Luke 20:36 — a prophecy which clearly applies to the Eighth Day — the post-Millennial period.)

THERE SHALL BE NO LONGER ANY MOURNING, OR CRYING, OR PAIN: It is important to know that these unfortunate parts of man’s experience ARE BEING eliminated DURING the Millennium. They are NOT totally gone until the Eighth Day — and even there, not until AFTER the little-season testing.

THE FIRST THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY: This is the final statement of the Mediator’s proclamation begun in verse 3. It SUMMARIZES the Mediator’s OBJECTIVE — to make the FIRST, FORMER, or OLD world a part of the past. The Mediator succeeds in his work. Thus he can here say that (ignoring the little season) once all is turned over to the Father, all remnants of the old order are gone. Indeed, when the Mediator turns all over to the Father ALL REMNANTS OF THE OLD ORDER ARE GONE. The deception of the little season is NOT a part of the old order; it is a new test — a parallel to the test of the perfect man Adam in Eden. It is NOT a test to see if OLD sin yet exists in individuals. It will test the propensity for NEW SIN in each individual.

21:5 — It is interesting and important to note that the message of verses 5 - 8, while outlining Mediatorial concepts, is spoken TO THE JOHN CLASS PRIOR to the beginning of the Mediation. This is a very exciting section. Its setting has the King ON HIS THRONE (since 1874), but with part of his body, the John class, YET IN THE FLESH to “write” or publish things about the kingdom which has ACTUALLY BEGUN except that its mediatorial phase has not yet begun. These verses explain why we, today, have the clarity of the Gospel objectives during this Harvest time.

AND HE: — He who has just pictured himself making the mediatorial proclamation, but now, instead, addressing the John class BEFORE the mediation becomes a reality.

WHO SITS ON THE THRONE: Jesus is ON the throne BEFORE the mediation begins. This verse PROVES it.

SAID: — to us; to the John class — the Church IN THE FLESH. Indeed, this “SAYING” is the epitome of his Gospel message. Note that verse 3 is “SAYING.” It takes place in the context of the mediatorial period. Verse 5, however, now uses “SAID.” This is a reference to what is SAID to the John class PRIOR to the mediation.

BEHOLD: Again this simple word trumpets attention to the simple magnificence of the statement which follows it — the objective of his entire reign and priesthood: (NOTE THIS CAREFULLY: IT IS POWERFULLY BEAUTIFUL):

I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW: Remember the time setting: Post-1874, but Pre-Mediation. First note: Is not “making all things new” the equivalent of “the restitution of all things?” (Acts 3:20, 21) It is. The point, then, is that he is ALREADY MAKING all things new; i. e., the Times of Restitution HAVE BEGUN. (We know that, of course. Their beginning marks the SENDING of Jesus.) This is a CONFIRMATION of Acts 3. “Behold, I am making all things new” says it all. It echoes the end of verse 4 — the FIRST or OLD things (the world as all men have known it) will be PAST once he has finished this task. But the exciting “behold” continues:

WRITE: He tells us to PUBLISH this. (Cf. Isa. 52:7.) We can publish it now as a witness; later we can help to administer it. This word and the next few are telling us what is to be a large part of our witnessing effort at this time.

FOR THESE WORDS ARE FAITHFUL AND TRUE: In this phrase is hidden much of beauty. First, these words imply that many things said about our Lord and his mission are NOT faithful and true. He wishes THESE truths to represent him. Secondly, “faithful and true” is used limitedly in Revelation. Each time it appears it seems to be spoken to the Church of the Laodicean period. (See 3:14; 19:11; 22:6) It is in Laodicea only that we can fully appreciate the truth and faithfulness of the real Gospel.

21:6 — **AND HE SAID TO ME:** Jesus is still speaking to the Laodicea John class. Note with amazement the import of the next words:

THEY ARE FINISHED (BEGUN); YES! The plural is CORRECT and VERY important. The “THEY” refers to the WORDS which he instructs us (the John class) to “write.” What were these words? “I AM making all things new.” How are these words “finished”? The Greek for “finished” is Strong’s #1096 — a very special word. It was used in Matt. 5:18 where its true meaning is so important in the study of type-antitype relationships. It is the Greek word GINOMAI, and it means “to come into being.” The thought IS NOT of something BEING OVER or ENDED, but rather something which has JUST BEGUN — as when an antitype FULFILLS a type by its BEGINNING. So, what is Jesus saying? He is saying that his “making all things new” (the restitution) HAS BEGUN. This message also must include (by the authority of Acts 3:20, 21) the preaching of the PRESENCE OF JESUS AT HIS SECOND ADVENT.

I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA: It is no accident that this is the first reference to this title since 1:8 (Please reconsider the notes on 1:7, 8.) We have just been told that Restitution Times have begun. Jesus is drawing our minds back to 1:7 where his presence begins with troublous times — synonymous and synchronous with the beginning of the Times of Restitution. In 1:8 he claimed his title (given to him by God) as the first and last word — THE authority. Now he shows us that those prophesied “times” HAVE BEGUN. He is KING, even while the John class is yet in the flesh. And, even as 1:7 progressed into the blessing part of his reign, so here, Jesus shows how he will give all to drink.

THE BEGINNING AND THE END: The first and last word on any and all subjects = the Judge of all. (See notes on 22:13.)

I WILL GIVE TO THE ONE WHO THIRSTS: All the world is thirsty. They will rush to the Mediator (head and body) to drink of the life springing from that Mediator. Note the switch to future tense. He is speaking of what WILL be once mediation begins.

FROM THE SPRING OF THE WATER OF LIFE: (Cf. John 4:14.) The Mediator will become the source of life for mankind. This is another statement of the OBJECTIVE of the Mediator: to give life back to the fallen race.

WITHOUT COST: In this age these two words would only bring suspicion! But in the mediation they will bring joy and peace and praise!

21:7 — **HE WHO OVERCOMES:** Just as the Church had to overcome (2:7, 11, 17, etc.) so must all mankind. The mediatorial reign is for the purpose of allowing men to overcome the influences and ravages of the old order.

SHALL INHERIT THESE THINGS: (Cf. Matt. 25:14) What things? This is apparently a reference back to verse 5. The overcoming race will inherit the promises of restitution leading to the transfer into God’s hands at the close of the mediation.

AND I WILL BE HIS GOD: During restitution processes, Jesus will be the “Mighty God” of humanity (Isa. 9:6) (Greek is literally “I will be to him a god.”)

AND HE WILL BE MY SON: — with all the privileges of that close and special relationship. (Greek is literally “He shall be to me a son.” Isa. 9:6 also establishes this father-son relationship.)

21:8 — BUT FOR: Now follows a list of exceptions — people with qualities which will make the overcoming process improbable. This is a list also worthy of consideration for those of us in the narrow way who wish now to overcome.

THE COWARDLY: — those who cannot develop a sincere faith structure; those in whom personal fear triumphs over trust in another.

THE UNBELIEVING: — those who allow skepticism to sour their confidence.

AND ABOMINABLE: — people inclined toward unrighteousness. Those who sacrifice to be seen of men but with disregard for God. Those who have a failure to appreciate. Those who disregard Christ's merit.

AND MURDERS: brother-haters; those who sow discord by accusations; builders of self by comparisons.

AND IMMORAL PERSONS: — those who harbor and entertain desires for forbidden things

AND SORCERERS: (Gk. = pharmakeia; See 18:23 and Galatians 5:20 = “witchcraft.”) — those who mix up combinations of truth and error to exaggerate the senses (of right and wrong) in others.

AND IDOLATERS: — those who appropriate or attribute to self or others honors belonging to someone else.

AND ALL LIARS: — those who engage in hypocrisies, to whom truth is an expendable or even expandable factor.

THEIR PART: — their “inheritance” if they do not overcome these characteristics.

WILL BE IN THE LAKE THAT BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE: (See 20:10, 14.) They will be immersed in destruction and poisonous (and, therefore, avoided or not-referenced) obscurity — the nothingness of eternal oblivion in fact and memory.

WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH: Having been ransomed from the first (or Adamic) death, their death is rightly called second.

— Part II: The Mystical Bride —

(21:9-21)

This section of Chapter 21 details in symbol the New Jerusalem, the glorified 144,000, the Bride of Christ, the co-regent in the work already shown.

21:9 — AND ONE OF THE SEVEN . . . PLAGUES: Here is the Harvest period's faithful friend to the John class. First met in 17:1, he is ever-present to explain to us the details and hidden beauties of the Divine Plan of the Ages. ALL of the things which Revelation details as being explained by this angel were explained to us by Pastor Russell. It seems appropriate that he is here given the honor of introducing the bride. His introduction of the harlot in Chapter 17 so closely parallels this chapter. In each instance he is dealing with a woman, a city, and precious stones. In each case he “carries” us away in spirit” to show us what we need to learn.

CAME AND SPOKE WITH ME: Either personally or through his writings, Bro. Russell always has “come” and has “spoken” to us of the details we need to know for our faith's strength at this end of the age. NO ONE (since Isaiah) has said so much so clearly about the Kingdom as has he.

SAYING: This, indeed, he SAID often. Who has EVER told so much about the composition, training, purpose, and glory of the Church class?

COME HERE: It is needful that we consult his ministry — go to him — to find the details of the “meat in due season” (Matt. 24:45.) The entire CLIMAX of the disciples’ questions to Jesus in Matt. 24 centers around Jesus’ two replies: (1) In verse 30, he tells WHEN and WHERE “the sign” would appear. (2) In verses 44-47, Jesus virtually says: “If you want the answers, there will be a servant of mine present when I return. He will give you the answers which I will share with him.”

I SHALL SHOW YOU THE BRIDE, THE WIFE OF THE LAMB: Clearly we have mixed symbols! But that is part of the point. The Church is not literally a bride any more than Jesus is literally a lamb. The term bride is used to show the unity and joint-heirship of Jesus and his Church. It is also used to hint at the coming family — the restored race. Thus (v. 7), the race will be called “sons.”

Note also that the bride does not mean one not yet wed. She is (looking forward in this picture) already the wife of the lamb.

21:10 — Note the similarity and difference between 21:9-11 and 17:1-4. The same “angel” who showed us the judgment of a harlot now shows us the exultation of the virgin. He clearly delights in the comparison!

AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY: Have we not often been “carried away” by the wonderment of this story? Remember, this is being told to the John class in advance. John is yet in the flesh wondering what it will be like “beyond.”

IN SPIRIT: — in our mind’s eye

TO A GREAT AND HIGH MOUNTAIN: — the kingdom of God set up in all of its glory. (Isa. 2:2-4.)

AND SHOWED ME THE HOLY CITY: — the new and righteous government.

JERUSALEM: — City of peace.

COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN: — beginning its dealings with men.

FROM GOD: — i.e., by Divine Authority and with the support of Divine Power

21:11 — HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD: Compare 4:3. The very stone (Jasper = diamond) which is used to summarize God’s character traits is now used to suggest that the Church also possesses these traits. Thus they possess and reflect God’s glory. (Cf. 14:1.)

HER BRILLIANCE: — clarity of character and ability to give light. She, like Babylon, is called “her.” But no other similarities exist. (Note their NAME differences: Cf. 14:1 to 17:5.)

WAS LIKE A VERY COSTLY STONE: It is no coincidence that Babylon (18:21) and Tyre (= stone) were stones. But Jerusalem is a most VALUABLE stone.

AS A STONE OF CRYSTAL-CLEAR JASPER: (diamond): The most valuable, most solid, most pure of gems. The Revelator is telling us that 144,000 are, once perfected, the epitome of God’s character. The thought is staggering!

21:12 — IT HAD A GREAT AND HIGH WALL: For some time now we will be shown the new “city” in architectural terms. It is important to remember that these are symbols. This is not a literal edifice. The paintings of the masters which portray the new Jerusalem as a celestial version of the old Jerusalem are way off track. Anyone who views this new city as a literal city is missing the most wonderful blessings of the symbolisms. No city ever looked like this one! Visualizing it in standard terms of walls, foundations, gates, streets, etc. DETRACTS from what we are to learn.

High walls symbolize protection and security for the inhabitants of ancient cities. Thus this new government will offer that perfect (great and high) protection and security for which men yearn.

WITH TWELVE GATES: Gates are entries. Men will want to “enter” the new arrangement, and God has here provided for each the BEST WAY, the appropriate gate, through which to enter. Since mankind has many personality types (psychologists postulate there are 12!), it is needful to have an individualized way of entry for each need.

AND AT THE GATES TWELVE ANGELS: Angels are messengers. Seemingly, in this context, they are gate-keepers — messengers who either give PERMISSION or HELP for entry into the new order. Some have hypothesized that these are the Ancient Worthies (the “princes in all the earth” of Psa. 45:16 — those of the “better resurrection” of Heb. 11:35.) This may well be the case. (If so, it is likely that they are in this position as REPRESENTATIVES of the 12 tribes of Israel.) The number 12 speaks strongly in favor of these angels, being the twelve tribes themselves. Israel has been restored with the specific purpose in mind of being an earthly blessing nation. Zech. 14:17 suggests strongly that failure to acknowledge Israel’s place in the arrangement will exclude one from entering the city. Thus Israel seems the BEST explanation for the gates. Zech. 8:20-23 is powerfully in support of Israel’s being the gate-keepers.

AND NAMES WRITTEN ON THEM: — whether on the gates or the angels seems not clear nor important. The gates and their angels are so interdependent as to make this question moot.

WHICH ARE OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL: We have seen (7:4-8) that the Church is symbolized by these tribes. The world in the Millennium apparently will all become proselytes of these tribes. The suggestion is strong that all men fit temperamentally or character-wise into one of these twelve categories.

NOTE: Israel is symbolized in Revelation (6:13) as “figs.” The Church is symbolized as “Israel” (2:9; 7:4-8). The “sons of Israel” in 21:12 is not symbolized. It is “THE NAMES” of the “twelve tribes of the sons of Israel” here used as the symbol. “Names” are symbols of characters. The “angels” are the twelve tribes themselves. Thus the consistency of symbolisms is not compromised.

21:13 — This verse gives four directions. Four is a symbol of UNIVERSALITY (Cf. 7:1.) But the reason for this verse is not clear. Perhaps it is simply saying that mankind, no matter from which (figurative) direction they will be coming, will find appropriate access to the kingdom. Luke 13:29 seems to substantiate this concept. This verse also brings to mind the arrangement of tribes around the tabernacle. The lesson thus seems to add the thought that there is no “back door.” It is impossible to sneak in. The tribes are encamped on all four sides as gate-keepers.

21:14 — AND THE WALL OF THE CITY: The city is the Church. The wall represents the protective function which the Church supplies for all who enter.

HAD TWELVE FOUNDATION STONES: Again, picturing a NORMAL structure doesn't work. As we will learn in verse 16, this city is a CUBE! A cube has 12 edges. It is quite likely that these EDGES are the foundations. The FAITH chapter of the Bible (Heb. 11) provides a clue to this symbol. Heb. 11:10 obviously refers to the New Jerusalem — “the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” To Abraham this represented permanence. But permanence was first begun with FAITH. (Eph. 2:20) As Rev. 12:1 confirms, the entire faith structure which results in this new government rested on the teachings which Jesus gave through his twelve foundation teachers. Stones are a solid foundation — just as are the writings and records of the Apostles.

AND ON THEM THE TWELVE NAMES OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE LAMB: Even as the gates have names (representing characters or temperaments), so do the foundations. The WAY IN may depend on ones character make-up; but the support (the permanence) of the city will rest on the characteristics of TRUTHS.

21:15 — AND THE ONE WHO SPOKE WITH ME: — the 7th messenger, Charles T. Russell

HAD A GOLD MEASURING ROD: — had a Divinely delineated standard. It is ONLY because Jesus gave this servant the food and the stewardship (Matt. 24:45-47) that this servant was able to comprehend (“measure”) the details of the Divine Plan. The Rod is the Scriptures. The servant was given the ability to USE them for discernment.

TO MEASURE THE CITY: — to comprehend what its function and capacity is

AND ITS GATES: — to comprehend the requisites for entry

AND ITS WALL: — to comprehend how all-inclusive its ability to protect and to secure the blessings contained in it.

21:16 — AND THE CITY IS LAID OUT AS A SQUARE: Cube would seem a better description since the remainder of the verse gives a three-dimensional measurement. But “square” teaches some lessons. As verse 13 showed, there is equal access from any direction. A square has four sides and, therefore, shows UNIVERSAL access. A square is also harmoniously proportionate demonstrating the balance and symmetry of Divine planning.

AND ITS LENGTH IS AS GREAT AS THE WIDTH: This is redundant and must, therefore, be important! Bro. Burns poetically interprets this as “the extensiveness is as vast as the comprehensiveness.” Perhaps this phrase provides a message: Even as the redundancies of Lev. 25:8 suggested to us the CALCULATING of the Jubilee antitype, thus the redundancy of Rev. 21:16 may be for the purpose of suggesting mathematical CALCULATIONS. This is not unlikely considering the very next phrase:

AND HE MEASURED THE CITY WITH THE ROD: Bro. Russell was constantly comparing Scriptures to teach the manifold details concerning the new age and its governance.

TWELVE THOUSAND STADIA: (NAS uses 1500 miles which, while it gives the reader of today a better idea of distance, destroys the numerological symbolism built into the text. The literal size of the city is not the point! The symbolic size is.) In English we derive our word stadium from this distance unit. It may be a significant term in that a stadium is a race-course. A successful completion of the race-course we call the “narrow way” is necessary to be a part of the Church which constitutes this city. (See next phrase for more on 12,000.)

ITS LENGTH AND WIDTH AND HEIGHT ARE EQUAL: For the first time we have information showing this symbolic city to be a cube. Chapter 7:4-8 carefully detailed for us that there are 12,000 members per tribe in Spiritual Israel. The implication here, therefore, is quite strong that EACH MEASUREMENT represents ONE SPIRITUAL TRIBE. A cube, of course, has 12 edges. $12 \times 12,000 = 144,000$ (Rev. 7:4). Thus Chapters 7 and 21 BOTH break down the spiritual Church into 12 sections of 12,000 each.

It is possible (even likely) that the 12 foundations of verse 14 refer not (as in the real world) to supports UNDER the city, but rather to the edges which FRAME it. Thus these 12 edges could represent the Apostles whose teachings were the framework (foundation) of the new government, while each “stadium” (furlong) could represent individual Church members built on those foundations. In this view, the Church CIRCUMSCRIBES the city — it defines its limits; it contains its blessings; it is the wall of protection.

The AREA of each side ($12,000^2$) is 144,000,000 units. That is 144,000 times 1000. This possibly shows that The Christ is a wall of protection for a thousand years (Compare 22:2).

Other Numerological Correspondencies

It is worthwhile here to digress to see some of the vastness of information packed into the dimensions of this city. Since verse 16 suggested (by its redundancy) the idea of calculating, we are justified in doing so. (Bro. George Tabac has suggested these intriguing numbers.)

A furlong (stadium) is an eighth of a mile. (5280 feet divided by 8 = 660 feet per stadium.) Therefore, using the modern measurement of a foot, one side of the city = 7,920,000 feet. (12,000 furlongs of 660 feet each) The diameter of the earth is 7920 miles. Ignoring the miles and feet, and only considering the numbers, the suggestion is that the cubical box known as the New Jerusalem forms a box of protection and salvation for the earth for a thousand years.

In Ezekiel 41:8; 40:5; 43:13, there is described a city built on the GREAT CUBIT. This is a cubit plus one hand-breadth, or 1.76 feet. The city (Ezek. 48:16) measures 4500 cubits square. The measurement brings it in conformity to the earth's diameter and the New Jerusalem in that 4500 cubits (of 1.76 feet each) = 7920 feet. Thus the Lord confirms our speculations in Revelation by using a completely different numbering system in Ezekiel to arrive at the same conclusions. It stimulates further calculation efforts.

The area of the entire surface of the New Jerusalem ($12,000 \times 12,000 \times 6$ sides) = 864,000,000. This number is 1000 times the diameter of the sun in miles (= 864,000 miles), thus seeming to say that (Matt. 13:43) the Church will shine as the sun for a thousand years.

21:17 — AND HE MEASURED ITS WALL: Bro. Russell speculated in Volume I regarding the eventual population of the earth. This verse may supply the answer though the number is less than Bro. Russell's speculation — which he admitted was greatly inflated. The meaning of this phrase, however, is significant. If the wall symbolizes protection, MEASURING the wall suggests an attempt to see HOW MANY can be protected by it. Traditional Christianity has suggested that most will be lost — only a small minority saved. But Bro. Russell's measurement of how many would be protected by the New Jerusalem was VERY DIFFERENT. He, based on the Abrahamic Promise, said that ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH would be protected. Thus, if we MEASURE the wall, we should find a number representing how many people that will ultimately be.

We must make several assumptions. We must assume that only ONE wall is meant. This is not an unreasonable assumption in that the measurement given (144 cubits) MUST be the thickness of the wall since its other dimensions have been previously given. Remember, the results of the measuring will likely represent earth's ultimate population.

ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR CUBITS: The volume of the wall, then, would be its area (144,000,000) times its thickness (144). This IGNORES that one measurement is in cubits, the other in stadia. Perhaps other lessons are to be learned by NOT ignoring this difference. It is most remarkable, in any event, that the Lord can take disparate numbering systems used by different cultures and STILL come up with numbers which teach so much and seem far beyond the realm of coincidence!)

The result is 20,736,000,000. This estimate of earth's eventual population is mathematically VERY reasonable taking into account population reductions by the flood, the Great Multitude's spiritual reward, the black death, the great wars, etc. Computer models suggest that today's population is about correct if we started with eight people about 4500 years ago — the time of the Flood.

Interestingly, the number is calculable in two more ways:

- (1) If each member of the Church restores 144,000 people, the number is also 20,736,000,000.
- (2) If in Rev. 22:2 we assume the trees represent the Church, we have 144,000 trees times 12 fruits times 12 months times 1000 years = 20,736,000,000 as the possible number of all who will be healed.

ACCORDING TO HUMAN MEASUREMENTS: This phrase may have two meanings. It may (1) be telling us that this measurement is being given so that we can measure how many humans there will be on the perfected earth and, (2) — combined with the next statement:

WHICH ARE ALSO ANGELIC MEASUREMENTS: It may be telling us that the angel who is measuring is (was) indeed, a man. This has been our conclusion about the one speaking and measuring (21:9) who has been a friend and confidant to the John class since 17:1.

Other Numerological Correspondencies

Bro. Shallieu adds an additional fact:

As one side of the city is 12,000 furlongs, and as a furlong is 660 feet, one side = 7,920,000 feet (or 1000 times the earth's diameter.) If this be converted into inches, 7,920,000 feet = 95,040,000 inches which is the maximum distance (apogee) in miles of the earth from the sun.

Bro. Tabac points out the following:

Ancient calendars are based on a 360-day year (as are all Biblical prophecies — see Rev. 12:6, 14; 13:5). This is the origin of dividing a circle into 360 degrees. Curiously, the diameters of earth, moon, and sun, are ALL even multiples of 360.

Sun = 2400 x 360 or 864,000 miles;

Earth = 22 x 360 or 7920 miles;

Moon = 9 x 360 or 2160 miles.

Note also how TIME uses the same numbers which tie into the symbolisms of the New Jerusalem:

12 hrs in 1 day (John 11:9) as 12 tribes and Apostles.

1440 minutes per day as 144,000 in the Church.

3600 seconds per hour as 360 days per year.

86,400 seconds per day as 864,000 miles in the sun's diameter.

8640 hours in one 360-day year as 864,000 miles in the sun's diameter.

Finally, a pyramid drawn with its base as the earth's diameter and its height being the total of the radii of the earth and moon combined, will have as its base angles the measurement of 50 degrees 51 minutes — the exact angle of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh as well as the angle of all of its chronologically symbolic passage ways! (Cf. Isaiah 19:19, 20.)

21:18 — AND THE MATERIAL OF THE WALL WAS JASPER: We have already seen (v. 11) that the city was primarily Jasper (diamond). Here the WALL is specified. This seemingly indicates that protection and security come not from being hidden (behind something opaque), but from purity of character.

AND THE CITY WAS PURE GOLD LIKE CLEAR GLASS: A number of conclusions might be drawn from these symbols. Gold represents Divine nature; the "city" (government) is, of course, comprised of those who have attained that nature. The purity of the gold probably refers to the refining process through which the saints went in order to become a part of this city. (Mal. 3:3) The "like clear glass" phrase adds questions. Gold is not transparent. But verse 11 told us that the city was like Jasper (which is transparent.) It is possible that gold, therefore, refers also (or instead) to the color of the light emanating from the city. This is harmonious with prophecies like Daniel 12:3 and Matthew 13:43. The effect would be like sun shining through diamonds. Altogether the thought is of Divine brilliance and clarity.

21:19 — THE FOUNDATION STONES OF THE CITY WALL: The contextual implication is that these are also jasper, but decorated. Verse 14 suggested that these are the Apostles. They, though PART of the Church, clearly have a special and prominent function (Matt. 19:28).

WERE ADORNED WITH EVERY KIND OF PRECIOUS STONE: The implication is that these twelve have solidified character graces of GREAT VALUE to allow them to fulfill their special responsibilities.

21:19, 20 — NOTE: Many brethren have labored to discern the kinds of traits represented in the listing of jewels made here. Our own study was not equipped with experts in gems or language implications that would allow us to judge which conclusions might be best. It seems clear that since these gems are carefully NUMBERED, the order in which they occur is important. We have not been able to discern the reason for this. The Apostles are always listed in different orders. It IS interesting, and possibly significant, that only three of the Apostles maintain the same spot in the listing, whether that listing be from Luke 6, Mark 3, or Acts 1, or their initial listing in Matthew 10. In these, Peter is always first, Philip 5th, and James of Alphaeus 9th. Judas WOULD be consistent, but by Acts 1 he is already missing. Thus, the number 4 is prominent since $1 + 4 = 5$ (Philip) + $4 = 9$ (James) + $4 = 13$. The last number is most interesting. Since Judas disappears, this numbering system is almost a hidden prophecy of the Apostle Paul's take-over as #13. Perhaps this observation may some day be of value.

The Apostles were promised to sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel — which tribes expand to include all men. Therefore, the 12 Foundations represent the Apostles whose names must be linked NOT with the spiritual tribes of Rev. 7, but with the earthly tribes of Numbers 2:3-31 — a listing which omits Levi. Levi MUST be omitted because it has not inheritance in the land and as a single tribe thus represents all who attain the spirit nature.

The most impressive treatment of linking Apostles to tribes and stones is that done by Bro. Shallieu in the first Appendix of his THE KEYS OF REVELATION. Br. Shallieu wisely does

not assign an Apostle to each foundation. He DOES, however, equate an Apostle to each of the high priest's breastplate's stones with convincingness. It is NOT unlikely that the stones in Rev. 21 are the SAME as those in the breastplate. However, translation difficulties have, so far, made it seemingly not possible to discern which stone is which stone. Nevertheless, the CHARACTER TRAIT conclusions of Bro. Shallieu seem so excellent as to deserve a summary here:

1. SARD (Heb. = Odem) Tribe = Judah; Apostle = Paul. Non-compromising while very sympathetic and merciful; exuding praise; having a balance of love and justice; openness, honesty, devotion.
2. PYROPE (Heb. = Nophek) Tribe = Reuben; Apostle = Peter. Zealous, tempestuous, enduring, bold, fiery, impulsive, meek, humble, inconsistent.
3. FIRE OPAL (Heb. = Leshem) Tribe = Ephraim; Apostle = John. Passionate, emotional, sensitive, vehement, tender, paternal, defender of faith by emotionalism.
4. CHRYSOLITE (Heb. = Tarshish) Tribe = Dan; Apostle = James of Zebedee. Bold, open, insistent on pure inner motives, close examiner, hypercritical, aggressive, severe, frustrated, stressing purity.
5. TOPAZ (Heb. = Pitedah) Tribe = Issachar; Apostle = Andrew. Industrious, persistent, resigned, humble, responsible, self-denying, obligated, missionary in spirit.
6. LAPIS LAZULI (Heb. = Sappir) Tribe = Simeon; Apostle = Nathanael (Bartholomew) Devout, idealistic, prone to criticism, stepping out on faith, shunning deceptions.
7. AGATE (Heb. = Shebu) Tribe = Manasseh; Apostle = Thomas. Introspective, prone to quietness, independent thinker, appreciates subtleties of thought, easily lets offenses slide off, cautious.
8. ONYX (Heb. = Shoham) Tribe = Asher; Apostle = Simon the Zealot. Cheerfully constant, optimistic, effervescent, enthusiastic, vivacious.
9. AQUAMARINE (Heb. = Bareqath) Tribe = Zebulun; Apostle = Philip. Outgoing, a comforter, hospitable, pleasing personality, in need of the support of others.
10. ROCK CRYSTAL (Heb. = Yahalom) Tribe = Gad; Apostle = James of Alphaeus. Disciplined, decisive, a leader, orderly, level-headed.
11. AMETHYST (Heb. = Achlamah) Tribe = Benjamin; Apostle = Jude. Hunger for meat of word, sincere, serious, sober, earnest, enduring faithfulness, introspective, fearless.
12. JASPER (Heb. = Yashepheh) Tribe = Naphtali; Apostle = Matthew. Persevering, having grit, not note-worthy, good-intentioned, disorganized, contrite.

These conclusions are a combination of characteristics suggested by the stones themselves, by the names and prophecies related to the tribes, and by the histories of the Apostles. If they be correct, these lists should well represent the inner-most qualities of all human beings. Each of us should be able, with honest searching, to find which of these best represents us. But to do so, a careful consideration of Bro. Shallieu's reasonings would have to be made.

There are, no doubt, many blessings in store for those who will be able to probe further the mysteries of these stones. Perhaps the matter is not yet revealed because the "placing in the body" is not yet complete. Cf. I Cor. 15:38, 41.

21:21 — AND THE TWELVE GATES WERE TWELVE PEARLS: The gates (as we saw in vs. 12 and 13) represent means of access into the city. We now learn their construction material to be pearl. A pearl is a gem developed through irritation — trial and suffering. The experience develops beauty. The gates, or the angels which keep them, are associated with Israel's twelve tribes — a group of people historically associated with experiences of development through trial. But, because of the next phrase, they may not be the point of this symbolism.

EACH OF THE GATES WAS A SINGLE PEARL: The stress of this phrase, that, no matter which gate one enters, one is entering a SINGLE pearl, draws the mind to Matt. 13:45, 46. (This parable is discussed on page 113, which please see.) The thought of the parable is the opportunity of CONSECRATION FOR SALVATION. How apropos this is to the function of the gates of the city. The entering individual must consecrate himself to the duty of overcoming the faults within him with the eventual end of a pearl-like perfection.

AND THE STREET OF THE CITY: The only “street” then open will be the “highway of holiness.” (Isa. 35:8, 9.)

WAS PURE GOLD LIKE TRANSPARENT GLASS: Again we have something which doesn't exist: transparent gold. But non-existent things (like multi-headed beasts) make good symbols. The street is gold because it represents the Divine Standard. As Isaiah said, “The unclean shall not pass over it” — although it shall BE FOR THE UNCLEAN. They won't complete the journey UNLESS they meet the standard. The transparency and smoothness represents that nothing is hiding that can hurt; there are no shadows; nothing is unclear. “The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err.” Nothing is rough to stumble. The stones shall all be gathered out.

Part III

— Nutrition and Prospects Under The New Government —

(21:22 – 22:5)

21:22 — AND I SAW: John now scans the interior for items besides the street. He chooses to give the description based on what is NOT PRESENT. This in itself is important. He is thus showing how some things previously necessary are no longer needed.

NO TEMPLE IN IT: Man, in his separation from God, has always needed a special, set-aside meeting place to meet with God. The New Jerusalem needs no such place:

FOR THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, AND THE LAMB ARE ITS TEMPLE: The New Jerusalem finally brings man and God (through the Mediator) back together from their six millennia separation. No “place of meeting” (temple) will be required. God and man will have met through the New Covenant administered by the Christ. Thus this phrase FIRST mentions GOD — the One with whom meeting was lost; then it mentions the Lamb — the one who brings meeting about.

21:23 — AND THE CITY: It should be noted that, since verse 22, we are examining things pertaining to the CITY. The question may (and should) arise as to whether the symbolisms are directed toward those who CONSTITUTE the city (the Church), or toward those who ENTER the city (the world.) It seems best to assume the latter. There are compelling reasons to do so:

1. The PURPOSE of the city is governing, NOT being a retirement resort for overcoming saints. The focus — even in its dimensions and materials — is to show how this government will help the world.

2. God and the Lamb ARE the sanctuary. A sanctuary (temple) is where one goes to meet with God. The Church will not need to go to meet the Lamb! He is her husband!

3. Verses 24-26 stress the reason for and function of the city — FOR THE WORLD.

HAS NO NEED OF THE SUN OR MOON TO SHINE UPON IT: The INDIRECT truths and judgments of the Jewish law (moon) and the Gospel message (sun) will be things of the past. They ONLY REFLECTED the God Who gave them. The city (AND those who enter it — see next verse) need no longer to have any indirect contact with things spiritual.

FOR THE GLORY OF GOD HAS ILLUMINED IT: The knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; no one need ask his neighbor, for they shall all know Him from the least unto the greatest. Once God's character and purpose are seen and appreciated, who shall need more light?

AND ITS LAMP IS THE LAMB: In our day, the Bible is the lamp. In the mediation, Jesus will be the direct source of all information. As we now consult Scripture, the world will then consult the Mediator. In him will be all the answers — the first and last word on every subject; the Alpha and Omega.

21:24 — AND THE NATIONS SHALL WALK BY ITS LIGHT: Note that it is the CITY'S LIGHT by which the nations (peoples) walk. But it is God and the Lamb (v. 23) who illumine the city. The thought is (as through past ages) one of protocol. God's light through Jesus and then through the Church will lighten the world. The nations (peoples) SHALL walk (i.e., make progress) BY ITS LIGHT. Progress throughout the mediation will be by no other standard.

AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH: During the mediation, the only real kings on earth will be the Ancient Worthies. (Psa. 45:16.) Their being called princes does not negate them as kings. Jesus is Prince (Dan. 12:1) while he is also King (Rev. 19:16.)

BRING THEIR GLORY INTO IT: (Here there is no future tense like "shall walk" — a progression of the nations. The Ancients have a "better resurrection" — Heb. 11:35 — and, therefore, need not use the future tense showing their progression. They start out in the highway as princes with a glory like Adam's — Heb. 2:7). The Ancient Worthies will have a special glory which is theirs from their position and their uniquely "better" resurrection. The purpose of this phrase seems to be to assure us that these "kings" will not use their glory for personal gratification, but rather to glorify the New Jerusalem. That "kings of the earth" here is probably NOT the usage in Revelation prior to this point is suggested by 19:19-21 where the old kings are "killed with the sword."

21:25 — AND IN THE DAYTIME (FOR THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT THERE): Implied in these words is (1) the thought that the Millennium IS a "daytime" — a time of enlightenment, and (2) the thought that nights (times of deception and uncertainty) are forever gone.

ITS GATES SHALL NEVER BE CLOSED: There will be no limited access times to this government. Access WILL be limited by stipulations (which all can meet who wish to), but never by time. In ancient cities, gates were closed by night. But in this city, there is no night.

21:26 — AND THEY: — probably the "kings" (the Ancient Worthies)

SHALL BRING: — throughout the age as men progress

THE GLORY AND HONOR OF THE NATIONS INTO IT: "Glory & Honor" is a phrase which describes PERFECT men. (See Heb. 2:7, 9.) When the nations (peoples of the earth) reach perfection individually, they will not glorify themselves (even as the Ancient Worthies do not — v. 24). The Ancient Worthies will direct men to use their new "glory and honor" for the good of the whole — for the New Jerusalem. Personal glorying will not be brought into the city.

21:27 — AND NOTHING UNCLEAR: The Jewish law listed many things as unclean. The thought here, then, seems to mean nothing against the kingdom laws. Therefore, this phrase represents a commitment to OBEDIENCE.

A NOTE: The three things listed in this verse which block entry through the gates into the city are parallel to the three things needed to be overcome by a Christian PRIOR to entry into the holy of the tabernacle. In the court condition, a Christian must (1) recognize the sacrifice and accept it; (2) wash up (with truth) at the laver; and (3) agree or consecrate in obedience to the Divine Will. We have just seen that the “unclean” word implies a commitment to obedience. No one will enter the highway of holiness without an initial consecration to obey the laws of the kingdom. As we shall now see, the next two items represent the acceptance of the sacrifice and the washing with truth.

AND NO ONE WHO PRACTICES ABOMINATION AND LYING: “Practices” is important. The New Creature does not “practice sin,” but that does not mean that it is free from it. Likewise, in the mediation, access is not denied because of a lack of perfection, but rather because of lack of commitment — consecration.

Abomination immediately brings to mind the “Abomination of Desolation” spoken of by Daniel and Jesus. THAT abomination centers around the sacrifice of the mass which negates the merit of the Lord’s death. Thus, the suggestion is strong that abomination is a lack of respect for or appreciation of the sacrifice. One must see and accept the merit on the brazen altar in the court before entering the highway of holiness.

Lying refers to insincerity or hypocrisy. One must have a clean conscience with respect to dealing with TRUTH before entering the highway of holiness. Thus the laver in the court of the tabernacle is here paralleled.

The SUMMARY of this verse thus far is this: Consecration based on acceptance of the sacrifice and upon principles of truth MUST be made before entering the New Jerusalem.

SHALL EVER COME INTO IT: It is clearly shown that some during the mediation will never enter the highway of holiness because of stubbornness against making a sincere consecration to righteousness. They will die (after a hundred years — Isa. 65:20) outside the gates of the city. The gates are the first filter in the purification system of the mediatorial reign.

BUT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAMB’S BOOK OF LIFE: (Sinaitic = Book of Life of Heaven.) This does NOT show predestination. The thought of this verse seems to be that one excludes himself from the book of life by refusal to enter through the gates. Only those who covenant to give up the unclean things will come into the city and be written in the book — apparently when they enter, just as the Church has a crown assigned as it enters the narrow way and holds it to completion. (Cf. 20:12.)

22:1 — AND HE SHOWED ME: This is yet the angel of 17:1 and 21:9, Bro. Russell.

A RIVER: Not just a BODY of water (truth), but a continuing, unending FLOW (supply). The Church is the supplier, the source, of this truth. (See John 4:14 and 7:38, 39.)

OF THE WATER OF LIFE: The truth which makes life possible and desirable.

CLEAR AS CRYSTAL: Literally, “Bright as crystal.” Truth has a sparkle. It makes the eye sparkle. It sets the heart dancing. Its purity is reliable and refreshing.

COMING FROM THE THRONE OF GOD AND THE LAMB: Even though the Church is the immediate source of truth for the healing of the world, the true source is God’s **AUTHORITY** as channeled through the Mediator (the Lamb.) This source guarantees its purity. (The next phrase should probably NOT begin a new verse, but be in verse 1 as it seems to show the location of the river:

(22:2) — IN THE MIDDLE OF ITS STREET: — This river is not off the beaten path. It runs right down the middle of the street (the highway of holiness.) No one need go out of his way to drink of the living waters.

22:2 — AND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE RIVER: This apparently indicates that, regardless of which side of the truth you were on when you entered the highway, nourishment will be available for your development.

THE TREE (GROVE) OF LIFE: These trees seem to represent the glorified saints (Isa. 61:3). The Tree(s) of Life, in each of its applications, seems to represent that which is necessary to sustain life — everything from literal food (Gen. 2:9) to the gift of immortality (Rev. 2:7). It may also represent partaking of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant (Rom. 11). Thus it would not be entirely out of line to call the olive tree the Tree of Life.

BEARING TWELVE KINDS OF FRUIT: What kind of fruit will the Church produce? It will produce restored mankind as its fruitage. **THAT** is the **POINT** of the Gospel — the Abrahamic Promise — “In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” That is the Bible in one sentence! There will be twelve kinds of fruit because all men will apparently eventually be classified as one of the twelve tribes of Israel (21:12, 14.) Each tribe represents one of the basic character types of mankind.

YIELDING ITS FRUIT EVERY MONTH: A month is a **LUNAR** cycle. The moon, being a symbol of the Law, seems thus to indicate that this process is the administration of the New Law Covenant — a Covenant which writes in hearts instead of in stone. Additionally, this reference to months suggests that each member of the Church will produce a fruitage of 144,000 humans — 12 months times 12 fruits times a thousand years = 144,000. 144,000 squared will show the total number of the eventual human race = 20,736,000,000. (See 21:17.)

AND THE LEAVES OF THE TREE: (Cf. Matt. 24:32) Leaves symbolize profession. When a tree puts forth leaves it shows (or, at least professes) that it is alive. Two possible interpretations come to mind (1) the doctrines which the Church will profess will heal the nations. Or, (2) the professions here refer to the faith professions of the Church in their first lives. Thus the lives of the Church would serve as examples for the world even as the lives of the Ancient Worthies serve as examples for the Church now. (See Heb. 12:1.)

WERE FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS (PEOPLES): This phrase shows that the Church will, indeed, function as a **SYMPATHETIC** high priesthood. As men look back at the faith-professions (leaves) of the human lives of the saints, it will serve medicinally as a healing balm. They will know, indeed, that they are being healed by individuals who truly understand their illnesses.

A NOTE: The next three verses are about mankind. This may be obvious to some, but not so obvious to others. We have seen that the leaves are for the healing of the peoples. It is these very peoples who become servant-sons (even as the Church is now known by both titles) of the Most High. They will reign **FOREVER**, as opposed to the Church’s reigning for a thousand years. They will have the same

character-likeness of the Father written on their foreheads as does the Church (14:1) — but on a different plane of existence. They will be illumined by the Father; the Church is NOT, but is rather the illuminator (21:23, 24.) The curse came off the Church during the Gospel Age (Rom. 8:1); but it comes off the world in the Millennium.

22:3 — AND THERE SHALL NO LONGER BE ANY CURSE: The curse entered in Gen. 3:17-19 (or even 14-19). It exits in this verse. The Millennium is the Times of Restoration (Acts 3:21) of things lost. Its job is the removal of the curse.

AND THE THRONE OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB SHALL BE IN IT: In what? The implication is in the city. The location seems immaterial, however. The intent is that the authority — the office of rulership and judgment — is behind all that is happening. Thus the arrangement is infallible. That is the comforting thought behind this statement.

AND HIS BOND-SERVANTS SHALL SERVE HIM: This is the world of mankind — willing servants in the bond of the New Covenant.

22:4 — AND THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE: Face is a symbol of favor. Acts 3:19-21 uses “presence” of the Lord; but the Greek is FACE. Mankind will experience the favor of God for the first time since He turned his face (“presence”) away in Eden. See Gen. 3:8 where mankind “hid” himself from God’s presence (face) by sinning.

AND HIS NAME SHALL BE ON THEIR FOREHEADS: His character traits will be impressed upon their characters even as was so with the saints (14:1), though on a different plane of existence.

22:5 — AND THERE SHALL NO LONGER BE ANY NIGHT: The night-time has been a symbol of prevailing evils. No longer will evil threaten from the shadows. No shadows will exist even as they do not exist in God’s character. (Jas. 1:17.)

THEY SHALL NOT HAVE NEED OF THE LIGHT OF A LAMP: The Old Testament Scriptures were characterized as “a lamp unto my feet.” (Psa. 119:105) The Law of God will no longer come from writings on stone or parchment, but from a fellowship with Him and His Christ.

NOR THE LIGHT OF THE SUN: The Gospel is symbolized by the sun. But the Gospel was the “good word” about what was TO COME. In the New Jerusalem arrangement, it WILL HAVE COME, and the good word will be fact.

BECAUSE THE LORD GOD SHALL ILLUMINE THEM: (See last two phrase comments.) Reality will have replaced promise.

AND THEY SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER: This will be the lot of all who obey and reach perfection. It is the restoration of kingship to Adam and his descendants in fulfillment of the promise of Restitution of All Things. (Acts 3:19-21) It is the realization of the promise of Jesus’ parable (Matt. 25:34) and of Psalm 8 as quoted by Paul in Heb. 2:5-8. THIS is the point of Messiah’s reign which ENDS when man, himself, can reign. For an eternity the earth will be man’s domain, his realm, his sovereignty. And he will, through the experience gained through evil and restitution, be perfectly capable of making his reign glorious!

Psalm 115:16.

Concluding Thoughts

Rev. 22:6 - 21

A PARALLEL
WHICH HELPS TO CORROBORATE THE INTERPRETATION OF THIS CHAPTER

Revelation 22:6-17 deals, in order, with (1) an angel, (2) an admonition to prepare for the glorification, (3) a payment to servants based on what they have done, and (4) the judgment-blessing of the peoples of earth. It is very interesting to note the parallel of this sequence with our Lord's Great Prophecy in Matthew 24:45 through 25:46. There also we deal (1) with the Laodicean angel, (2) with the Virgins parable admonishing a readiness to go beyond the door, (3) with the Talents parable showing payment according to usage, and (4) with the judgment of the peoples of the earth represented in Sheep and Goats. This parallelism seems more than coincidental and gives us some confidence in the sequence of interpretation of Revelation 22

LORD' S GREAT PROPHECY

CLOSING OF REVELATION

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Faithful & Wise Servant
Matt. 24:45-47 | Angel (See 21:9 for antecedent of "he.")
Rev. 22:6,9-11 |
| 2. Jesus' "coming" to close the "door." Matt. 25:1-13 (especially verse 10) | Jesus speaks of "coming" with a blessing for those who "keep the words." Rev. 22:7

The angel warns the "wise virgins" that they must work on OWN oil —Rev. 22:11

Jesus closes the door by rendering appropriate rewards. Rev. 22:12 |
| 3. Jesus gives out rewards according to talent usage. Matt. 25:14-30 | Each is given reward according as his work is. Rev. 22:12 |
| 4. Mankind is dealt with during the mediation. Matt. 25:31—46 | Jesus states his mediatorial authority in Rev. 22:13 and then begins to deal with Israel (22:14) and with the remainder of mankind (22:17). |

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

(22:6-21)

This section of Revelation is, on the first several readings, exasperatingly unclear in its form and construction. There seems to be a number of reasons why (which will be discussed in due course.) Ultimately there seems to be an excellent clarity and reason behind the way these verses are placed.

The FOCUS of this section is on FINAL WORDS — final admonitions, summaries, prospects, etc. These come from two sources: (1) The angel (one of the seven with the bowls of plagues — in this case, Bro. Russell), and (2) Jesus.

A brief, generalized summary of the construction of these verses is as follows:

1. (6 - 11) The Seventh Angel's Last Message to the John class in the Harvest
2. (12 - 17) Jesus' Personal Summary of the Judgment of All Not Yet Beyond the Veil, of the World, and of the Joys Just Ahead
3. (18 - 19) Jesus' Warning About handling the Holy Word
4. (20 - 21) John's Farewell

It is most humbling and at the same time significant that Pastor Russell's place in the plan is so great as to conclude this magnificent book with a summary of his message as well as the most appropriate and expected summary from Jesus. It leaves us realizing how the Lord has locked away the understanding of Revelation from any who are not aware of the Harvest message. How absolutely dumbfounded in humility this should make us who have been allowed a peek into the Divine things at this end of the age. What awesome responsibility it implies.

1. THE ANGEL'S LAST MESSAGE TO THE HARVEST JOHN CLASS

(22:6-11)

These verses, with a punctuating interruption by Jesus, are the last to focus on the teachings supplied by the seventh messenger and on the results this message must have on the Laodicean Church. They deserve sober and extensive meditation.

22:6 — AND HE: The antecedent of "he" must be found all the way back in 21:9. The only other reference is 22:1 which also needs an antecedent. "He" is still C. T. Russell, the messenger (angel) to the Laodicean Church.

SAID TO ME: This (6-11) is the last recorded summary of the message which this angel gave to the John class — the last remaining members of Christ in the flesh. They DO well summarize the epitome of the place of this angel in God's plan during the Harvest period.

THESE WORDS ARE FAITHFUL AND TRUE: WHICH words are faithful and true? WHY is he saying this? Do we not SUPPOSE Revelation to be faithful and true? SEVERAL lessons are to be learned from

this short phrase. First, the angel is quoting the words of Jesus found in 21:5. (Please review the notes on that verse.) It is important that the angel is quoting Jesus. The angel has no authority to do otherwise. His place in the plan was to help us see what Jesus had said. This is why he PROVIDED this angel. (Matt. 24:45-47.) Back in 21:5, Jesus was assuring us that the message about the Times of Restitution having begun was faithful and true. Beginning in 21:9, the angel ELABORATED on what Jesus had said. He told us ALL about the bride — the new government, its purpose, its scope, its rules, etc. Never before had anyone shown the Gospel to be so large and grand and all-inclusive: the blessing of “all the families of the earth.” The angel now reminds us that it was Jesus who taught us all of this “meat in due season.” These words, the whole story just elaborated by the angel, are faithful and true — worthy of our homage. All the words from 21:9 through 22:5 are part of what is faithful and true.

“Faithful and True,” of course, also IDENTIFIES THE TIME of this message. This phrase has ONLY been used in connection with the Gospel Age Harvest — the Laodicean Period. (Cf. 3:14; 19:11; 21:5.) This helps us to know that this section of Revelation has its primary setting NOW, though it surely had SOME meaning to earlier brethren.

We who have received the Harvest message, the clear truths of the Divine Plan regarding ransom, restitution, and the presence of our Lord have, indeed, through all of our study comparisons in the Holy Word, found “these words” to be “faithful and true.” Little wonder that John (the John Class) over-reacts in verse 8! He is overcome with gratitude and wonder.

AND THE LORD: — Jehovah

THE GOD OF THE SPIRITS OF THE PROPHETS: (Cf. I Cor. 14:32.) God directs prophecy throughout the age. The “spirits” (teachings — I John 4:1) of the prophets (the New Testament prophets — the saints) are correct ONLY if they are in accord with Scripture. Hence, the next phrase to ASSURE that our prophesying will be correct:

SENT HIS ANGEL: — in this case, the seventh angel. The angel is here explaining his place in the Harvest period. The angel of 1:1 and 22:16 is NOT this angel. THAT angel served all seven stages of the Church. THIS angel (22:6) only serves the seventh stage — the only time when “faithful and true” is used.

TO SHOW HIS BOND-SERVANTS: — in this case, specifically THE HARVEST SAINTS

THE THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY TAKE PLACE: This is WHY we have had Bro. Russell’s ministry. It prepared us to know what is about to happen (Amos 3:7). This angel (Bro. Russell) is here telling us what he told us elsewhere: he was commissioned to give us “meat in due season.” (Matt. 24:45-47.) Without this information, the “spirits of the prophets” (the teachings of the Harvest saints) would be sorely inadequate to the task at hand. Old “Christian” answers were not up to the job of explaining things in the 20th Century.

NOTE: Among the MANY things which were shortly to come to pass, perhaps the most significant to the saints yet in the flesh is their glorification — the closing of the door of Matthew 25:10 when only the Great Multitude remain on earth. Because Jesus interrupts at this point to comment on that most important future event, we must realize that this is now the pressing issue of our Christian lives.

22:7 — AND BEHOLD: There is NO question that this is Jesus now speaking — interrupting to intensify the last words of the angel and to make those words have a particular FOCUS. Jesus has not interrupted the narrative in Revelation since 1:8 and 16:15. It is interesting how he uses this technique only in the introduction and conclusion of the book with one exception during the plagues. This time his interruption begins with that word which has always indicated a special depth of meaning: “Behold.”

But His FIRST word is NOT “Behold.” It is the Greek word “kai.” This word, with equal ease and propriety (depending on context), can be translated either “and” or “even.” “And” does not seem to make a great deal of sense here; “even” seems to make much sense in that the interruption is specifying a particular THING “which must shortly take place” — EVEN (take special note — BEHOLD) his “coming quickly.” This is NOT his second advent. It COULD NOT BE. His second advent comes BEFORE the angel gives meat in due season. NOTE:

I AM COMING QUICKLY: To understand this statement in its context, it is imperative that we realize the Scriptural usage of this expression.

(1) When Jesus says “I am coming” in 2:5, we all know he is not threatening an early second advent! We know the same thing in 2:16 and 3:3. Why, then, must we have the second advent in mind in 22:7 and 22:12? We need not, as we shall see.

(2) In Matthew 25 (in the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins) we have a usage which helps to explain Revelation 22. Matt. 25:6 declares the Lord’s 1874 coming. Yet, in 25:10 we have what COULD BE the puzzling statement that “the Bridegroom came.” If he came in verse 6, he cannot “come” in the SAME SENSE in verse 10. Verse 10 applies to the act of taking his saints all beyond the veil. It is NOT a personal coming; it is a “coming” symbolic of a SPECIFIC ACTION TAKEN. That is EXACTLY what is meant in Rev. 2:5, 2:16, and 3:3. It also is EXACTLY what is meant in Rev. 22:7. (16:15 has a parallel meaning.)

In 22:6 the seventh angel is talking to the John Class yet in the flesh — the Laodicean saints. This happens AFTER the Lord returned. (See Matt. 24:45-47.) The angel is not given charge over the Lord’s “goods” of truth UNTIL the Lord, “WHEN HE COMES” finds the angel serving the saints. Therefore, Rev. 22:7 CANNOT refer to the second advent. Rev. 22:7 is the event of Matt. 25:10 — the taking of the saints beyond the veil. THIS is what is to “shortly take place.” THIS is the message of urgency to the Harvest saints. THIS is the event which brethren, for decades, have been trying to date (without success, but with continuing fervency!) Thus Jesus continues His interruption by stating:

BLESSED IS HE WHO HEEDS (KEEPS) THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK: In order to be a “wise virgin,” it is necessary to apply the wisdom found in Revelation (and expounded by the seventh angel) to our personal growth in character, work, and watchfulness. This was the intent of 19:10 — “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of (this) prophecy.”

Thus, by Jesus’ personal interruption in 22:7, we are, by the Lord Himself, reminded of the shortness of the time and of the means by which our callings and elections might be secured. We are reminded that the messenger was sent PRINCIPALLY to help make us ready to enter that door which will soon be shut.

Jesus now stops His interruption to let us see our reaction to the angel and to receive the summary from the angel as to how our time and efforts should be focused in the remaining days.

22:8 — AND I JOHN: No doubt the literal John, when he wrote Revelation, had this experience. But the experience was for OUR benefit in showing us how we could, in these last days, fall into what would be the fatal flaw of idolatry which would keep us from being numbered among the wise virgins.

AM THE ONE WHO HEARD AND SAW THESE THINGS: While the Apostle John heard and saw and recorded these visions, we (the symbolic John) have heard (understood) and seen (comprehended) the wonderful import of the word pictures of Revelation. No one else has had this privilege. No one CAN understand the symbols of this book without instruction from this angel who first spoke with us in 17:1. Without pride or merit, we must, in all thankfulness, know that WE are the ones “who hear and see these things.”

AND WHEN I HEARD AND SAW: We heard and saw (as this context clearly shows) WHEN THE SEVENTH ANGEL explained “present truth” to us. It has continued to grow since he left the scene BECAUSE he provided the FRAMEWORK for understanding what is happening all around us during this century.

I FELL DOWN TO WORSHIP: — a symbol of obeisance going beyond respect.

AT THE FEET OF THE ANGEL: — To “sit at the feet of” is an expression meaning to learn in an humble attitude. But to “fall down at the feet of” is an action which should be reserved for our attitudes toward God and His Son. This angel is Bro. Russell. To worship him is most inappropriate.

WHO SHOWED ME THESE THINGS: Here is the REASON that John fell at the angel’s feet. John’s gratitude for the magnificence of the message and for being able to comprehend it made him exaggerate his response. But while the action is UNDERSTANDABLE, it is, nevertheless, DEPLORABLE.

This is the second time this inappropriate action is recorded. (See 19:10.) It is possible that this shows that this tendency is strong in the John Class BOTH early in the Harvest period AND late in the Harvest period when Rev. 22 seems to apply. Brethren need not FEAR underrating the messenger when they see how he is singled out in the Book of Revelation as being of such great importance. Revelation makes it clear that there is NO IMPORTANT UNDERSTANDING available WITHOUT this angel. But Revelation’s WARNING, to the contrary, (and THAT stated TWICE,) is that there should be a FEAR of idolatry which could blind the virgins to the parade of increasing truths BASED ON, but not necessarily FOUND IN the writings of the angel.

22:9 — AND HE SAID TO ME: — via his writings which clearly warn against such things.


DO NOT DO THAT: Regardless of joy and appreciation, we must pull ourselves together to practice the Scripturally approved attitudes we should manifest toward God’s messengers. Idolatry will result in our failure if not our death. Idolatry for good things is no better than idolatry for bad ones.

I AM A FELLOW SERVANT OF YOURS: This angel is clearly one of the saints and does not want to usurp praise nor to accept it in any undue way. He would have been an UNwise and UNfaithful servant otherwise.

AND OF YOUR BRETHREN THE PROPHETS: This phrase is difficult. Clearly all saints are not prophets according to this phrase. (They are in another context. See 22:6). The angel may be saying that he serves the entire John Class, but, in a special way, he serves those who prophesy.

AND OF THOSE WHO HEED (KEEP) THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK: The angel again makes reference to Jesus’ words (22:7). It is easier to interpret this phrase if “kai” is translated “even” instead of “and.” This would then imply that the prophets are those who particularly heed the words of Revelation — a very reasonable interpretation. If “and” be used, it is very difficult to understand how a third class (1. “yours.” 2. “your brethren,” and 3. “those who heed”) can exist separately. Do not John and his brethren “keep the words of this book?”

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22:10 — DO NOT SEAL UP...THIS BOOK. An additional meaning to these words might be that the angel is telling us that what HE HAD SAID regarding the meanings of the prophecies of Revelation WAS INSUFFICIENT — that instead of putting the “final” interpretation of Revelation in Bro. Russell’s words, we should be willing to keep it OPEN, “unsealed” for expansion. This is the general thought of I Thess. 5:20, 21 (see NAS):

Despise not prophesying,
BUT prove all things; hold
fast that which is good.

This is likely what Bro. Russell meant when he said “someone else will have to write the Seventh Volume” — comments on Revelation. The brethren FOLLOWING his day have been doing just that.

WORSHIP GOD: THIS is the only standard for worship. All else is futile, idolatrous, blasphemous, erroneous, and deadly. This is one of the PRIME ADMONITIONS for the Harvest Church. It would not be recorded here as among the angel's final words to John if it were not of VITAL IMPORT. The temptations to do otherwise are rampant and subtle.

22:10 — AND HE SAID TO ME: It is of interest to note that this phrase is used three times in the angel's final message to us. In verse 6 it is followed by the information that the harvest message is the faithful truth and the angel was SENT to us to give it. In verse 9 it is followed by the information that the message must stand separate from the messenger. Now, and finally, it is used in verse 10 to encourage TWO things; (1) the fervent study of prophecy, and (2) the necessity of working on self rather than worrying about working on others. These three messages from the angel seem to encapsulate what we need to know from the ministry of Bro. Russell. It seems well worthy of thought and meditation.

DO NOT SEAL UP THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK: Clearly this expands on Jesus' last words in verse 7. Sealing up denotes setting it aside for later use. That is NOT for us to do now. There IS no later! We are to be probing constantly — or, as Jesus said, to be watching and praying. Any saint not interested in prophecy — in knowing what the Lord is doing and will be doing — has a flaw which may cost him his crown. This was one of the problems with the foolish virgins.

FOR THE TIME IS NEAR: (See notes on page 7, Point # 1.) The time of his “coming quickly” to take the last saints home is here. The time to apply the words of this prophecy (in order to be ready for that event) is NOW. Therefore, the following final advice from the angel:

22:11 — LET THE ONE WHO DOES WRONG, STILL DO WRONG: The listing in this verse is NOT of people in one category. It lists those doing wrong as well as those who are holy. The thought is that to be faithful now we must work ON SELF and the application of Scripture to SELF. We cannot work out the salvation of OTHERS — good OR bad. This verse has a close parallel in Matt. 25:9. The meaning may be identical.

AND LET THE ONE . . . : The remainder of this verse continues the lesson stated above. The operative word is “LET.” We are not naturally inclined toward LETTING anyone, filthy or holy, do what he is doing. We have a natural propensity to meddle — to right the world before the due time, or to right the righteous to keep them from falling. The “LET” of this verse deserves meditation.

The last two groups in the listing (righteous and holy) may well refer to those who are on the plane of justification and those who are spirit-begotten. The first two groups (the wrong and the filthy) may refer to superior individuals in the world who campaign for reforms based on erroneous thinking and to the morally degenerate. In any case, we are not to trouble ourselves with their paths. LET them pursue them. Only enough time remains for us to work on ourselves.

2. JESUS' PERSONAL SUMMARY OF THE JUDGMENT OF ALL AND OF THE JOYS AHEAD

(22:12-17)

Jesus interrupts again. We never hear more from the angel. He has delivered to us all we need to know. The interruption is timely. It fits well into the context. The angel has just told us to FOCUS on our

personal walk in the narrow way. The interruption of Jesus accentuates the lesson. He in essence says, “If you do what the angel has recommended, you will be successful. Your work will render to you the appropriate reward. You will then help in the joyful work ahead.”

22:12 — BEHOLD: in all former instances where this word occurs, there have been important truths or hidden gems following it.

I AM COMING QUICKLY: (See notes on 22:7.) This refers NOT to his advent, but to the parallel of Matthew 25:10. This “coming” is the act of Jesus’ taking the final saints “home.”

It is interesting to note that these words could have had little meaning for the saints of most of the Gospel Age. Jesus WAS NOT coming quickly in their lifetimes — not in the sense of his advent. As we have seen in places like 2:5, 2:16, and 3:3, he “came” quickly in the sense of creating needed changes in the Church. Here in Chapter 22, however, there is a special and wonderful meaning in these words to the watching “wise virgins.”

AND MY REWARD IS WITH ME: This bolsters the application of “coming” stated above. He is here speaking of the final doling out of destiny to all who have been his disciples — but especially to those yet in the flesh — those to whom the “coming quickly” means the same as Matt. 25:10.

TO RENDER TO EVERY MAN: “Man” here, as elsewhere throughout Revelation, seems to symbolize Christians (true or just professing.)

ACCORDING AS HIS WORK IS: THIS is a time when those remaining are very much proven by the kind of works done. See I Cor. 3:11-15. While judgment BEGINS at the house of God, it will continue into the mediation for the world of mankind. The narrative following this verse will lead us in that direction. But here, the words seem most specifically to apply to the spirit-begotten yet in the flesh. — to the wise and foolish virgins. Remember that this interruption by Jesus follows the angel’s admonition to WORK ON SELF and to LET others be. Thus we would be made ready to go into the marriage — the “reward” of the wise. The foolish who have built on sand or with wood, hay and stubble, receive less than a full reward. (II John 8).

22:13 — I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA: For the third and final time, Jesus speaks forth the title which he had received from his Father. The first time was in 1:8 while looking forward to the kingdom spoken of in 1:7 which is the objective of all his earthly efforts and of the work of the Gospel Age. The second time was in 21:6 when, HAVING RETURNED and BEING SEATED in his promised throne, he speaks this title TO HIS SAINTS yet in the flesh to assure them that Restitution had begun and they can confidently preach it. The final time (22:13) reasserts his title as he puts an end to the old age and opens (in verses 14 and 15) the new age of mediation for the world.

THE FIRST AND THE LAST: — the ONLY authority, the first and last word on all subjects, especially judgment. (Cf. Isaiah 44:6) God, Who owns this title for Himself, GAVE it to the Son when He committed all judgment to him. (John 5:22, 27; Matt. 28:18.)

THE BEGINNING AND THE END: All three of these expressions (Alpha & Omega, First and Last; Beginning and End) say the same thing. They reinforce each other by their repetition using different words. The fact that there are THREE, stresses that this is the ULTIMATE in perfection of authority. (Cf. 4:8.) The lesson is clear and simple: No deviation from this Judge’s standards are permissible or even possible once the mediation is begun.. Not only were the rewards for the passing age correct (verse 12) but those for the mediation also (verse 14.) [1:8 mentions only one phrase because it is the beginning of the Gospel Age. Rev. 21:16 mentions two phrases because the presence has begun. Here three phrases are used because mediation has begun.]

The TRANSFER has taken place! In verse 12, the Judge has completed the work of judgment for those under judgment in the old age. In verse 13 he has re-stated his authority as he is about to begin mediation. In the following verse (14), he addresses the new objects of judgment — the various classes in the world of mankind.

AN INTERPRETIVE UNCERTAINTY

When we compare verses 14 and 17, the question naturally arises as to why they are both present. Are they speaking of the same group? Verses 14 and 15 are no longer about the spirit-begotten (although a careless reading might make verse 14 sound like a reference to the Great Multitude.) It IS POSSIBLE that verses 14 and 17 both refer to the world in general, but the strange interpolation of verse 16 seems to separate the two narratives as if to make sure that we notice that they are not a connected unit.

This leads to the speculation that perhaps verse 14 is speaking about a special class who are needed BEFORE the world in general can enter into judgment — a class which must be made white and ready to be helpers for the world. We know from prophecy that Israel is a class like that. Israel must be made ready to be a blessing nation before the gates to the city can be opened to the world in general. These notes, therefore, are continuing based on the assumption that verse 14 refers to the preparation of Israel SUBSEQUENT to the completion of the Great Multitude, but PRIOR to the opening of the New Jerusalem to mankind in general.

22:14 — BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO WASH THEIR ROBES: This is Israel. Israel is mentioned as wearing a robe. (For one example see Isaiah 64:6. Job, who probably types Israel, is also pictured as having a robe — Job 29:14.) The fact that this sounds like Rev. 7:14 is only a proof that Israel (who had dirtied their justification) is, like the Great Multitude who had dirtied theirs, required also to clean their robes before they can be useful tools in the Lord's hands. Isaiah 25:8 also sounds like the Great Multitude of Rev. 7; but a look at the context (Isa. 25:6-9) will show that Israel has the same description. Isaiah 25:6ff is clearly a picture of the mediation time.

THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE THE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE: 22:2 pictures the Church as that grove of life. Access to restitution for Israel (as well as for the world later) will be by a commitment (a consecration) to righteousness (i.e., “wash their robes.”) Israel had no life under the old Law Covenant. Their right to life will be dependent on the new Law Covenant which will require washed robes. Because of the need for their acceptance of Messiah, it is not inappropriate to say that their robes will be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

AND MAY ENTER BY THE GATES INTO THE CITY: (See notes on 21:12.) While the gates seem eventually to BECOME the twelve tribes of Israel, entrance for Israel into the city when they will be worthy, as a blessing nation, to be gates, seems to be through those faithful of the Law Age (the Ancient Worthies). In other words, Israel cannot become a blessing until it is IN the city. How does it GET into the city? The scriptures indicate that this will be through the administration of the Ancient Worthies. Thus, the Ancient Worthies are the gates for Israel; then Israel will be the gates for the world.

This phrase also helps to show that this verse is not about the Great Multitude. The Great Multitude does not enter the city by the gates nor walk up its highway. They enter the “palace” (Psa. 45:15) rather than the “city.” They also enter BEFORE and not BY restored Israel.

It is also interesting to note that the washing PRECEDES entry through the gates. This is very much like the tabernacle of the Jewish Age. Washing at the laver came before entrance into the tabernacle.

22:15 — Here is a list of the qualities (those failures of washing) which keep someone from entering the city (progressing up the “Highway of Holiness” — Isa. 35.)

It is important to note that Israel is pictured as the “blessed” (v. 14) who DO enter the city. Verse 15 seems to show the REMAINDER of the world of mankind who, at this point, have NOT YET done what is necessary to enter. They will be CALLED to enter (verse 17) once the mechanism of restored Israel is set up. So, who is yet outside? Note, especially, the first group:

OUTSIDE ARE THE DOGS: Dogs have consistently symbolized GENTILES — strangers to the Jewish church-nation. Thus, we have Israel IN THE CITY, but the NATIONS (the Gentiles) yet outside. (Matt. 15:21-28.) Also implied in this phrase is the NEED for the nations to acknowledge the place of Israel in the plan. Until they do so, they will be denied access to the blessings. (Zech. 14:17, 18; 8:23.)

AND THE SORCERERS: “Sorcerers” is from the Gk. “pharmakeia.” (Cf. notes on 21:8.) It seems symbolically to represent the characteristic of “drugging” someone — i.e., dulling or heightening his senses so that he does not perceive things accurately. There will apparently be people in the early stages of the mediation who try (by exaggeration, half-truths, etc.) to dissuade others from following the prescribed course for blessings. Anti-Semitism now makes it difficult for people to deal with Jews. The DRUGGING here referred to may be the same kind of prejudicial attitude.

AND THE IMMORAL PERSONS: The Greek is “pornoí” — fornicators. Fornication in the old age was the habit of mixing church with state. Perhaps in the new arrangement it will represent the same kind of attempt to mix worldly reasoning with the rules of the kingdom — a combination which will not be tolerated past the gates into the city.

AND THE MURDERERS: Jesus made it plain that functional murder is the slander of another. Before entering the city, everyone will have to take responsibility for self — not for looking good by making others look bad.

AND THE IDOLATERS: — those who take or give credit everywhere and anywhere except where it is due. Thankfulness and credit will have to be given for the sacrifice of Jesus before anyone can enter the city.

AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES AND PRACTICES LYING: All of the world’s troubles began with a lie (Gen. 3:4.) As the Bible closes, we are here shown that lies will not be permitted past a certain point (the gates). The FUTURE begins WITHOUT A LIE!

Verse 16 is almost parenthetical. But why is it where it is? We earlier saw that it serves as a functional divider between the narrative of Israel’s entering the city and the narrative of the nations entering the city. It also seems to accomplish a few other things. Jesus, in the midst of describing the kingdom for the WORLD, does not want us to become engrossed in the thoughts and beauties of the earthly kingdom — even though we will administer it. So, he interrupts his own narrative by saying,

“All I am writing in Revelation (though it is ending with thoughts OF THE EARTH) has been delivered to you, the CHURCHES, for YOUR edification in SPIRITUAL things.” He also, by showing himself both root and offspring of David, shows that Israel CANNOT be the blesser until it recognizes his Messiahship. (Compare Matt. 22:42-45.) Once THAT happens, and NOT UNTIL THAT HAPPENS, the “Spirit and the Bride” can turn and offer the blessings to the nations. Thus Jesus uses this root & offspring phrase to swing from the salvation of Israel (verse 14) to the salvation of the world (verse 17.)

22:16 — I, JESUS — the one about whom the entire book is written — “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1)

HAVE SENT MY ANGEL: — the angel who delivered the whole message to John after “signifying it.” (1:1)

TO TESTIFY TO YOU: — to the saints, not the world

THESE THINGS: — some of which are about the world.

FOR THE CHURCHES: — for the benefit of the seven stages of the Church. Understanding the restitution just described is no reason for PURSUING it.

I AM THE ROOT AND THE OFFSPRING OF DAVID: (Cf. Matt. 22:42-45; Isa. 11:1, 10.) This statement says so very much in this context. It says that anyone, to be blessed, must recognize his Messiahship — his historical, prophetic, and genealogical right to the position he holds. It says RESTITUTION through the second Adam — a new father for the race. (See I Cor. 15:45; Isa. 9:6; Psa. 45:6.) Jesus here claims his rightful inheritance of the nations. (Psa. 2:8). By this statement he PIVOTS from the old age (while he is still David’s descendant) to the new age (of verses 14 and 17) when he becomes David’s Lord. It is not only a masterpiece of logic and prophetic culmination, but it is at the same time one of the great masterpieces of literary accomplishment. The next phrase heightens the reference to the change of age:

THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR: — the harbinger of the day — the day for which all creation has groaned in hopeful (though ignorant expectation). Having introduced this phrase, Jesus continues in verse 17 with that magnificent description of morning:

22:17 — AND THE SPIRIT: The spirit is, of course, inanimate. But it issues forth from both Father and Son. It seems the case in Revelation that the Holy Spirit is primarily exercised via the Lamb (5:6). Thus, often this phrase is justifiably made synonymous with the Bridegroom. Why does it not just say so? Apparently because the Lord wanted it realized that every agency of Divine power and influence will be working toward bringing mankind toward life. This is the time of POURING out of the spirit on all mankind (Joel 2:28). Thus, when the “spirit” says “come,” we may be assured that all creation (as channels of that spirit) is issuing that invitation so that no one will miss hearing it.

AND THE BRIDE: Why, if the Spirit is being poured on all flesh, if the invitation is so widespread and inescapable, why does this verse add “the bride” to “the spirit” when the invitation to “come” is issued? This is because the bride is SYMPATHETIC. It is former human beings, former overcomers, former friends, relatives, acquaintances issuing the invitation. The familiarity will be necessary for confidence.

SAY, COME: It must be remembered that it is an INVITATION, not a coercion. It MUST be of free will that men enter the city. For some individuals it may take some time before they wish to respond, to come.

AND LET: Very much like 22:11, the use of “LET” here is important. All creation will work together to ALLOW a person’s free will to function toward the desired ends. No one will be forced to come; they will be ALLOWED to come — an approach which will draw more men faster than if coerced.

THE ONE WHO HEARS: Men will come for at least three reasons. The first of these reasons is because they will HEAR. The MESSAGE will be appealing. Their MINDS will respond to the invitation.

SAY, COME: Clearly, the ones who HEAR will not only come, they will also join the voices of the Spirit and Bride in inviting others to come. It will be a swelling chorus.

AND LET THE ONE WHO IS THIRSTY COME: This second group of comers seems not to come because of the truth as a message, but comes because they suffer from dehydration. The thought seems to be that the physical craving for life is so strong as to draw them on an almost purely physical or animal craving for it. The difference here is manifest because this group, unlike the first group, does not enter into calling others. Their personal needs are so strong that they must be met — like a starving man reaching for a crumb, oblivious to all around him.

LET THE ONE WHO WISHES: This third group covers the remainder of mankind — people who do not initially respond strongly to ideas and who have not suffered as much from the ravages of Adamic condemnation to let them realize that they really are thirsty. They will respond because the invitation is good, and they wish a part of it once they see the benefits.

TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE: This all three groups do. Water symbolizes truth which LEADS to life if properly applied. Thus all three groups will have entered upon the highway of Holiness which leads to life.

WITHOUT COST: This echoes 21:6. How long it will take men not to be skeptical about the free gift is open to speculation. The fact is, it will cost DEARLY NOT to partake of this water. There will be no cost (no side-effects, no dangers, no hidden, small-print clauses in the contract) for partaking of truths leading to life.

That’s it. That’s the whole story. But Jesus doesn’t want it corrupted. This is the reason he concludes his words with verses 18 and 19. He issues a caveat to all during the Gospel Age who would be dealing with the Holy Scriptures:

3. — JESUS’ WARNING ABOUT HANDLING THE HOLY WORD —

(22:18, 19)

22:18 — I TESTIFY: Let us note with care: this is the testimony of Jesus, THE JUDGE! It is the testimony of him who has the first and last say on all subjects.

TO EVERYONE WHO HEARS THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK: — to all who acquaint themselves enough with Revelation that they claim to have “heard” what it says. Note that it is not just to those who read the book, nor even to those who hear the words of the book, but to those who hear the words of the PROPHECY of this book. The warning seems to be to those who know enough to know better than to treat it lightly.

IF ANYONE ADDS TO THEM: — If anyone knowingly augments God's message so that it seems to say things it does not say. Perhaps this is a warning not to use the truths of Revelation as a club to coerce others. Usually we add to someone's words because, as they stand, they do not make the point WE want to make.

GOD SHALL ADD TO HIM THE PLAGUES WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK: Whoever would knowingly add to the message given would be identifying himself with the great Babylonish-Antichrist system and will, therefore, experience the plagues which that system experiences. This phrase highly suggests that Babylon's practice, in effect, ADDED to the words here written.

This last phrase also seems to emphasize that this final chapter of Revelation is truly aimed at the Laodicean period. While this warning MAY have discouraged some during the age from too much tampering, it is clear that the "plagues which are written in this book" seem, at the very earliest, to be available in Philadelphia (9:18, 20). The BULK are in Laodicea (Chapters 15, 16). It may be argued that the three "woes" (8:13) are, in effect, the first three of ten plagues. This would still restrict plaguing to the time since Sardis. There is one other text, 11:6, which MIGHT suggest that plagues were available throughout the 1260 years. The weight, however, is strongly in favor of 22:18, 19 being a warning to those of us who live in the seventh Church and who "hear the words of the prophecy" much more clearly than any others at any other time.

22:19 — AND IF ANYONE TAKES AWAY FROM THE WORDS OF THE BOOK OF THIS PROPHECY: It is one thing to add thoughts which are not present. It is completely different to deny (take away) what IS said. There is something Satanic about destroying an idea which is good and not supplying something better to replace it. It is curious (though mysterious) that verse 18 says "the prophecy of this book." Verse 19 says, "the book of this prophecy." But in BOTH cases, adding or subtracting, is from the WORDS — the ideas.

GOD SHALL TAKE AWAY HIS PART: Notice Divine Justice: To him who ADDS, something is added. To him who TAKES AWAY, something is taken away.

FROM THE TREE OF LIFE: that part of the Abrahamic Covenant which grants membership in the body of overcomers. (See 2:7.)

AND FROM THE HOLY CITY: — from being a part of the New Jerusalem, the new government (21:2). Just as Paul testified that he had made known THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD, those who will be a part of the Holy City must never be accused of leaving anything out, taking anything away.

WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK: Both verses 18 and 19 end with this phrase. The plagues are "written in this book." The Tree of Life and the Holy City are "written in this book." The phrase seems to recommend a going back to consider what is said about these matters. Consider how displeasing it is to God to be of those deserving of plagues. Consider how wonderful it is to God to be of those who will receive the immortality and Messiahship represented in the Tree and the City. Now that we have reached the end of the book, these two verses are virtually saying, Go back and read it again!

Thus Jesus has ended His message to us — except for John's quoting five more words from him in the next verse. It is sobering that it ends with a warning; but so did the Old Testament Scriptures (Mal. 4:6). It is curious that Israel so re-arranged their Bible that it does not end with this warning. THEY did not want to have a warning ending their Holy Book! We must learn from their mistake; we must cherish the warning with which we were left. It is not that the Lord doesn't want us to keep GOOD THINGS foremost in our minds. It is, rather, that he wishes us to retain sobriety.

When we see clearly, we might have the tendency to devalue what has become easy to us. It is a fatal flaw to do so. Verses 18 and 19 are not so much there to discourage tampering as they are to encourage HONESTY and BALANCE. They say “Study the Word: absorb its wonderful detail; do not expand upon it with personal preference; do not negate any of its precepts. It is a COMPLETE meal, needing no augmentations or diminutions. It is perfect.” We have found it so.

4. JOHN’S FAREWELL

(22:20, 21)

22:20 — HE WHO TESTIFIES TO THESE THINGS: By this phrase, and by the rest of the verse which identifies the Testifier, we know that verses 18 and 19 were spoken by Jesus and not by John. We also have a coda to the ominous tone of verses 18 and 19.

SAYS, YES. I AM COMING QUICKLY: These words could be stress-inducing to those who are adding or subtracting from the Word. But to the saints, they are the best of news. It is so difficult to know how these words were received throughout the age. They, no doubt, had an intended meaning for those brethren. But they seem, in the context of this chapter, to be meant more for us at the end of the age. Again, as in 22:7 and 12, they appear NOT to refer to his advent, his parousia in 1874, but rather to his receiving to himself of his totally completed bride (Matt. 25:10). To this message John enthusiastically replies:

AMEN, COME, LORD JESUS: We are again brought to the beginning of the book (1:7) where John exclaims “Even so, Amen!” in response to a statement of the prophets regarding features of the second advent. The entire John class throughout the age has been UNIFIED by this one desire: the return of their Lord (with all that it would imply.) Babylon has feared this event and has been UNIFIED by that fear. The true saints have always joyously anticipated it.

The “quickly” means so much to the Laodiceans. It had so little real meaning to others. We, since the 1870’s, have lived at the threshold always believing that events would QUICKLY culminate in our lifetimes. How much nearer we are today! Yet we need the patience of 14:12.

Our dear Brother John, the “beloved Apostle” who has represented us all throughout this Revelation journey, personally bids us adieu with the most appropriate final words:

22:21 — THE GRACE: “Grace” comes from a Hebrew word meaning to stoop to help an inferior. We have all personally experienced this helping power.

OF THE LORD JESUS: — Our Helper, the one we will shortly join in joint-heirship of all these beloved promises.

BE WITH THE SAINTS: (This is probably the best Greek reading.) If the text should read “be with all,” it would, by implication, be all of the saints — though with exceeding joy we know this grace will, indeed, in due time (which is soon), extend to all!

AMEN: So let it be!

APPENDIX A

A GLOSSARY OF SYMBOLS USED IN REVELATION

AN IMPORTANT PREFACE:

This glossary is only superficial although it can prove very helpful in decoding some of the hidden meanings of Revelation. The student should remember that many things not included in this glossary are of symbolic import. Among these are the meanings of proper names. It is also imperative to realize that Revelation uses some words in both a literal and a symbolic usage. Only the context can help determine whether or not a literal or symbolic usage is intended. Examples of such words are heaven, earth, death, angel, ten, etc.

- A -

AIR: powers of spiritual control; demons

ALPHA & OMEGA: The glorified Jesus as the first and last word on all questions – first to his Church, then to the world

ALTAR: the condition of sacrificial dedication to God; UNDER THE ALTAR = a completed sacrifice;

OUT FROM THE ALTAR = action after glorification

AMEN: used as a noun to represent Jesus; otherwise means “thus it is” or “thus let it be.”

ANGELS: messengers (spirit, human, inanimate objects, events)

ANTIPAS: Against the Father; i.e., anti-Papacy; Arius; possibly: Against Jesus’ equality with the Father

ARK: the New Covenant arrangement under Christ and his Church

ARMAGEDDON: condition of ripeness for destruction (pictured by this ancient battleground of the forces of good and evil); literally: destruction of the mountain

ASIA: mud, boggy, condition of being earthbound

- B -

BABYLON: primarily the Roman Church; extends to "daughter" denominations; the condition of confusion

BARLEY: basic Christian truths common to all Christianity

BEAST: a group of men (institution or government) with unholy characteristics. Symbol includes the people under their domination

BEASTS (FOUR): God's four attributes: wisdom, justice, love, and power. Should be translated "living ones."

BED: A place of affliction, though sometimes “comfortable affliction”

BEHEADED: having given up personal will in order to do God's will

BELLY: effects of having taken in and assimilated information

BIRD (UNCLEAN): demon, selfish profiteer, or person pushing personal ideologies; also any inhabitant of Babylon

BITTER: difficult and painful

BLACK: devoid of light (truth)

BLOOD: life or its value; can mean death, as in blood spilled; can mean deadly or distasteful as an extension of spilled blood

BOOK: a plan with its information, or a record. (See also "little book.")

BOOK OF LIFE: the record of those found worthy of life (in either Gospel or Messianic Ages)

BOTTOMLESS PIT: condition of powerlessness or dormancy

BREASTPLATE: defensive armor, faith

BRIDE: The Church of Christ; the 144,000

BRIDEGROOM: Jesus

BRIDLES: a controlling element of doctrine

BRIMSTONE: deadly poison (added to symbol of fire to show no way of escape)

BURNED: disillusioned or destroyed in profession; destroyed literally (totally consumed in destruction)

- C -

CALF: justice (because the calf was the principal animal sacrificed to satisfy justice)

CAMP OF THE SAINTS: the Messianic Age's earthly government consisting of the faithful pre-Christ ancients

CANDLESTICKS: (7) churches as lightbearers; (see also "two candlesticks")

CHAIN: connection of truths used to render error powerless

CHARIOTS: organized efforts

CITY: government (religious or secular)

CLOTHING/CLOTHED: status; one's standing before God; one's commission or badge of authority.

CLOUDS: trouble; obscurity

COURT: the condition of justification of the unconsecrated (rightly or nominally)

CROWN: authority (when from diadema); victory (when from stephanos)

CUP: experiences or vehicles of conveyance

- D -

DARKNESS: erroneous and superstitious teachings; uncertainty

DAY: a year; a non-specific period of time with certain characteristics

DAY AND NIGHT: in perpetuity

DEATH: loss of spiritual life; condition of being alive but not having received eternal life; loss of previous belief or condition; having sacrificed earthly life-rights.

DENS: secret societies, hiding places, conditions of subterfuge

DEVIL: civil power

DEVOUR: see "eat"

DOGS: gentiles

DOOR: opportunity; proximity

DRAGON: civil power or pagan Rome

DRAGON, SERPENT, DEVIL, SATAN : (as 4-part name) civil power under control of personal devil

DUST: mourning

DWELL ON THE EARTH: having strong ties to earthly or worldly interests (i.e., the establishment)

- E -

EAGLE: wisdom; Bible

EARTH: society; the established way of doing things; the social order

EARTHQUAKE: revolution

EAT: absorb, appropriate, come into harmony with

EGYPT: type of Western, Christian world

ELDERS: Old Testament prophecies

EUPHRATES: people who support Babylon; mankind

EYES: foresight; wisdom

- F -

FACE: favor or displeasure depending on contextual evidence

FALSE PROPHET: a confederation of Protestant denominations with the Anglicans

FAMINE: lack of truth or of support

FIG AND FIG TREE: Israel

FIRE: destruction or righteous judgment

FIRSTFRUITS: products of the Gospel Age; i.e., the Church and Great Multitude

FLOOD: great amount of truths

FOREHEAD: the sum total of character

FORNICATION: a Christian dabbling in affairs of this earth, thus unfaithful to Jesus, the espoused bridegroom.

FOUNTAINS: the Church (true or false) as a source of religious truths

FOUR: the component parts; universality

FOWLS: discontents

FROGS: unclean and boastful

FURNACE: heated experiences for proving or judging or refining

- G -

GARMENTS: justification; symbols of status

GIRDLE: representative of service or servitude

GLASS: purity; transparency; calmness

GOD: position of highest authority (including its counterfeits)

GOG & MAGOG: symbolism for a rebellious civil power at the end of both Gospel and Millennial Ages; condition of challenge to God's established authority. Gog apparently represents the visible part of the collusion; Magog represents the invisible (spirit) part of it.

GOLD(EN): of Divine things (or their counterfeit)

GOSPEL: the totality of God's Word including its judgment message

GRAPES: evil fruitage

GRASS: humanity in general, or a specific segment of it; when green is specified, right-heartedness or justification is implied

GREAT MULTITUDE: Christians who will receive a heavenly reward but not be part of the 144,000 in the body of Christ; any other unified large group on earth or in heaven

GREEN: alive in spirit (in the sense of having inclinations toward righteousness); justified – as under the Jewish Law

- H -

HAIL: hard truths

HAIR: wisdom, venerableness, spiritual strength

HAND: works; cooperation; responsibility

HARP: harmonious set of doctrines

HARVEST: end period of the Gospel Age; beginning of the Messianic Age; results of prior activities

HEAD: place of ideas; forms of government; empire

HEAT: adverse effects from enlightenment

HEAVEN: the religious world or its leadership; can also represent the power of governing
HELL: the condition of oblivion when men die, but from which there will be a release
HORNS: powers; lesser governments than heads which are empire-sized
HORSE: doctrine – as in the power of an idea to move men from one place to another
HORSEMEN: followers or promoters of doctrines
HUNGER: lack of spiritual food and the desire for it; yearning for something once possessed

- I -

IMAGE: federated Protestantism
INCENSE: prayers, sacrifices; the merit behind both
IRON: strength
ISLAND: small nation or republic
ISRAEL: the people of God (i.e., the true Church)

- J -

JERUSALEM: the Millennial Divine government by the Church glorified
JEWS: Christians
JEZEBEL: the Roman Church in collusion with the powers of the state
JOHN: Church in the flesh throughout the age

- K -

KEYS: ability to control access

KILLED: discredited; having lost prior belief or status

KINGS OF THE EARTH: men of influence (including beyond Christendom); possibly also applied to Ancient Worthies

KINGS OF THE EAST: probably the Church who will shine as the sun; (possibly Islam)

- L -

LAKE OF FIRE: the second death: i.e., perpetual extinction

LAMB: Jesus

LEAVES: professions

LEFT: position of disfavor

LIFE: justification; spiritual vitality

LIGHTNING: bright flashes of truth

LINEN: the righteousness of saints

LION: power; Jesus

LITTLE BOOK: Daniel

LIVING SOUL: spirit-begotten Christian

LOCUSTS: devouring force as a plague to false Christianity

LORD'S DAY: Millennial Age

LUKEWARM: neither loving righteousness nor hating iniquity sufficiently

- M -

MAN (FACE OF): love

MANCHILD: man of sin; Papacy

MANNA (HIDDEN): immortality

MARK: indication of agreement or sympathy or cooperation; characteristic

MARRIAGE: the uniting of Christ and his Church in the spirit realm

MEN: Christians, nominal or true

MERCHANTS: capitalists

MICHAEL: "One Who as God" = Papacy

MILLSTONE: a place which prepared spiritual food

MONTH: 30 years (a day for a year)

MOON: Old Testament writings; Jewish Law

MORNING STAR: Jesus

MOUNTAIN: large kingdom

MOUTH: Message

MURDERERS: character assassins

- N -

NAKED: without justification or ill-clothed (compromised justification)

NAME: sum of character; reputation

NATIONS, KINDREDS, PEOPLE(S), & TONGUES: (4-name entity) the "sea" class; people without strong roots or commitments to the present order of things

NEW JERUSALEM: the spiritual government of the peaceable kingdom: Christ's Church glorified

NICOLAITANS: people who lord it over others; power usurpers; men who need a following

- O -

ODOURS: Prayers (See also INCENSE)

OIL: Holy Spirit

OLIVE: Holy Spirit

OLIVE TREES: see "two olive trees"

- P -

PALMS: symbol of salvation and of Great Company

PARADISE: garden; God's planting – the fruitage of both phases of the Abrahamic promise

PATMOS: symbol of separation; possible connotation of "mortal"

PEARL: character developed through trials

PENNY: (DENARIUS) symbol of a day's wages or labor

PILLAR: stalwart of stability

PIT: see "BOTTOMLESS"

PLAGUES: truths forced on false Christianity to weaken it (see VIALS)

PRISON: restraint

PROPHETS : (TWO) Old & New Testament writings

PURPLE: royalty (real or assumed)

- R -

RAIMENT: justification or righteousness (See CLOTHES or GARMENTS)

RAIN: blessings of truth

RAINBOW: covenant

RED: sin

REED: standard of judgment or understanding

RIGHT: position of favor

RIVER(S): people who support something; source of refreshment

ROCKS: stable institutions

ROD: strong rule; a standard of measurement

- S -

SACKCLOTH: mourning or humiliation

SAILORS: workmen

SAND OF THE SEA: those ultimately of the earthly kingdom

SAT (SIT): Controlled or dominated

SATAN: civil government (under the influence of the personal devil)

SCORPIONS: tormentings

SEA: restless humanity without strong ties to the social or religious order of things

SEA OF GLASS: pure water of God's truths for cleansing purposes; the laver

SEAL: way to prevent premature understanding

SEAT: center of power of judgment (Throne)

SECOND DEATH: extinction from which there is no redemption

SHIPMASTER: businessman

SHIPS: commerce

SICKLE: truths to do a separating work

SMOKE: remembrance, obscuration, or evidence, or confusion

SODOM: type of Babylon showing lack of morals and disregard for the individual

SONG: praise coming from harmonious truths

SORE: a perpetual, threatening problem

SOUL(S): (see "LIVING SOUL") Saints who have died and await resurrection

SPIRITS: teachings; 7 Spirits = functions of the Holy Spirit throughout the 7 stages of Church history

STARS: teachers (true or false)

STINGS: painful irritations due to unwanted truths

SUN: Gospel (improperly received, can burn: see Rev. 7:16; 16:8, 9)

SUP (DINE): eat the final meal of the day

SWORD: Bible; any cutting message

SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN: Rome once it has absorbed nominal Christianity

- T -

TABERNACLE: Temporary dwelling place, i.e., presence; God's plan pictured by a building

TAIL: last part

TALENT: sum total of the Gospel: the worth of a man

TEMPLE: God's plan, including the Church itself; The Most Holy room of the Tabernacle representing the New Covenant arrangement

TEN: a complete number in reference to earthly or civil things

THIRD: term is probably literal, referring to one of three existing entities

THIRST: craving for truth which leads to life

THRONE: office of rulership including judgment

THUNDER (INGS): results of lightning; i.e., resulting activities or philosophies or controversies

TIME (chronos): 360 years; a period of certain characteristics (Karios)

TORMENTED: vexed to the point of great discomfort; used in reference to the giver, not the recipient

TREE: important individuals or small nations or institutions

TREE OF LIFE: promise of continued existence on any plane; possible reference to the Abrahamic Covenant (as in the olive tree of Romans 11)

TRIBES OF ISRAEL: divisions of the glorified Church

TRUMPET: important and timely message heard beyond those for whom it was intended

TWO CANDLESTICKS: Old and New Testament writings — as GIVERS OF LIGHT

TWO OLIVE TREES: Old and New Testament writings — as functions of the HOLY SPIRIT

TWO PROPHETS: Old and New Testament writings — as TEACHERS

TWO WITNESSES: Old and New Testament writings — as TESTIFIERS in advance of God's purposes

- V -

VIALS: mechanism to deliver plaguing truths (Bowls in some translations)

VINE OF THE EARTH: Babylon, the fruitage of Satan's planting and as counterfeit of Jesus' True Vine

VIRGINS: true Church or Great Multitude; undefiled by illicit cooperation with the world and its ways

- W -

WAR: a struggle or persecution

WATER: truth

WATERS: people/truths

WHEAT: deep spiritual truths (as opposed to BARLEY)

WHITE: pure or justified

WHORE: a church which has compromised itself with politics and worldly involvement (HARLOT in some translations)

WILDERNESS: condition of separation (in mind and attitude) from generally accepted standards of doctrine and practice; the TIME (1260 yrs.) of this experience

WIND: War or great disruption

WINDS: powers of demonic control (resulting in strife)

WINE: gospel (pure or polluted); doctrine; experiences coming out of teachings

WINEPRESS: the last trouble of the Harvest which squeezes life out of false religion

WITNESSES: see "TWO WITNESSES"

WOMAN: Church (true or false); covenant

WORMWOOD: Arius, as poisonous and bitter to the apostasy

—Y—

YEAR: 360 years (a day for a year); an indefinite period

Appendix B

Words and Phrases

THE SEVEN SPIRITS

The expression, THE SEVEN SPIRITS, occurs four times in the book of Revelation. A comparison of these usages reveals the likely interpretation of the meaning.

Rev. 1:4: shows the seven spirits BEFORE THE THRONE — a symbol of the position of SERVICE.

Rev. 3:1: points out that Jesus also has these spirits. That 1:4 showed them to be God's is here strengthened by stating that they are "OF GOD."

Rev. 4:5: "defines" these spirits by equating them with another symbol, SEVEN LAMPS OF FIRE (which also are "before the throne.") A lamp, of course, is a light source: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psa.. 119:105) This text testifies the meaning of the lamps. The number seven shows the totality of God's truth. These are lamps of fire because truth burns away error.

Rev. 5:6: again equates the seven spirits with a symbol — the seven eyes of the lamb (or, possibly, both the seven horns and the seven eyes.) That these eyes are "sent forth into all the earth calls to mind II Chron. 16:9 and Zech. 4:10. Chronicles is especially helpful in that it gives the reason these eyes (the watchcare of wisdom) are sent throughout the earth: to show God's POWER on behalf of His saints. Since HORNS symbolize POWER, the seven horns (complete Divine power) and the seven eyes (complete Divine wisdom) are combined on behalf of the Church.

CONCLUSION: If the seven spirits are, in essence, the Holy Spirit, the greeting in Rev. 1:4, 5 lists God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus.

The number seven (Divine wholeness) symbolizes the fact that the influence of God which we call the Holy Spirit is total in its ability to handle the affairs of the universe as well as the affairs of His Church. Jesus intimated the far-reaching importance of this spirit for the good of the Church when, in John 14:26 and 16:7, he pointed out that the spirit would do things for them as a group (throughout the age) that he could not accomplish for them if he were personally present.

If the number seven is also used literally to show seven specific functions of the spirit, those seven are not obvious. POWER, WISDOM, and TRUTH were specified in these verses. Four more would have to be found.

The logical initial meaning, then, of the seven spirits is the Holy Spirit of God in its myriad applications. It is quite logical that the expression simply shows the function of the Holy Spirit in each of the seven churches — having an individuality of function as needed for each Church.

THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

The identity of these elders is considered by some brethren to be a reference to the office of the Church's priesthood, and by others as a reference to the books of the Hebrew Scriptures. (A quick glance at the title page of Lesser or like English translations of the Hebrew Bible will show that the Jews know their scriptures as the "24 Books,")

An exhaustive topical comparison in the book of Revelation seems to say that the 24 elders are, indeed, the writings of the Old Testament. Note the following summary of the characteristics, actions, position etc., of the 24 elders:

Rev. 4:4 They are ON THRONES — positions of judgment; the words of the prophets are the standards of judgment under the law. Their thrones surround God's throne — they are satellites or extensions of His judgment. They are IN WHITE — they are pure. They wear GOLDEN CROWNS ON THEIR HEADS — that is, their thoughts are given Divine Authority; this is what we normally call INSPIRATION.

Rev. 4:10 They FALL DOWN & WORSHIP — the testimony of the Scriptures uniformly gives adoration and praise to the Father. They CAST THEIR CROWNS before the throne. Despite hymnbook theology which attributes this to the saints, there is a better symbology here. The saints are admonished not to lose their crowns; it is unlikely they will cast them away. The casting of these crowns before the Father seems to say that these elders recognize that the sole purpose for their Divine authority is to glorify God. (The beasts of Chapters 12 and 13 also have crowns, but not of gold; it is not authority from God. Nor do they cast them off!)

Rev. 5:5 Since John represents the Church in the flesh, it is significant that the elder addresses John — just as the O.T. scriptures teach the Church. It here comforts John by identifying Messiah in terms from the O.T. writings. Jesus ADMONISHED that he be identified in this manner when he sent to John the Baptist saying, "What do you see?" The Church KNEW Jesus was Messiah BECAUSE he fulfilled the scriptural details.

Rev. 5:6 The Lamb stands in the midst of the elders. Jesus knew, lived by, quoted, and was identified by the prophecies.

Rev. 5:8 Each has a harp — harmonious teachings; each of the prophecies is harmonious within itself and among its neighbors. Each has a golden bowl (Divine container) of incense (praise). These are said to be the "prayers of the saints." Indeed, the prayers of saints are based, not on want, preference, or personal ideas, but on the promises and the spirit gleaned from the Holy Scriptures.

Rev. 5:9 The 24, along with the 4 living ones (God's 4 attributes), sing a new song — a song newly realized at the beginning of the Gospel Age: who the lamb is, and what he has done. Here it is IMPERATIVE TO NOTE that the KJV is wrong in its translation. It is NOT "redeemed us" or "made us" or "we shall reign"; it IS "made THEM" and "THEY will reign." The 24 elders are speaking about someone other than who they themselves represent; they are speaking about the Church. The O.T. DOES give this testimony concerning the saints.

Rev. 5:11 Here again, the 24 join with others in the heavenly realm to testify the worthiness of the lamb.

Rev. 5:14 Just as God's attributes concur that it is the Lamb's right and opportunity now to take over, the 24 fall in adoration of the idea.

Rev. 7:11 No new lessons.

Rev. 7:13-17 In 7:9 John sees a group in addition to the 144,000 which he has just witnessed in its completed state. In 7:13, one of the elders asks John, WHO ARE THESE? While this COULD be a rhetorical question to see if John knows about this group, it seems more likely that this is an honest question. The subject of the Great Multitude is hidden deeply in the types and symbols of the Old Testament. It is not unlikely that the Old Testament would, on the surface, say, "This is new; I don't know anything about it." John, however, protests. It is as if he says, "Stop and think carefully; you DO KNOW." At this point, the elder can honestly testify: "Oh, Yes!" And he begins to expound THE OLD TESTAMENT facts concerning this group.

Rev. 11:16 Once the beginning of the reign is announced (11:15), the prophecies concur with the announcement and give the details concerning the characteristics of that reign. The focus of all the O.T. is the kingdom, and no greater worship can happen toward God than the final fulfillment of those predictions.

Rev. 14:3 Who is singing here is not clear. Verse two mentions the harpists which COULD be the elders (see 5:8). But verse 3 has the elders HEARING the song along with the 4 Living Ones. It MAY BE that the 144,000 are the ones singing since it is clear that they CAN learn the song. If so, the Church is singing the WHOLE STORY, the FINISHED MYSTERY, which they have learned from God (the throne) and his attributes (the 4 Living Ones) and the elders (the prophecies). Thus, they sing to these in appreciation.

Rev. 19:4 No obvious new lesson.

The totality of the testimony of these texts points strongly to the 24 elders being the O.T. writings. To the Jewish mind, 24 will immediately bring the response: The Holy Scriptures. Their response is probably the basis of this symbolism.

It is interesting to note that the FINAL appearance of these 24 is in Rev. 19: 4 — still the Harvest period. If they represented the office of the Church, would they not be ESPECIALLY mentioned in Chapters 20-22 — the Millennial chapters when the Church comes into glory?

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THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

It is not easy for a non-Jew to figure out how the Jews can consider all of the books of the Hebrew Bible as TWENTY-FOUR BOOKS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES as is clearly seen on page 305 on Dr. Leeser's title page for his translation. A little investigation has solved the mystery for us Gentiles:

The Old Testament (Hebrew) Bible is divided into four basic sections:

1. The Law (The Torah)
2. The Prophets
3. The Minor Prophets
4. The Holy Writings

THE LAW (the books of Moses) is considered as 1 book. THE PROPHETS are each considered as one book and, therefore, add 9 more to the total. They are: Joshua, Judges, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. THE MINOR PROPHETS are often called "THE TWELVE" but are considered as 1 book because, being short, they were all kept on one scroll. They are called minor because of their lengths, not their importance. The twelve are: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. There remain 13 books to make up the total of 24. These final 13 are collectively known as THE WRITINGS or THE HOLY WRITINGS. They consist of the following books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, I Chronicles, and II Chronicles. Thus is completed the TWENTY-FOUR:

THE LAW	=	1
THE PROPHETS	=	9
THE TWELVE	=	1
THE WRITINGS	=	13
<hr/>		
Total	=	24

The origin of the above "solution" is lost. Most commentators have other solutions to arrive at 24. None of them makes the Law into a single book.

תורה נביאים וכתובים

TWENTY-FOUR BOOKS
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES



CAREFULLY TRANSLATED AFTER THE BEST
JEWISH AUTHORITIES

BY
ISAAC LEESER

HEBREW PUBLISHING COMPANY
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The Twenty-Four Elders

**THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH;
PEOPLES AND MULTITUDES AND NATIONS AND TONGUES;
THE SEA**

The above three expressions occur throughout Revelation. A topical consideration of these phrases yields much fruitage. The three expressions are all related and are thus here all examined together, although one at a time. The way they fit together will become evident after consideration of all three.

THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH

Throughout scripture, the earth, when used as a symbol, refers to ESTABLISHED SOCIETY. The phrase, THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH, seems to be a symbol for a class of people who have reason to feel at home or comfortable with the present establishment — not that they might not see the need for certain improvements, etc., but that, on the whole, they have ROOTS deep enough in the THINGS OF THIS EARTH that they are not really interested in looking for things, or even permitting things, that threaten the established way of doing things.

Revelation uses this phrase in the following contexts:

Rev. 3:10 - In addressing the Philadelphia stage of the Church, the Lord is aware that Philadelphia has had to put up with an ever-changing look at the Gospel truths. This is the period in which the Reformation has occurred and all of the subsequent little reformations that were rampant after Luther opened the door of religious independence from Rome. The saints were remarkably PATIENT during all of these changes, and the Lord here promises to spare them the additional changes which will occur during the Laodicean Church. In the Laodicean period, not only would truth itself be clarified further, but challenges to every phase of life would arise — political, economic, philosophical, scientific. And all of this, according to Daniel, would be accompanied by the madness of running to and fro. In Rev. 3:10 it is made clear that all of this "HOUR OF TESTING" was specifically NOT for the saints, but for THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. It will, of course, have some effect on the saints; but it is NOT FOR the saints. It is to show this poor world — notably those who trust in the things of this world, those who have roots, those who DWELL in the earth — the empty folly of all they hold dear.

Rev. 6:10 - Here we are in the time of the fifth Church, Seal and Trumpet — the time just before the Reformation, the time when Papacy still has pre-eminent control even though the seeds of reformation are being sown. As we learned from Chapter 12, "Michael and His angels" use the DRAGON (civil power) as their tools to persecute the Church. Thus, in this prayer in Rev. 6:10, the saints can rightly realize that their (blood) lives have been the victims of THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH — those who had a stake in or roots in the prevailing order. The DRAGON and the followers of Michael were all happy to go along with the status quo and to persecute all and any who voiced opposition to their

authority. It was, then, altogether correct to watch for God's vengeance against this institution (church and state).

Rev. 8:13 - This verse follows the fourth Trumpet's sounding and strongly proclaims that it will be the effect of the final three trumpets to cause special WOE to those who DWELL ON THE EARTH. Indeed, history is clear that the truths begun in the days of Wycliffe and growing ever since are the truths which had the power to affect society and its operations. Those who dwelt on the earth prior to Wycliffe hardly felt any challenge to their ways of life because the Anti-Christ system was strong enough to suppress the challenges nearly totally. Beginning with Wycliffe, however, the proverbial cat was out of the bag.

Rev. 11:10 - This context is during the sixth Trumpet — most particularly at the end of the 1260 years: the time of the French Revolution. France had suppressed (actually outlawed) religion for 3-1/2 years. The two witnesses, olive trees, and lampstands (the Hebrew and Greek scriptures) were "OVERCOME" (verse 7). The reaction of THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH is that they rejoice! Religion and the Bible had been their constant enemy. Clearly, however, the Lord does not permit the extinction of His Holy Word (verse 11).

Rev. 13:8 - Chapter 13 is a history of the rise of the two great non-Protestant apostate churches, Papacy (10 horns) and English (2 horns.) Verse 8 shows that THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH are faithful followers of the apostasy. It is in their interest to do so; the established church gives them solidity — ROOTS, and doesn't challenge their ways of life.

Rev. 13:12 - The Church of England was not on the world scene to challenge Papacy's doctrine or practice. The Anglican Church was virtually a carbon copy. Thus the Anglican Church encouraged the continuation of the worship of the 10-horned beast, and not the worship of newly-formed Protestant movements.

Rev. 13:14 - Deception, note, is of THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. The true saints are NOT DECEIVED by either beast or by the image.

Rev. 14:6 - This is a Harvest-time chapter. When the everlasting Gospel is sent through the earth to gather his elect, it is not restricted. It is sent from "one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:31). The "heavens", remember, include the apostate heavens. Thus, this Gospel goes to THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH as well as to others.

Rev. 17:2 - The story continues, the apostate church makes drunk THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH; their senses are deadened to her errors of doctrine and practice. The true saints are not so deceived.

Rev. 17:8 - Only THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH (NOT the saints) will wonder (be confused and deceived) regarding this particular beast.

The PERSONAL lesson for us from this phrase study is that we, if overcomers, will not have roots in this society. We will not feel that earth (the current ways of doing things) has any charms for us. Our trust will not be in its institutions, economics, politics, religious reforms, etc. We do not dwell on the earth; we merely traverse it as pilgrims.

PEOPLES AND MULTITUDES AND NATIONS AND TONGUES

This four-part phrase is the antithesis of THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. Peoples, Multitudes, Nations, and Tongues seems to refer to the masses of humanity which do not have roots in the order of things. They are not necessarily uncomfortable; nor are they necessarily rebellious. They do not, however, have a vested interest in the way things are though they may rely on the way things are for their continuance in their lifestyle. Somehow, however, this is not of great concern for them. They are that great body of humanity which is subject to changes in the status quo without having a great deal to lose or without too much care about whether they have a great deal to lose. These may, in a few instances, be wealthy or powerful people; but their power or wealth is not their major mental concern. These are, for all practical purposes, the sea class, although there might be a slight difference in the symbology.

Revelation uses this four-part name in the following contexts:

THE PRIMARY DEFINITION TEXT is found in Rev. 17:16. Verse 1 of Chapter 17 shows the woman (the apostate church) sitting on many waters. Verse 15 interprets this by saying that the waters ARE peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. This helps to clarify the connection between this group and the sea class. As we examine other texts containing the phrase, we will see it CONTRASTED with those WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH.

Rev. 5:9 - This verse is crucial. It shows that the Church COMES FROM THIS CLASS. This is only natural. The class which DWELLS ON THE EARTH is not interested in the things of the Lord because their roots are established in the earth.

Rev. 7:9 - This verse shows that the Great Multitude also comes from this class — a natural deduction even if it were not stated since the Gt. Multitude begins by being prospective members of the body.

Rev. 10:11 - HERE THE PHRASE IS DIFFERENT! It is Peoples and Nations and Tongues and KINGS. The context here shows the John class (the Church) after the 1260 days, eating the little book (digesting the book of Daniel which is now OPEN because it is now the time of the end — Matt. 24:14, 15; Dan. 12:4). As the resulting disappointments of the Miller movement gave the Church a bitter stomach (verse 10), the Church is promised that it will yet, in the time future from this point, prophesy again. Recall Rev. 14:6 from the consideration of THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. Rev. 14:6 is a Harvest prophecy. The general proclamation of the gospel in the Harvest was to be from one end of heaven to the other — to THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH as well as to others. The "others" are specified in Rev. 14:6 as being every nation, tongue, tribe and people. Here in Rev. 10:11 we have a summary of that Harvest prophesying: it will not only be to the waters class, but also to KINGS — people who DO dwell on the earth. This accounts for the variant of this expression in this location.

Rev. 11:9 - This context also came up in the study of those who DWELL ON THE EARTH. When religion and Scripture were proscribed in the French reorganizations, the earth-dwelling class was pleased. But verse 9 shows that the peoples-tribes-tongues-nations class will NOT PERMIT the extinction of the Scriptures. To them, the ideas and ideals of the Bible are appealing.

Rev. 13:7 - In Rev. 13:8 we learned that the earth-dwelling class WORSHIP the apostasy; Verse 7, however, informs us that the CONTROL over the waters class is also in the hands of this beast. Remember that one major reason the earth-dwelling class LIKES the false church and its secular confederates is that THEY CAN KEEP ORDER. This verse shows that the beast had this authority and power at his disposal — the masses were under his control because (as Chapter 12 showed) the dragon was forced to co-operate or his time would be short.

Rev. 14:6 - This has already been examined above under Rev. 10:11.

Rev. 17:15 - This was our defining verse. (See p. 308) Note also in it the parallel to Rev. 13:7: the harlot SITS on this class, i.e., controls them.

The PERSONAL LESSON from these texts is important. Because we are called from the waters class and not from those who dwell on the earth, we might find our natural tendencies favoring the sea class in the conflict now at the end of the age. It is important to remember, however, that we were called FROM this class. We are not to remain a part of it. To the contrary, we are to grow new roots in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. We were never earth dwellers; we WERE sea, but are no longer such. While the Lord will replace the earth, he will DO AWAY with the sea (Rev. 21:1). He doesn't like restlessness.

THE SEA

The distinction between sea and the phrase PEOPLE & MULTITUDES & NATIONS & TONGUES is probably slight just as is the distinction between earth and those who DWELL ON THE EARTH. As the earth represents the establishment, those who dwell on it are those individuals who profit from it, have their hopes and investments in it, and would prefer to see it continue. The symbol of the sea seems to be that segment of mankind which does not have that loyal attachment to an established way of doing things. The sea, then, represents the entire class which, all together, form that moving, rootless, changeable, unpredictable unit which can, with the right stimulus, erupt into stormy waves. They cannot do this as individuals; they must do it only as a group. Peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, on the other hand, seems to represent the individuals which make up that sea.

AN IMPORTANT PARENTHETICAL DIVERSION.

(1) The expression SAND OF THE SEA likely stands alone as a special symbol in itself and will not be examined below in the texts containing the word SEA. The expression dates from the promise to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in which the difference between the heavenly and earthly descendants seems symbolized by the two differing phrases: STARS OF HEAVEN and SANDS OF THE SEA. When SAND OF THE SEA is used in Revelation, the symbolism is the same. SAND OF THE SEA refers to all mankind not spirit-begotten; this would include those who dwell on earth and those who are part of the sea. The two uses are as follows:

Rev. 13:1 - The first part of this verse belongs to Chapter 12 and summarizes the conclusion of that chapter. The dragon is stated to make war with the remainder of the woman's seed (Rev. 12:17). This is the promise that to the end of the age, the civil power will be a real threat to spirit-begotten Christians. Since they will be "at war," it is clear that the SEED is not (as he would wish) under his control. But he WILL have control over the non-spirit-begotten: "AND HE STOOD ON THE SAND OF THE SEA" (KJV is poorly translated.) That is, the civil power will control (stand on) the masses of mankind to keep them from getting out of hand. This is an encapsulated version of the entire time of the end. In the time of the end, the world is falling apart, and the powers that be must do all in their power to hold it together. They are ignorant of the incoming kingdom. The Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16ff) is, in effect, the final loss of control by the powers that be.

Rev. 20:8 — The only other use of this term in Revelation is here. This is a description of the end of the 1000 years when Satan is loosed for the final deception. Satan here is the same character as we find in Chapter 12 (Compare Rev. 12:9 with Rev. 20:2). In both places CIVIL POWER is what is primarily being symbolized. (We do not EXCLUDE the presence and influence of the personal devil, but the symbol stresses the civil power, not the former Lucifer.) At this point in history, of course, the STARS OF HEAVEN class are all in heaven — only the earthly seed of Abraham remains on the planet. Notice the interesting similarity of the language of this verse with that of Matt. 24:31. In the Gospel Harvest, his elect (the STAR class) are gathered from the FOUR winds — from one end of HEAVEN to the other. Rev. 20:8 is almost accurately termed a Harvest of the Millennium in that we are now dealing with the nations in the FOUR corners of EARTH — NOT now the STAR class, but rather the SAND OF THE SEA class. Satan (probably through a new attempt to establish a CIVIL POWER to replace the Ancient Worthies) will try to deceive this entire SAND class. Hopefully few will follow him.

(2) The expression SEA OF GLASS also occurs twice in Revelation. This expression WILL be treated below in the examination of THE SEA. However, a number of brethren who are fine Revelation scholars do not believe that this phrase is the same as THE SEA. They make some good arguments on behalf of their viewpoint, and it would be good to acknowledge here that this phrase MIGHT, indeed, not be related to the subject of the sea. It will be treated below as though IT IS synonymous with the SEA, but a minimum of the alternative view will first here be presented.*

In I Kings 7:23 and in II Chron. 4:2, the huge laver made for Solomon's temple is called a sea. The reason is not clear, but it IS the same word as used for the actual ocean. Because Rev. 4:6 is a picture of things surrounding God, the point is well made that this SEA of Solomon is a more likely reference than is the restless masses of humanity. The other occurrence in Revelation (Rev. 15:2) is in its context not so demanding of this explanation. However, Rev. 15:2 is tied to Rev. 4:6 in that these are the two instances of the sea being called a SEA OF GLASS. The laver, of course, represents that part of the Christian's calling experience in which he CLEANS UP — a pre-consecration experience. It seems to represent that great body of water we so frequently summarize as THE TRUTH or GOD'S WORD. In Chapter 4, it is easy to see that God's Word (as a body of water) is appropriate in the picture which includes all those things which do Him service. The symbolism in Rev. 15:2 is not so obvious.

The meaning of GLASSY (or OF GLASS) is usually stated to be TRANSPARENT. This is both harmonious and logical. This meaning SEEMS to be enhanced in Rev. 4:6 by the addition of the explanation LIKE CRYSTAL. (This is missing from Rev. 15:2). Some have felt that LIKE GLASS

* Since this writing, we are compelled to agree that "Sea of Glass" is a separate subject from the SEA CLASS. It is surely a reference to the Lavar. See reference to 15:2 for clarification of this symbol.

indicates smoothness. This thought has backing in Revelation also. Rev. 21:18 and 21 compares the pure gold walls and street of the New Jerusalem to pure or transparent glass. While the word TRANSPARENT is present, it seems out of place while describing gold WHICH IS NEVER TRANSPARENT but which can be ultimately SMOOTH. One possibility is that TRANSPARENT GLASS, much like flawless diamonds, is of great value. The stress would then be on PURITY — a PURE SEA. This seems the most likely meaning as Rev. 22:1 corroborates. In Rev. 22:1 the river of the water of life is described as being as "clear as crystal" — margin: bright as crystal. This would suggest that this river and the lavar (SEA OF GLASS LIKE CRYSTAL) are all bodies of water so pure as to sparkle because of their total lack of impurities.

If the above be true, Rev. 15:2 yet needs an explanation. How is this PURE sea MIXED WITH FIRE? I Peter 1:7 gives a clue. Our partaking of the pure waters of truth brings on the trial of our faith by fire. Another necessary question: Why would this lavar appear in the introduction of the plagues? Possibly because the period of the plagues will be the most difficult time of faith trial. And a third necessary question: Why do the saints stand on the sea? (At its initial writing, this question had no answer. The comments on 15:2, however, answer this all harmoniously.)

END OF IMPORTANT PARENTHETIC DIVERSION. — (See pp. 39 and 183 for clearer explanation.)

Revelation uses the SEA in the following contexts:

Rev. 4:6 - This is the so-called THRONE SCENE. We stand at the opening of the Gospel Age. The immediate question to be asked of those who claim that SEA here is restless humanity is: Why is restless humanity mentioned in a list with the 7 spirits, the 4 living creatures, the 24 elders, etc., etc.? There IS a good answer. This list of things which stand before or about God MAY BE a list of the instrumentalities which He will use as His tools during the ensuing age. The sea, while it seems out of place in this list, IS, indeed, prophetically one of His major tools. If this be the case, the GLASSY SEA would here refer to the calm, smooth condition of humanity at the time of the first advent. The world was then in what has come to be known as the PAX ROMANO — the Peace of Rome: an unparalleled 200-year span of peace. (See comments on 4:6 for better explanation.)

Rev. 5:13 - This verse is PROBABLY a statement of the RESULT of the work of the Lamb throughout the Gospel Age as the Millennium begins. It seems difficult to interpret this verse at the Gospel Age's opening since every creature in heaven, earth, sea, etc., DID NOT AT THAT TIME acknowledge the Lamb's right to dominion. The symbol of SEA here is not difficult IF IT IS A SYMBOL. It would simply show that that part of humanity which has no roots would acknowledge the new king. It is, however, possible that heaven, earth, and sea are here literal — All of God's creation will (some intelligently, others instinctively) acknowledge and fall into obedience to the new king and His arrangements.

Rev. 7:1, 2, 3 - The context here is the time of the French Revolution — the Time of the End, the time of the 6th Seal (Rev. 6:12), Trumpet, and Church. The forces set loose at that time which caused a tenth part of the city to fall (Rev. 11:13) were such as could spread to the rest of the world and bring Daniel's foretold great time of trouble too early. God here limits the destructive power until such a time as the Church would be completed (144,000 sealed). Clearly the final 9/10ths will fall because earth, SEA, and trees will be hurt.

Rev. 8:8, 9 - The second Trumpet period (70 to 313) sees the forces in Pagan Rome weakened by the varying demands of the myriad peoples under Rome's authority. Rome (the Great Mountain) was in essence destroyed as a Pagan empire as demonstrated by Constantine's conversion to "Christianity." UP TO this point, Rome religiously had three parts: Christians, Jews, and Pagans. The Pagan part dissipated as the emperor became "Christian". This part (the pagan part) of the sea became blood: DEAD. Their religious life had been sustained by the support of the emperor and by emperor worship; these now DIED AS PAGANS and all the profits from paganism (the ships on that third-part of the sea) stopped.

Rev. 10:2, 5, 8 - This chapter is part of the 6th Trumpet picture again focusing on the end of the 1260 years. One MUST SEE the connection between this chapter and Daniel 12. In Daniel 12, the angel standing over the flood proclaims the vision to be for the end of time, times, and half a time as he holds up his hand and swears by Him who lives forever. This follows the statement that the writings of Daniel would be sealed up until the end time. In Revelation 10 this (apparently the) same angel reappears with the little book (Daniel) in his hand; the book is NOW OPEN because the time (1260 years) IS FULFILLED (verse 6). He takes the same stance and swears with his uplifted hand as he had done in Daniel. In short, what Daniel 12 prophesied is here come to pass. In Revelation, however, the angel is not only above the flood, but he stands with his right foot (sign of favor) on the sea, and his left foot (disfavor) on the land. This corroborates the study on peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues as compared with the study on those who dwell on the earth. We see that God can USE the sea class (and even draws His saints only from this class) but cannot use those rooted and grounded in the present order.

Rev. 12:12 - This verse is a quotation of the (false) claims of the exalted Michael (apostate Christ). The message is earth (society) and sea (the non-committed) are now under the control of the new religious heavens (the Roman Church) which has cast the dragon (civil power) out of heaven (religious control). This dragon knows well which hand feeds it and will do the bidding of its new master. If it does not, it

will be REPLACED (its time in office will be cut short.) Because of this marriage of convenience between church and state, WOE to all who do not conform — whether they be part of the establishment (earth) or part of the masses (sea).

Rev. 13:1 - This chapter (among other things) traces the beginnings of the "Holy Roman Church." We see that it comes OUT OF THE SEA. The apostate church (unlike the 2-horned beast of verse 11) was born in the restless period during which Rome lost its paganism as we saw in Rev. 8:8. The great mountain of Rev. 8:8 was thrown into the sea and OUT OF the sea came its replacement, the 10-horned beast.

Rev. 14:7 - This is the first entire chapter to treat the Harvest period exclusively. The message of the angel (v. 6) seems to be - Stop worshipping religious powers, society, the liberty of the masses, or the earthly sources of religious information; WORSHIP GOD. IF heaven, earth, sea, and springs are here symbols, the last sentence interprets them. It is quite possible, however, (and even likely) that these words are not here symbols but literalisms: Worship the God who made all you see. In either case, the angel is rebuking CREATURE WORSHIP and admonishing its replacement with CREATOR WORSHIP.

Rev. 15:2 - If the symbol of sea here remains consistent and is not a reference to the temple lavar as a type, we see conditions at the beginning of the harvest period symbolized. The sea (masses) is still smooth; its soon-to-come upheavals have not begun. BUT, the elements are present within it which will shortly cause it to erupt into the storms Jesus predicted (Luke 21:25). It has within it "fire" elements — perhaps the philosophies whose eventual effect is the disruption of all which has held society together in the past centuries. These might be Darwinism, Communism, Existentialism, Higher Criticism, etc. The saints, however, stand above all of this knowing the PLAN (Harps) and not concerned with the worries which rest beneath the surface of the masses. See page 183.

Rev. 16:3 - This second plague affects the sea class. It destroys the Christian profession of sea-class individuals just as the emperor's conversion (Rev. 8:9) destroyed the pagan profession of the Roman pagan sea. This probably refers to the loss of Christianity as a vital force in Eastern Europe after the Communist revolution took over.

Rev. 18:17 - This chapter details the gradual dissolution of the unity between Babylon (church) and her supporters (state, commerce, etc.) during the 20th century. Those who made their livelihood from this system, shipmasters (profiteers), passengers & sailors (laborers, and those "going along for the ride"), by LIVING OFF THEIR bilking or defrauding of the poor masses (sea), mourn the passing of the old order.

Rev. 18:19 same lesson.

Rev. 18:21 - The heretofore-cheated sea will swallow up its previous landlord even as it swallowed up Rome (Rev. 8:8) but with much greater violence and with a welcome permanence!

Rev. 20:13 - At first glance this verse seems to have something wrong with it! Is it not sufficient that death and hell give up their dead? After all, where else can the dead be? Why, for instance, does it not say that the earth gives up its dead? Look closely: heaven and earth can't give up their dead because they ARE NO MORE (Rev. 20:11.) By the time the kingdom is in full sway, all who were in power in religious places (heaven) and in civil places (earth) will have lost their positions. There will be a new heaven and earth. But the sea will yet remain. Poor rootless humanity will all be standing there ready to get their roots - a permanent place in the new society. They are yet "dead" — in need of following The Christ to life. The sea will GIVE UP ITS DEAD BY CONVERTING THEM (See Isaiah 60:5.) It would probably have been enough to say that death and hell give up their dead, but apparently the Lord wanted us to realize that we should have followed THREE entities prophetically through the Revelation: Earth & Heaven (Rev. 20:11) AND Sea (Rev. 20:13). Remember that the sea SERVED the Lord from the beginning of the age — Rev. 4:6 (IF, indeed, Rev. 4:6 is NOT a reference to the lavar).

Rev. 21:1 - Once the sea has served the Lord, He does away with it — He no longer wants anyone to be rootless! He has, during the age, taken His Church and Gt. Multitude from this class; He has used it to swallow up Babylon and Pagan Rome; He has symbolized His temporary favor toward it by having the angel (Rev. 10:2) place his RIGHT foot on it. But now He converts it to be part of His NEW EARTH. STABILITY AT LAST!

HOOR

The word-study on "hour" was prompted because a number of brethren in their interpretations of Revelation prophecy (particularly Chapter 18) insist that an hour must be a very short time. Before looking into the prophecies which contain this time-word, it seems wise to learn from a topical study how the word is actually used.

While our conclusion as to the meaning of hour was reached AFTER the topical study, in this summary we will state the conclusion first:

AN HOUR IS A NON-SPECIFIC TIME WITH A CERTAIN CHARACTERISTIC.

(NOTE: in this research, as with all good research, we will not speculate on difficult examples; we will utilize only the clear examples to arrive at conclusions. The application to difficult texts will come later.)

HOOR is used two ways in Revelation: (1) it is used without a modifier; (2) it is used with a modifier — the word "one."

ONE

Because the addition of the modifying word "one" can be significant, it is important to determine its meaning. Revelation uses TWO words for "one." The word which is used with hour, however, is consistently Strong's 3391. It is used consistently to mean either ONE OF A SERIES or ONE AS IN SOMETHING THAT IS SINGULAR IN NATURE. (It is NOT to mean one as opposed to two.) It is used much as we might say - "I remember ONE TIME that" When we use one in that sense, we mean that we remember an incident in our memory which stands out as a singular example. "One" is combined with "hour" in Rev. 6:1; 9:12; 13:3; 17:12; 17:13; 18:8; 18:10; 18:17; and 18:19. In this last citation, no Greek word is present for "one."

The word HOOR (S5610 = hora) is not always translated the same. Its use outside of Revelation is revealing. II Cor. 7:8 is one example of its use by Paul. Here he uses it to refer to a time during which the Corinthian Church was sorrowful. In I Thess. 2:17 he uses the word to refer to the time he hadn't seen the Thessalonian brethren. The Apostle John (I John 2:18) seems to use the word to describe THE ENTIRE GOSPEL AGE!

In Revelation, the word has eleven uses as follows:

Rev. 3:3 where it refers to an unexpected time at which the Lord would recompense the Sardis Church for sleeping.

Rev. 3:10 speaks of the "hour of temptation" from which the Philadelphia brethren would be kept. Brethren have universally (nearly) applied THIS hour to the entire Harvest period — now over 140 years in length.

Rev. 8:1 is subject to interpretation, and will thus not enter into the conclusion. In this instance the Greek prefix for "half" is added to the word. (See Strong #2256).

Rev. 9:15 is also subject to interpretation. If, indeed, hour is as general a word as this survey indicates, efforts to make this verse a specific chronological indicator may be faulty in concept.

Rev. 11:13 is a text usually applied by brethren to the French Revolution. That was a period of 10 years.

Rev. 14:7 refers to the "hour of His judgment." Its context is the judgment on Babylon — a period usually interpreted as the Harvest of the Gospel age (now over 140 years in length).

Rev. 14:15 clearly refers to the entire Harvest; again we have hour meaning a period in excess of a century.

Rev. 17:12 again requires interpretation. The first instance of the use of "one" as a modifier is here. If our definition be correct, the phrase "one hour" here should refer to the fact that this will be a singular time in history — one which will be set apart by its individual characteristics and peculiarities.

Rev. 18:10 is a verse frequently used to show the shortness of Babylon's final judgment. While this may or may not be true, the survey of "one" and "hour" would indicate caution in relying on this interpretation. It may very well simply refer to the strange and wonderful time during which the Lord is carrying on His judgment against Babylon. The context of this verse in Chapter 18 could clearly indicate that this is the case.

Rev. 18:17 is similar.

Rev. 18:19 again makes the same case. History does seem to indicate that the laying waste of the wealth of Babylon has taken many decades and continues to progress with efficiency.

Conclusion restated: AN HOUR SEEMS TO REPRESENT A NON-SPECIFIC PERIOD OF TIME WITH SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS. WHEN IT IS RE-ENFORCED WITH "ONE," IT STRESSES THE PECULIARITY OF THE TIME.

CROWN (S)

Because a part of the interpretation of Revelation depends on which crowns are on which heads, it seems expedient to do a topical study on the word.

Revelation utilizes TWO Greek words for crown: STEPHANOS and DIADEMA (Strong's 4735 and 1238 respectively). The former is used 8 times, the latter only 3. A comparison of their usage gives great dividends. The surface difference between the words is this: STEPHANOS refers to a wreath of victory given as a prize. The victory seems always to imply resulting authority. DIADEMA refers to a diadem bound around the head — the usual visual symbol for a king.

STEPHANOS:

- Rev. 2:10: The saints gain the crown of the life — i.e., immortality as a prize.
- Rev. 3:11: Let no one take your crown; we can forfeit the prize.
- Rev. 6:2: Probably the horseman is the glorified Jesus. A crown represents authority based on victory. In this case, He has the authority to spread the pure doctrine.
- Rev. 12:1: The early church, represented under the Sarah Covenant, has authority for thought coming from the 12 Apostles.
- Rev. 14:14: Jesus has a golden (Divine) authority to control the righteous trouble (cloud) and to reap.

PLURAL:

- Rev. 4:4: The 24 prophecies have the authority of God.
- Rev. 4:10: The prophecies cast toward God (i.e., acknowledge the source of their authority) their crowns.
- Rev. 9:7: This devouring force has (or appears to have) the Divine authority for their work.

DIADEMA:

- Rev. 12:3: The red dragon has crowns on its 7 heads. These heads obviously claim authority. But the DIADEM seems to represent **APPROPRIATED AUTHORITY** in Revelation. (In Ezek. 21:26, the diadem is a legitimate kingly authority, but **ONLY** when approved of God. All other appropriations are counterfeit)
- Rev. 13:1: Again we have **APPROPRIATED AUTHORITY**. This beast has diadems on its 10 horns.
- Rev. 19:12: Here we have Jesus wearing **MANY** crowns — probably **APPROPRIATED** from the 7 heads and 10 horns to whom they did not rightly belong. The real kingship was (Ezek. 21:26) to **LEAVE** the king of Israel and belong to no one until **JESUS** came with the **RIGHT** to it.

SUMMARY: A diadem seems a good thing **ONLY** on Jesus. On all others it is a bad thing — inappropriate. A crown (or wreath) of victory which entitles the wearer to certain privileges of authority seems good on anyone. False kings wear diadems in a counterfeit manner — their rulership was not earned; it was usurped.

THRONE(S)

In the KJV, throne is sometimes translated seat. But all are from Strong's number 2362 from a root meaning to set. Throne always seems to mean the setting down or establishment of the authority of judgment thus differing from CROWN which only shows authority but does not specify the nature of the authority unless the word is from DIADEMA which implies the civil authority of a king.

Most uses in Revelation are clear. A few uses give additional light on the subject of certain thrones:

In Rev. 3:21 the Church is promised to sit with Jesus on his throne even as Jesus shares his Father's throne. On which throne is Jesus sitting? The implication is that there is really only one throne, but it is a shared throne. God has all authority of Judgment, but He gave judgment authority to the Son who will also give it to the saints.

In Rev. 4:4 there are 24 thrones for the 24 elders. This seems to state that the standard of judgment during the Old Testament writings was the word of the Lord through the prophets.

In Rev. 7:9 and Rev. 7:15 the Great Multitude is BEFORE THE THRONE rather than on it. This position seems to imply a position of service. (Compare note on Rev. 14:3)

In Rev. 8:3 there is a little obscurity. This verse seems to refer back to Rev. 5:8. Just as Chapter 5 serves as a prelude to the opening of the seven Seals, Rev. 8:3 seems to serve as a prelude to the opening of the sounding of the Trumpets. This gives extra support to the concept that the Trumpets are a re-play of the same periods in which the Seals were opened. Thus verses 3-5 seem to say, we are being carried back to the same starting point as when we looked at the opening of the seals. Thus Rev. 8:3 seems to be God's throne as the Gospel Age begins. As this passage sounds much like the golden altar of the tabernacle with the throne being much like the most holy of the tabernacle, it again supports the idea of judgment (of the saints through the age) as the acceptable incense must precede the priest into the most holy or he would be condemned.

In Rev. 11:16 we again find reference to the 24 thrones of the elders.

In Rev. 12:5 the "manchild" (the man of sin; the Papacy) ascends to the usurpation of the throne (judgment power) of God.

In Rev. 13:2 we find much the same thought as in Rev. 12:5. Here the 10-horned beast gets his power to judge (throne) FROM THE DRAGON. The Roman civil power relinquished religious judgment to the bishop of Rome when Justinian was Emperor.

In Rev. 14:3 we have a verse of great lack of clarity. WHO IS SINGING? Even though it is BEFORE THE THRONE, it seems to be the Church. (See notes on 14:1-3 for clarification.)

In Rev. 16:10 clearly is a reference back to Chapter 13:2. The implication is that this plague threatens the authority of the Pope to judge and causes great internal conflict in the Roman church.

In Rev. 20:4 we find thrones assigned to the saints. This is the only place in Revelation (other than the 24 thrones of the elders) where thrones are in plural. Compare this with Rev. 3:21 and with Matt. 19:28. The back and forth idea of plural versus singular thrones seems simply to imply the delegated judgment from God to Christ and the Church AND the perfect UNITY of that delegated authority (John 17:20, 21).

TREES

Introduction: TREES is one of the symbols which Revelation uses but which is not interpreted within the book of Revelation itself. The word comes from Strong's numbers 1186 and 3586 (Gk.) To interpret the symbol, however, it is valuable to look at some Old Testament uses and some New Testament uses other than Revelation. Therefore, PART I of this study examines TREES outside of the book of Revelation. TREES is a large enough subject that it could be a study in itself almost as large as the book of Revelation. Our part I study, however, will restrict itself to only representative texts which help to understand the symbology so that it can be applied to Revelation's uses of trees.

PART I — TEXTS SHOWING THE SYMBOLIC MEANING

Psalm 1:1-3 Here the GODLY MAN is said to be like a tree which faithfully yields fruit.

Psalm 37:35-36 In this text the WICKED MAN gains visibility as a prospering tree; but his pretense fades away.

Psalm 92:12 Here the RIGHTEOUS MAN also is likened unto a flourishing tree. The text shows the enduring quality of these trees, however, by making them evergreens, palms and cedars.

Proverbs 3:18 In this citation, WISDOM is said to be the TREE OF LIFE. This is perhaps a reference to Jesus as Solomon personifies wisdom in Prov. 8:22-31. 1 Cor. 1:30 corroborates the idea of Jesus' being the personification of wisdom. It is possible, therefore, that JESUS is the TREE OF LIFE.

Isaiah 61:3 Here we have the SAINTS called trees of righteousness planted by God.

Ezekiel 17:22-24 This little parable would not clearly explain the meaning of any tree except that the similarity of phraseology in Ezek. 21:26 seems to explain what is meant. The house of Solomon was losing its claim to the throne so that ultimately the house of Nathan would inherit the throne in the person of Jesus. The HIGH house was being abased, the LOW exalted. Thus the trees here again represent IMPORTANT MEN and their HOUSEHOLDS — KINGS in this instance.

Daniel 4:20-22 Again a KING is represented by a tree. This text is helpful also in that it explains WHY the symbol of a tree works for this mighty man: " . . . for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth." Thus we see that a tree represents VISIBILITY and INFLUENCE.

Matthew 3:10 Here (and in Luke 3:9) John the Baptist refers to the PHARISEES and SADDUCEES as trees soon to be cut out at the roots because of lack of fruitage.

Matthew 7:17-19 Jesus uses the imagery that John the Baptist had used and applies this symbol of trees to FALSE PROPHETS.

Matthew 12:33 The PHARISEES (v. 24) are here likened to trees.

Matthew 13:32 In this parable Jesus likens the history of the Gospel Age Church to the planting of the faith seed which grows into an exceeding large institution (BABYLON) which becomes the home of uninvited guests which feed off of it. The parable (and the related one in Luke 17:6) refers to places in Revelation 18. In Rev. 18:4 Babylon has become the habitation of unclean birds. In Rev. 18:21 Babylon (like a millstone) is cast into the sea as is the tree of Luke 17:6. So, in these Matthew and Luke parables, and INSTITUTION seems to be symbolized by a tree.

Matthew 21:18-21 Here is another parable which, by itself, does not explain the meaning of tree. That a literal tree is not meant is obvious in that Jesus was hardly the kind of man who cursed trees. Jeremiah 24 explains that figs represent ISRAEL. This Old Testament text opens the understanding of the symbology of the FIG TREE in this parable and in all of its usages throughout the Bible. Israel, not bearing the desired fruitage, was cast off from the promises at the first advent.

Matthew 24:32-34 Jeremiah's clue interprets this parable well. When, at the time of the second advent, ISRAEL puts on leaves (profession of being alive = 1948), we know that summer (the kingdom) is near — within the generation of those who see the FIG TREE put forth leaves. The parallel account in Luke 21:29-32 adds "ALL THE TREES." The lesson is that when Israel is born as a new nation (post World War II), other new nations would also be springing up in great number. This has proven true. Thus TREES also symbolize NEW OR SMALL NATIONS.

Mark 8:24 This little parable attached to the healing of the blind man is significant. It does not interpret trees, but because the significance of trees is clearer by now, there is a significant lesson involved. Notice that Mark 8:21 ends the loaves and fishes miracle with a question: "Do you not yet understand?" This MAY BE connected to the healing miracle. The SEVEN baskets remaining apparently represent the TOTAL MESSAGE of all the seven messengers to the Church. Thus, when the Gospel Age ends, the disciples SHOULD UNDERSTAND. The healing miracle seems to show THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING: The Doctrine of Restitution. The blind man is brought OUT OF THE VILLAGE (out of Babylon?). His eyes are anointed with truth (spit = water) from Jesus' mouth. His "seeing" (understanding) begins by seeing "MEN"; for they look to me (margin) like TREES walking about." Trees don't walk. But people who are symbolized by trees DO! But trees fall (Ecclesiastes 11:3). Here trees are upright again, thus symbolizing the awakening and restitution of fallen mankind. In the healing miracle, once this all-important doctrine is seen, the blind man "began to see EVERYTHING CLEARLY."

Luke 6:43-45 MEN are again equated to trees.

Luke 13:6-7 Since the FIG TREE has been identified earlier, this little parable with its dates corresponding to Jesus' ministry is clear. The fig tree is ISRAEL.

Romans 11 The olive is a symbol of the Holy Spirit in any of its functions. The OLIVE TREE here, by context, shows the work of the Holy Spirit through the promise to Abraham regarding his seed. So this tree represents ABRAHAM or, possibly the Abrahamic Covenant. Its branches are natural (the Jews) or engrafted (the Gentiles.)

Jude 12 APOSTATE CHRISTIANS or UNFAITHFUL CHRISTIANS are here shown to be trees which have no fruitage by autumn; they are uprooted — TWICE DEAD = the 2nd death.

CONCLUSION: TREES represent MEN OF STATURE or GROUPS OF MEN as in INSTITUTIONS or SMALL NATIONS. These people stand out because they have INFLUENCE or NOTABLE GROWTH which draws attention to them above other men who are smaller vegetation: GRASS (Isaiah 40:6).

PART II -- CHARACTERISTICS OF TREES

All symbols have REASONS for being used. When the Lord picks a symbol it makes sense to all generations. Therefore, the characteristics of trees are important as elements in understanding the symbol. We have named characteristics which came to mind and then found that they all have Biblical parallels.

FRUIT-BEARING Jesus' parables made it clear that a tree without fruit (a man or nation without offering something for others) is worthless.

EVERLASTING Trees don't have predictable life-spans. It is probably safe to say that trees don't die. If they DO die it is because they have become diseased, they have been denied water, they have been chopped down or uprooted, etc. Thus the promise of Isaiah 65:22 is of special value: God's people will have everlasting life.

NEED WATER The symbolic tree (mankind) must have TRUTH (water) for life. Thus the promise of Psalm 1:3 and the restitution prophecy of Job 14:7-9.

HAVE ROOTS As Paul promises that a Christian will be grounded, not tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, all trees (men who gain maturity) will have stability.

GIVE SHELTER Jesus' parable of Matthew 13:31-32 showed how others are attracted to mature trees as a place of rest.

PURIFY AIR While no specific reference seems to exist on this function of a tree, the tree's giving of shade and coolness is implied throughout scripture.

PROVIDES MATERIALS Jesus himself promises to make his faithful trees **PILLARS IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD**. Paul also says the Church is the pillar of the truth.

PART III — TREES IN REVELATION

In Revelation, tree(s) has four Greek words, S1636 is the word specifically for the olive tree; S4808 is the word specifically for fig tree. The other two Greek words deal with tree characteristics: S3586 refers to the tissue, the **WOODINESS**, which constitutes a tree; S1186 refers to the branching-out appearance of a tree. Medical terms use this word (dendron; dendrite) to refer to those parts of the body branching out like trees, e.g., nerve endings, capillaries, etc. These last two Greek words possibly add to the symbolic significance of trees. The branching-out (S1186) is used in those places where trees seem to refer to notable persons — notable as is a tree which has spread its branches; The woody quality is used for those texts referring to the **TREE OF LIFE** or to places where the building material **WOOD** is meant. This would seem to show the strength of wood, the strength and reliability of the **TREE OF LIFE**.

WOOD — The texts using S3586 this way (Rev. 9:20; Rev. 18:12) seem not to have the symbolic meaning attached to "trees" and, thus, will not be here treated.

TREE OF LIFE — (Rev. 2:7; Rev. 22:2, 14). In Rev. 2:7 it is promised to the overcomers that they will eat of the tree of life. The meaning is not clear. It may signify unlimited access to life. Eating may signify appropriation to oneself as in the Lord's Supper, thus becoming **PART OF** the tree of life. This fits best when compared to Rev. 22:2 where the trees may very well **BE** the glorified Church which supply fruit for the world (Rev. 22:14).

OTHER TREES WHICH SEEM TO SYMBOLIZE SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS, INSTITUTIONS, OR (POSSIBLY) SMALL NATIONS:

Rev. 6:13 - This verse is in the midst of the description of the sixth Seal and should, therefore, apply during the period of PHILADELPHIA. The 12th verse brings us to the earthquake, the French Revolution. The FIG TREE represents Israel. It was Napoleon's intention to re-establish the Holy Land as a home for the Jewish people. His plans were ruined by Lord Nelson's fleet. This would have been too early in God's plan for the restoration of Israel which was prophesied to come in 1878. So here in 1799, the figs do not mature because the Napoleonic plans for the Holy Land were shaken by the great wind of war.

Rev. 7:1-3 - The great wind of war COULD HAVE expanded to be the great time of trouble. But this too would have been premature. Thus the four winds which could have blown to make the final whirlwind are held back so that the society (earth), the masses of rootless humanity (sea) and the significant leaders (trees) are not destroyed. Such a commotion would prevent the successful completion of the 144,000.

Rev. 8:7 - Until we have discovered the significance of A THIRD PART,* a clear interpretation of these trees is not possible. The setting is during the first Church (33-100). The destruction is likely the trouble on the Jewish nation. Trees, no doubt, refers to significant leaders among men. Just which ones is not yet clear. Since the world at that time was Jewish, Roman, and Christian, this may simply mean that the Jewish leadership was destroyed.

Rev. 9:4 - This is part of the fifth Trumpet — the time of Wycliffe. The stings of increasing truth from Wycliffe, Huss, and others as well as the translation of Scripture into the vernacular created irritating STINGS on the established church. Verse 4 notes that this increasing light (Wycliffe is the MORNING STAR OF THE REFORMATION) does NOT hurt the grass (people) or the trees (probably the Church), but ONLY those men ("Christians") WITHOUT the seal — apostates.

Rev. 11:4 - This text does not represent trees as individuals, institutions, or small nations (unless, of course, we think of the Scriptures as an institution.) The trees and candlesticks ARE, however, PERSONIFIED as witnesses. Here, as elsewhere, the olive tree represents some special function of the Holy Spirit — in this case, the Old and New Testament writings which were in sackcloth (mourning) during the 1260 years of Papal rule.

*Subsequent to this part of our Revelation study, we decided that the fraction meant literally one of three functioning parts. See notes on Rev. 8:7.

"JEWS" IN REVELATION

Revelation began by pointing out that this is a book of symbols. As we might expect, things do not mean what they say. JEWS are not Jews in Revelation; Jews are Christians. However, Jews ARE mentioned in Revelation by their own symbolism. Note the following exhaustive list on the subject:

Rev. 2:9 This verse is a part of the message to the Smyrna Church. By now, the Jews had ceased to be a threat to the young Christian Church. What WAS a threat, however, was the growing antichrist element of which Paul had warned and which he said had already become active in his day. This verse acknowledges that the Smyrna Church had to face this threat from within. The apostate Christians, of course, SAID they were Christians, but were not; they were part of the new false house of worship — the synagogue of Satan: the emerging Babylonish element.

Rev. 2:14-15 We are, by this verse, into the third period of the Church; we are past 313 A.D. By now (verse 13) the synagogue of Satan has a throne: Rome. In verse 14, the "sons of Israel" are mentioned. This IS A LITERAL STATEMENT. Because this part of the passage is merely a reference to historical fact (that Balaam stumbled the sons of Israel), symbolism is not needed. When the next verse arrives, however, we are dealing with prophecy, not history. Balaam now is symbolized in its new form as the "Nicolaitans," and the implication is that the Pergamos Church are now the new "sons of Israel" who could stumble at the hand of the new deceiver.

Rev. 3:9 By this verse, we are in the 6th stage of the Church — the time when the Reformation has cut the ties from the apostate church and set the brethren free. The synagogue of Satan, of course, is yet around, but it no longer can control the saints whose 1260 years in the wilderness expire during this period. The Roman Church still claims to be JEWS (Christians), but the prophecy quite clearly states that they are NOT; they LIE. Having lost much of its power to persecute, the false church must BOW to (acknowledge) other Christians.

Rev. 6:13 Here TRUE ISRAEL is symbolized by the figs. They are UNTIMELY (unripe) because God did not want the re-establishment of Israel in the days of the French Republic although Napoleon WANTED to establish a homeland for them at that time. His WAR (wind) with England prevented his accomplishing his plans.

Rev. 7:4 Verse 3 refers to the BONDSERVANTS OF GOD. These are the very same ones to whom Revelation was written (1:1). These are the ones sealed in this prophecy; yet, it calls them members of "every tribe of the sons of Israel." The symbol remains constant; Jews = Christians.

Rev. 21:12 Here again the saints (symbolized by the 12 tribes) have their symbolic tribal names inscribed on the gates of the new Jerusalem. This 12-tribe reference clearly reverts to 7:4. The church will be the access to the new order. (See notes on 21:12 for alternative explanation.)

"INTERIOR" QUOTES

Revelation students are aware that much in the book is quoted from Old Testament writings — EXTERIOR QUOTES. Another kind of quote, however, is important to recognize — INTERIOR QUOTATIONS.

Not everything in the Bible is truth! We all recall the quote from the serpent (Gen. 3:4), "You surely shall not die!" THIS IS A LIE — and the Bible is full of them. Recall to your mind the incident in I Samuel 28 when Saul has the Witch of Endor "call up" Samuel from the grave. Samuel is "quoted" in verse 15-19. Yet we all know that he was dead. He never said these things. This lesson is important in Revelation. Note two important instances:

Chapter 12

In verses 7-9 we have the symbolic account of the rise of Papacy and the fall of Rome from religious rulership. Then, in verses 10-12, we have a quote FROM PAPACY. Among the claims made is that "the Kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come." What a lie! Yet, if we do not recognize this quotation as a false statement being made by Antichrist, we cannot properly interpret Chapter 12.

Chapter 6

In the narrative of the 6th Seal we also have a quotation. Following the Revolution and the Reign of Terror in France (verses 12-14), people of all sorts want protection from such upheavals. In verses 16 and 17 they are quoted as asking protection from kingdoms and institutions. But they MISINTERPRET what has been happening. They ascribe the horrible trouble to "the day of wrath" — the End of the World. It IS NOT that. They merely THINK it is. If we do not see this FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE, we are apt to interpret these verses as belonging to the 20th Century rather than the time of the 6th Seal. It IS important to know their fears. These fears made many search the Scriptures to determine when the "End of the World" would come. This resulted in the Adventist movement and the study of the chronology from Daniel by men like Miller and Wolff. What we DO NOT want to do is to take this "interior quote" as a statement of fact and thus place this prophecy at the wrong time in history.

"ONE OF THE ANGELS"

Preparatory Information:

In Revelation we (or John, representing us), are addressed in a number of ways.

- (a) Directly by Jesus (Rev. 1:17-20)
- (b) By a voice from heaven (Rev. 4:1; Rev. 14:13)
- (c) By an elder (Rev. 5:5)
- (d) By an angel (Rev. 10:9)
- (e) By a voice from the throne (Rev. 19:5, 9, 10)

and

- (f) (the point of this appendix)
By ONE of the seven angels which had the seven vials (Rev. 17:1)

This last named angel is of special importance. He first appears to John in this friendly, personal form in Rev. 17:1. He STAYS with John to the end of the book of Revelation, taking him aside and explaining things to him.

This angel is CHARLES T. RUSSELL, the seventh messenger to the Church. It is the point of this study to confirm that thesis.

The Evidences:

The fact that this angel first speaks with John in the Harvest period is in itself an evidence. John does not have the help of this angel UNTIL the Harvest period, and he (we) CONTINUE to have his help to the end — showing the continuing value of the message which God has provided for Laodicea.

If we trace the account to see what John (the Church) learns from this angel, we will see that ALL of these things are things the Church has learned through the ministry of Bro. Russell:

1. He shows us the judgment of the great harlot (Rev. 17:1). Bro. Russell was not unique in RECOGNIZING the apostate church. THAT happened by many before him. He was, however, unique in explaining the prophecies concerning the casting off, decline, and end of the Babylon.
2. He carries us back to study the wilderness condition of the Church — the 1260 years. (Rev. 17:3) In his explanations of the development of the great Man of Sin, Bro. Russell carefully explained the chronology of Daniel which showed the Time, Times, and Half a Time during which the true Church would have to live apart from the apostate doctrine and practice in a self-imposed wilderness, fleeing from the hatred of the harlot.

3. This angel shows us our wonder and explains the symbols of prophecy. (Rev. 17:6, 7) Bro. Russell realized the hunger of the John class to understand what had happened in Church history. He virtually said in his ministry, "Have you wondered about this? Let me tell you what it means."
4. This angel shows us the art of interpreting symbols and, by using these interpreted symbols, tells us things to come. (Rev. 17:15-18) Again, Bro. Russell (through the enlightenment of the Scriptures) taught us that waters consistently represent either peoples or truths, etc., etc. He then, through the art of topical study, showed us how to take these consistent symbols and apply them to prophetic passages in order to make sense of them.
5. He explained the bride class — the body of Christ which would bless all the families of the earth. Thus we knew the purpose of our calling. (Rev. 21:9)
6. He told of the new government of earth to be led by Jesus with that bride. (Rev. 21:10) Indeed, how often he "carried me away in spirit to a great and high mountain!" THAT, like Jesus' preaching, was the thrust of his message.
7. The angel explicitly detailed the SIZE of that new government. (Rev. 21:15). He told us that it would consist of 144,000 individuals with Jesus (Rev. 14:1-5.) He was perhaps the first messenger since the early Church to recognize that the New Jerusalem HAS a size — it was not to be just some great number of people who made it into heaven!
8. The angel is IMPLIED to be a MAN! (Rev. 21:17) (Rev. 22:9) (KJV)
9. He brought to light (after centuries of its being hidden) the facts of the doctrine of RESTITUTION, (Rev. 22:1, 2) Again, no messenger since the early Church had seen so clearly the doctrine which sets apart the TWO SALVATIONS. (Acts 3:20, 21)
10. This angel CLAIMS TO HAVE PRESENTED THE TRUTH. (Rev. 22:6) Stop to think about this. An angelic messenger would not need to make this claim (although Jesus does in Rev. 21:5). But this angel does what Bro. Russell did, he said, "here is THE TRUTH."
11. This angel detailed the chronology. (Rev. 22:10) Bro. Russell even used the words of this verse for his masterpiece volume on chronology, THE TIME IS AT HAND.
12. He foresaw our tendency to receive messengers as too important in themselves and corrected us of this error. (Rev. 22:8, 9; and Rev. 19:10)
13. He explained the doctrine of the Great Multitude (which had not been seen since the days of the Apostles) (Rev. 19:9)

14. This angel directs our worship to the ONLY TRUE AUTHORITY. (Rev. 22:9) The spirit of the Reformation has always been that the Bible is the only true authority for the worship of God. The followers of reformers strayed from this advice to form denominations. Bro. Russell did all in his power, and his writings still do the same, to INSIST that all faith structure be based ONLY on the Holy Word. All who take his writings for proof do violence to his ministry.

Conclusions:

The power of this ONE OF THE SEVEN ANGELS is inspiring. The John class could not walk well in the narrow way without the instructive friendship of this particular angel. The Lord knew this and thus introduces him to John in Chapter 17. We are grateful to the Lord for the provision and want to use it appropriately. Understanding the place of the Laodicean messenger is an invaluable asset to all Christians at this end of the age. Worshipping him is a pitfall.

There is an extra benefit from understanding the identity of this angel. By understanding who ONE of the angels is who has one of the seven vials, we are forced to the conclusion that the other six with the other six vials must be the remaining six messengers to the Church. Of course, all of them are now glorified beyond the veil with our Master. But this takes the guess-work out of discerning who the seven angels are who have the seven vials. They all blew trumpets; but the trumpets only did so much good. Now, equipped beyond the veil with great powers, they can pour out the seven plagues to destroy the great system of error which they hated.

WHICH HEAVEN?

Throughout the Bible "heaven" can mean one of various things. In Revelation, however, the meaning seems to fall into only a few categories. The following study is not conclusive, but it may be a help in determining what is meant when the word "heaven" is used.

First a summary: Most uses of heaven in Revelation are symbolic of the religious world — both true and apostate. Occasionally, however, heaven seems unmistakably to refer to the spirit realm — the place or condition of God's personal presence and direction. In a few other instances heaven seems more to be a reference to Divine Ordination — something which emanates from the realm of God's presence. Furthermore, there seem to be interesting small distinctions. For instance, voices IN heaven seems to be totally different from voices FROM heaven. The former seems to refer to the symbolic heaven of the religious world; the latter seems to mean a message from God. This all may yet need some fine tuning, but the suggested usages are listed below.

LITERAL OR NEARLY-LITERAL USAGES

The first list is a unit because these texts almost inescapably require a literal usage:

Rev. 4:2	description of God's authority
Rev. 5:3	No one on any level of existence was found worthy.
Rev. 5:13	all creation in all places.
Rev. 10:5	used as a direction
Rev. 10:6	all creation in all places
Rev. 14:7	as part of creation
Rev. 18:5	a colloquial usage meaning very high

The second list has in common texts which mention voice(s) FROM heaven. All seem to mean messages from God's Ordination and are thus, more or less, literal:

Rev. 4:1	(Cf. Rev. 1:10) — a message from beyond.
Rev. 10:4	a message from beyond.
Rev. 10:8	a message from beyond.
Rev. 11:12	Divine command.
Rev. 14:2	obscure, but seemingly a message from beyond.
Rev. 14:13	Divine information
Rev. 18:4	Divine command

The third list has in common the expression COMING DOWN from heaven and again seems (with one explainable exception) to refer to things literally coming down from the spirit realm or coming from elsewhere but by Divine ordination:

Rev. 3:12	New Jerusalem comes down from heaven.
Rev. 10:1	strong angel comes down; possibly Gabriel.
Rev. 16:21	hailstones come down from heaven — possibly as a judgment.
Rev. 18:1	angel comes down and enlightens earth.

Rev. 20:1	angel comes down with key and chain.
Rev. 20:9	fire comes down and devours enemies.
Rev. 21:2	New Jerusalem comes down.
Rev. 21:10	New Jerusalem comes down.
Rev. 13:13	THE EXCEPTION — In this one instance ONLY, something coming down from heaven seems to be FROM THE NOMINAL HEAVEN. Why? The implication is that this passage is a counterfeit of the true. Just as God from literal heaven can send down judgements (Rev. 16:21 and Rev. 20:9), so the two-horned beast here claims to be like God in the ability to send down destructive judgements.

SYMBOLIC USAGES

This fourth list consists of texts dealing with voice(s) IN heaven. The contexts are all easily explainable as being part of the religious world here on earth:

Rev. 11:15	the proclamation early in Laodicea was the Reign begun.
Rev. 12:10	here the Papacy claims the kingdom begun on earth.
Rev. 19:1 ⁺	this seems to be the Gt. Multitude's realization of the completed Church.

This fifth list has in common the Greek word and English translation for MIDST OF HEAVEN or MID-HEAVEN. The term seems to indicate that there is no preference shown in the contexts for any specific part of Christianity in the flesh. The messages are in the midst — not over to one side, favoring one group or another:

Rev. 8:13	eagle announces the three woes coming.
Rev. 14:6	the harvesting angel announces the gospel to Christianity.
Rev. 19:17	birds in the midst of Christianity called to the supper.

This sixth list is the longest and contains what seem all to be references to the religious world. Some of these are more easily explained than others; some seem to refer to the apostate heavens, some to the true:

Rev. 6:13	stars of heaven fell.
Rev. 8:1	silence in heaven for half-hour.
Rev. 8:10	great star fell from heaven.
Rev. 9:1	star from heaven fell to earth.
Rev. 11:6	two witnesses have power to shut heaven so no rain.
Rev. 11:12	Scriptures exalted to heaven.
Rev. 11:13	glory to "god" of heaven (= Pope?).
Rev. 11:19*	temple opened in heaven.
Rev. 12:1	sign in heaven (woman).
Rev. 12:3	another sign in heaven (dragon).
Rev. 12:4	stars of heaven thrown to earth.
Rev. 12:7	war in heaven.
Rev. 12:8	no place for dragon in heaven.
Rev. 12:12	heavens rejoice.
Rev. 13:13	an exception discussed in list number 3.

⁺This text probably belongs in the first list on the preceding page. See comments on 19:1

*See p. 332.

Rev. 14:17	temple in heaven.
Rev. 15:1	sign in heaven: angels with plagues.
Rev. 15:5*	temple opened in heaven.
Rev. 16:11	blasphemed "god" of heaven (= Pope?).
Rev. 18:20	rejoice heaven!
Rev. 19:11	heaven opened.
Rev. 19:14	armies in heaven.
Rev. 20:11	heaven fled away.
Rev. 21:1	new heavens; first had fled.

* These two texts seem to be ambiguous in the way they should be translated. Whether the temple IN HEAVEN was opened, or whether the temple was opened IN HEAVEN seems to make a difference not provable by certain translation rules. We prefer the latter as it seems to fit the facts more easily.

SPURIOUS USAGES

This seventh list is the listing of those places where heaven is spurious:

Rev. 16:17	part of seventh plague.
Rev. 21:3	proclamation about tabernacle of God with men.

TO WHOM ARE THE SEVEN CHURCH MESSAGES WRITTEN

This question may appear a strange one. The messages to the Churches SHOULD BE to the Church! But the question often arises among brethren as to whether these messages are to the church nominal, the Church true, or both.

THE PROBLEM

It should be noted that this would probably not be a question if we only had the messages to the first six Churches upon which to decide. The first six Churches clearly (with the possible exception of Sardis) have a DIVIDED MESSAGE. One part of each message is to YOU; one part is about THEM. The clear implication is that the YOU class is His consecrated saints; the THEM class is the apostate or nominal Christian element. (In Sardis, — Rev. 3:4 — the division is only implied. YOU and THEM are not mentioned; but the implication is strong that those in white are the saints. All the rest are impostors.)

Unfortunately, the seventh stage of the Church does not have this division. If it did, there seemingly would be no question. Of course, we might reason, "Why should one exception cause us to re-reason on the other six?" This is the reason for this study.

THE EVIDENCES

It must be noted that Bro. Russell felt that this Laodicean message was to the nominal Church. This is IMPORTANT. After all, he IS the messenger to Laodicea. Who shall tell him to whom he was delivering his message! The last article he prepared on the subject is R. 5992. This came out in November 1916 — the month AFTER he died. It is clearly his latest and last word on the subject. While some might dismiss this testimony, it seems illogical to do so. However, we CAN accept it and build around it to come to the conclusion that his statement is PARTLY true; or we can accept his statement as being entirely true and that, thus, Laodicea is, indeed, an exception in this list of seven Church messages. The FORMER seems the best route for reasons yet to be explained.

All seven stages of the Church DO have statements IN COMMON in their messages.

They ALL say: "To the angel of the church in _____ write:" To whom would these angels aim their messages? It is fair to say that their PRIMARY function was to aid the spirit-begotten ones. Even with Bro. Russell, while he proclaimed an enormously critical message toward Christianity in general, his PRIMARY work has been the edification of the saints. Even while he condemned the sorry state of Babylon, he did it primarily to say "come out of her my people."

They ALL say: "To him that overcometh. . . ." WHO CAN OVERCOME? Only the spirit-begotten. Thus, even in Laodicea, one MUST CONCLUDE that part of the message is NOT for the nominal church, but for the true. This is the time for the separation of the wheat and tares — a parable with much the same message as Revelation's "Come out of her." Would all or the bulk of the message be to the tares? This seems illogical in the extreme.

They ALL say: "Hear what the spirit says to the Churches." This is consistently aimed at those who "HAVE AN EAR." Could those with an ear be those who are not the Lord's? Again, it seems not possible, thus seemingly insuring that the "Churches" in these statements must be the TRUE Churches.

THE SOLUTION?

With the above evidences being nearly overwhelmingly in favor of the messages being meant for the

TRUE CHURCH, we must deal with Bro. Russell's position stating that the Laodicean message is to the nominal church. There can be no question that the seventh Church is unique. For the first time in history the Lord admonishes the separation of the true from the false. This IS OF NECESSITY VERY CONFUSING. It is akin to the situation in the first Church when the distinctions between Judaism and incoming Christianity were blurred to those who had to learn to live under a new religious order of things. Bro. Russell was clearly cognizant in his ministry of his dual responsibilities as messenger to the HARVEST Church. All who know his writings are aware of his constant attempts to balance the reaping of the wheat with the binding of the tares. The fact is, EVERYTHING stated in Rev. 3:15-17 was a just and true condemnation of the denominations of his day. There is, however, an interesting MYSTERY about this. The message to the Philadelphia Church has NOTHING BAD in it. The message to the Laodicean Church has NOTHING GOOD in it. Yet, these two Church periods meld into each other in the late 19th century. Did Philadelphia remain GOOD until 1874 and then suddenly turn so terribly corrupt? Remember that Babylon was CAST OFF in 1878. If all that Rev. 3:15-17 says about the Churches is correct, DID THEY NOT BECOME THIS WAY IN THE PHILADELPHIA PERIOD? If so, why does the Philadelphia message make NO MENTION of its deterioration as the Thyatira message makes of its improvement (Rev. 2:19)? The answer to this MYSTERY seems plain: The Philadelphia message is to THE TRUE CHURCH — THE SAINTS. Of them, nothing was found to be criticized. The nominal church of Philadelphia, on the other hand, became increasingly corrupt to live up to the Lord's reasons for casting it off in 1878.

This lends credence to the position that the messages are to the TRUE CHURCH. It also lends credence to the words of Rev. 3:15-17 being applicable BOTH to the cast off nominal church AND the saints of our day. Because it is the Harvest, it seems only right that a harvesting should be included in the message. The lukewarm and wretched condition of Babylon for which she is cast off (Rev. 18) IS THE VERY SPIRIT OF THE WORLD WHICH BECOMES A TRUE THREAT TO THE TRUE CHURCH. IN ALL of the seven Church messages, the sins of the apostate church are the things which the true Church must overcome in order to be faithful. ONE DOES NOT OVERCOME SOMETHING WITH WHICH ONE IS NOT AFFLICTED!

THEREFORE: Rev. 3:15-17 DOES (as Bro. Russell continually contends) apply to the nominal house . BUT, it also, and just as much, applies to the consecrated as a warning that they, like their counterfeit brethren, are afflicted with the same diseases which must be overcome.

THUS it seems appropriate, and in harmony with Bro. Russell's position, that we can say that the messages to the seven Churches are TO THE TRUE SAINTS. In each of these messages, however, is a reflection of prevailing sins among nominal brethren. In Laodicea, this reflection is also a condemnation — a REASON for the casting off of Babylon.

The import of the lesson is sobering. It would be very comfortable to practice Babylon-bashing, which some brethren seem to enjoy. But if we do not pay attention to the message which the SPIRIT SAYS TO US, we will fail to note that WE might have the same faults — even though we have increased light beyond measure. We can boast of our riches of truth but have characters not hot for righteousness or cold toward unrighteousness. We might well miss the point. We might not overcome!

The Laodicean Church does not have a YOU and THEM contrast so clearly stated as the other messages BECAUSE for NEARLY ALL of the period there is NO LONGER ANY THEM. They have been cast off during the first 3½ years of the seventh period of the Church. Once this casting off is accomplished, the message to Laodicea is a message to US — to the consecrated saints who must during this period of wealth and arrogance learn what REAL wealth is and build characters to go along with that knowledge.

QUALIFICATIONS for BEING ONE of the SEVEN ANGELS

MUCH discussion has gone into naming the seven messengers (angels) to the seven Churches. On the whole, Bible students have been in basic agreement as to the identities of these individuals. Now and then, however, some of us feel an uncomfortability with someone on the usual list and attempt a substitution. It is not unhealthy to question such things. It is wise, however, to have certain standards in mind before seeking candidates so that our suggestions are not illogical. The following is an attempt to help to arrive at such standards. Probably these standards will only help to make us appreciate more the standardly accepted list of angels.

(1) Since each Church message begins: "To the angel of the Church in _____ write," it is more than implied that the angel will have gotten the message and that the points of the message will be a PROMINENT PART of that individual's teachings.

(2) Since each message is written TO THE ANGEL, not directly to the Church, it is also more than implied that the messenger will be sufficiently WELL-KNOWN and /or WELL-PUBLISHED that the faithful of the period will be able to get the message from him. He will stand out in ecclesiastical history. He will not be obscure in the religious world.

(3) It might seem natural that the angel should be physically present at the time which marks the beginning of his period of the Church. This is probably USUALLY true. But there might be a Scriptural clue that this need not be the case. Rev. 2:19 says (NAS): "I know your deeds, and your love and faith and perseverance, and that your deeds OF LATE (margin: last deeds) are greater than AT FIRST (margin: the first.)" It seems that at the point this message is given, a part of the period had expired. This is true also in Rev. 2:4. Paul (who is most likely the first angel) was not an Apostle or even a Christian when Ephesus began. His messages to the Ephesus period (most of the New Testament epistles) date well into the period. Likewise, if John is the messenger to Smyrna, and if (as the parable of Matt. 13:25 suggests) Smyrna begins when all the Apostles had died, John was not present during Smyrna except by his writings. Therefore, the choice of an angel may, if proper reason be found, possibly be someone not living or functioning as the period opens. (see notes on 2:21.)

(4) If the history of any period is well known for a particular difficulty, the writings of the angel should be helpful in knowing how to combat and overcome that difficulty. For example: Gnosticism was rampant during Smyrna. The arguments in John's writings on the natures of Jesus as pre-human, human, and post-human were extremely instrumental in combating and overcoming the gnostic heresies. This problem IS NOT identified specifically in the message to Smyrna, but is well known in Church history. It may be that it is simply summarized along with other problems in Rev. 2:9.

(5) All of the angels need not have total clarity of understanding. Obviously, if Paul and John are the first two angels, they will have perfect doctrine because they were, additionally, inspired Apostles. Bro. Russell, because he lives when the "mystery will be finished," should have a complete, though not inspired, understanding (if not of every minute detail of the Bible) of the message due at the end of the age. The four remaining angels may, and likely DO, however, have a modicum of misunderstanding BECAUSE prophetically not all truth or clarity was to be available during their periods of the Church. Some of their errors may even be shocking! How foolish to think that they would have clear understandings and not share them with their contemporaries! But it was not in God's plan during their lifetimes to have clear truth available. Therefore, we should not fret over their errors and think we must disqualify them for their lack of understanding in many areas.

(6) In symbolic terms, these men must be FAT — zealous and liberal in their natures. Their charges are so very important that anything less than consuming commitment would disqualify them from consideration as angels. This fatness would include courage, a willingness to be different, a teachableness as well as an ability to teach. These men will not be purely intellectual, but they will have speaking for them historical evidence of having a close and devoted personal relationship with God. As far as fallen men can have exemplary lives, these men will.

(7) It is interesting to note the relationship to Scripture of the men usually listed as the seven angels. Paul and John WROTE Scripture. Arius DEFENDED its meaning just after the canon of Scripture had been established. Waldo, Wycliffe, and Luther all TRANSLATED Scripture — interestingly into the three languages which would ultimately become international languages: French, English, and German respectively. Russell HARMONIZED Scripture in a way never before attempted or never since equaled. These, among many other reasons, strongly attest to the rightfulness of their selection as the seven angels to the seven Churches.

HOW DO WE KNOW THE FOUR BEASTS REPRESENT GOD'S ATTRIBUTES?

It has become standard Bible student response to say that the four living ones (four "beasts" in the KJV) of Revelation represent the four attributes of God — Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Power. From whence did this understanding come? It seems to have been defined by Bro. W. I. Mann in 1883 (See R529). To summarize his explanation, we give the following:

By building upon several steps of information, we can determine that the LIVING ONES of Revelation are mentioned elsewhere in the Bible as CHERUBIM. The story is built as follows:

(1) In Gen. 3:24 we find CHERUBIM guarding Eden so that man would no longer have access to the tree of life.

STRONG, strangely, says the word is of uncertain origin — "an imaginary figure."

Clearly "imaginary" is not the right thought since God, Himself, uses the word in describing Lucifer (Ezek. 28:14), and God does not deal in the imaginary. However, He DOES deal in the SYMBOLIC. Perhaps referring to Lucifer as a Cherub — the ONLY heavenly creature which God authorized to be represented in a visual way — is to draw our attention to some attribute of Lucifer. He was a "Covering Cherub" — much the same as the tabernacle cherubim covering the mercy seat.

(2) The next occurrence of cherubim is in Exo. 25 and the many places thereafter where these creatures appear as part of the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant. They are replaced by similar but larger cherubim in the Temple (1 Kings 6:23). Ezekiel also describes cherubim in Chapters 1 and 10. He does not call them cherubim in Chapter 1; but he does in Chapter 10 where he says they were what he described in Chapter 1 (Ezek. 10:20-22). Here we see the connection with the four living ones of Revelation in that the same representations of Ezekiel 1 appear in Revelation 4.

(3) God's presence is always stated or implied with reference to the Cherubim. Even in Genesis, a careful comparison of Gen. 4:3, 16 will show that God was represented as being at the gate of Eden (even after the fall). His presence between the cherubim of the tabernacle and temple is well known: "He who dwelleth between the cherubim." (See Exo. 25:22 and Psa. 18:10). In Ezekiel 10:4, "the glory of the LORD went up from the Cherub."

(4) The conclusion is then easy to find when the meaning of Ezekiel's descriptions are discerned and compared with Rev. 4: The eagle is wisdom, the face of man is love (God SO loved man that He gave His son), the calf is justice (which is satisfied in the tabernacle), and the lion is power (as represented in Jesus and Satan, the two powerful antagonists of the Bible.) The CHANGE in the tabernacle Cherubim to the Temple Cherubim is most revealing. It is Scripturally clear that justice is SATISFIED on the mercy seat. It is also clear that God, in all His wisdom, is represented by the LIGHT above it. The two cherubim so well show love and power WAITING to aid man once justice is satisfied. And so it is pictured in the temple (representing the Millennium) when the cherubim NOW have spread wings to fly to mankind's aid.

TOO MANY BEASTS, HEADS, AND HORNS!

One problem in the interpretation of Revelation is the identification of the similar but differing beasts of Daniel 7 & Revelation 12, 13, and 17. For purposes of reference, they will herein be referred to by the following titles:

Daniel 7 —	The Terrible Beast
Revelation 12 —	The Red Dragon.
Revelation 13 —	The Leopard Beast.
Revelation 17 —	The Scarlet Beast.

Let it be known from the outset that this Appendix Item #74g will not solve all the mysteries of these prophecies. Many brethren of superb interpretive abilities have attempted to identify these beasts and their parts and to link each symbol to an historic equivalent. All of these attempts must be admired; but all of these attempts leave questions in the mind of this scribe. It is, therefore, the object of this paper simply to note some of the elements which seem obvious, to note where problems exist, and, perhaps, to suggest some possible solutions.

WHO (Generally Speaking) ARE THESE BEASTS?

It is the consensus of brethren who interpret Revelation that all of these creatures represent extended Rome in one form of costume or another. Pagan, Civil, Ecclesiastical, and Church-State forms have all been suggested. These seem accurate and logical and fill the interpretive requirements. Rome and its political and theological descendants have been the center of Church history.

Rome throughout history has been known as the City on Seven Hills. It seems that the Revelator incorporated this into his message for the sake of recognition. (Compare Rev. 17:9 to Rev. 2:13 for an example.) It should be noted that Daniel 7 does not refer to this 7-part symbolism. The historical identity of the Terrible Beast is, however, extremely obvious in Daniel's context of four beasts.

A LESSON FROM JOB

A careful consideration of Item #79 in Appendix C is highly recommended at this point. Leviathan and Behemoth seem clearly to distinguish between the civil beast and the ecclesiastical beast — both of whom are great enemies of the people and the true Church. The civil beast (Leviathan) seems clearly linked to the prophetic "seed" of the serpent (Gen. 3:15) which would "bruise (the seed of the woman) on the heel." Bible Students have too frequently focused prophetic attention on the ecclesiastical beast (the apostate Christianity) as our enemy. Insufficient focus has been given to the civil beast (governments) as the primary source of trouble for the saints. This imbalance is dangerous.

WHO (Specifically) ARE THESE BEASTS?

THE TERRIBLE BEAST (Dan. 7) This entity represents "Rome" during its entire history and through all of its evolutions. In Dan. 7:7 it is Rome before Papacy. In Dan. 7:8 it is Rome being transformed by Papacy. In Dan. 7:11 it is today's remains of the Roman-Papal Empire. The number of heads on this

beast is ONLY ONE (Dan. 7:20) because the varying forms of government of Roman history are not important to us in the interpretation of Gospel Age prophecy. The number of horns is ten PLUS one because it is important for us to see from history how the "little horn" came into power.

THE RED DRAGON (Rev. 12) This entity represents Pagan Rome evolving into Civil Rome. When first we meet it, we see it concerned about the growing religious power of apostate Christians (the manchild) — See Rev. 12:3, 4. We see it lose its religious influence to this child (Rev. 12:7-9). From this point forward it no longer represents Pagan Rome, but Civil Rome, and it is given the four-part name: Dragon, Serpent, Devil, and Satan (Rev. 12:9). He will be mentioned again in Rev. 20:2.

THE LEOPARD BEAST (Rev. 13) This picture represents the manchild's view of how the Roman Empire evolved into an ecclesiastical unit. The Red Dragon (of Rev. 12) represented the secular view. That Dragon gives this beast its power (Rev. 13:2) showing that in this picture the two are separate entities.

THE SCARLET BEAST (Rev. 17) This entity represents the interaction between church and state. Because of this it is necessary to have the woman sitting on the heads. Thus we can see how they do and do not relate or cooperate. In this chapter it becomes necessary to identify the heads since their chronology enters into the interpretation (Rev. 17:8, 9, 10).

HEADS

The head of a creature is the part that does the thinking — the part that directs the rest of the body. The Red Dragon, The Leopard Beast, and the Scarlet Beast ALL have seven heads. The Terrible Beast of Daniel, however, only has ONE (Dan. 7:20). This would lead us to believe that the Lord was trying to tell us that we have no significant interest in the Roman Empire as such. It would not be profitable for us to search history to find out what kinds of leadership it had before Christianity comes on the scene. Daniel focuses on the horns because he wants us to begin considering the details of Rome only once the Apostate Power is on the scene — once the little horn comes up. Therefore, when Revelation takes the trouble to draw our attention to seven heads on ALL THREE of these beasts, it strongly suggests that we must be interested in Roman leadership changes once Christianity develops. It would seem, then, that any listing of seven heads SHOULD NOT PREDATE the existence of the apostate church.

HORNS, CROWNS, & BLASPHEMY

In Daniel and in Revelation we find 10 horns in common for all of these beasts. Horns represent powers — just as we begin to consider the power of a bull or ram when he lowers his head to show us he is ready to exercise or employ the power he has.

These horns (along with crowns) are used symbolically to make several points:

- (a) The consistent use in all of these creatures helps us to equate them as various parts of one big picture.
- (b) In Daniel the plucking up of three of them by the "little horn" allows us to trace in history the chronology of the setting up of the Abomination of Desolation.
- (c) In Revelation 12 and 13 we see that Pagan-Civil Rome (The Red Dragon) has crowns on the heads. This is because the authority was vested in the central Roman political structure, not in the provinces. But in The Leopard Beast (Rome as viewed by the manchild in chapter 13), the crowns are moved to the horns because the church crowned the civil rulers under it and, for the most part, let them have the civil authority. In one sense the pictures are identical in that they both acknowledge that the civil rulers wore the crowns. In Rev. 13, however, the heads have BLASPHEMOUS NAMES on them. This is because church and state were so mixed as to be inseparable in each of the stages of the empire's evolution, and the Lord saw this entanglement of church and state as blasphemous.

(d) The Scarlet Beast (Rev. 17), on the other hand, has crowns on neither heads nor horns because in this picture the woman considers herself sovereign over the whole arrangement. It is not stated that she is crowned, but her royal attitude is clear in Rev. 17:4. Rev. 18:7 explains clearly what her attitude was — "A QUEEN." In Rev. 17:3, names of blasphemy appear all over THE SCARLET BEAST. This is because it claims throughout its history to rule by Divine Right received from the woman.

THE BIG TWO BEASTS

While, for purposes of detail, we have Daniel's Terrible Beast, Revelation's Red Dragon, Leopard Beast, Scarlet Beast, The Two-Horned Beast, and The Image of the Beast, we can profitably shrink all of these creatures into TWO CHARACTERS. This is the purpose of Job's prophecy when it introduces us to Leviathan and Behemoth. (See Item #79.)

The lesson we want to learn is that mankind and the Church have been faced with a double whammy. Satan has been operating through both CIVIL and ECCLESIASTICAL institutions — sometimes even against each other, and, thus, against himself. But Satan will cast out Satan whenever it is expedient for him to do so to save himself. Being aware of these two prophetic forces as enemies of the saints not only helps us to interpret prophecy, but also to be prepared for whatever we may have to endure.

Thus, all of these creatures are, in one form or another, either civil or ecclesiastical opponents of the Church.

LEVIATHAN, the primarily civil power of Satan, was introduced to us in detail in Revelation 12 as the Red Dragon. He was there given the four-name appellation "Dragon, . . . Serpent, . . . Devil, and Satan." (Rev. 12:9) We find him again in Chapter 16:13 when, during the 6th plague, he is in collusion with religion to try to prop up the old order. His final appearances are in Chapter 20 which begins with his binding (Rev. 20:1-3) and ends with his final attempt at deception (Rev. 20:7, 8) and with his ultimate total destruction (Rev. 20:10).

Note that Leviathan can function fairly well alone. While he does work with religion, he has the power to keep aloof from it and to outlast it by a thousand years! False religion is destroyed at the beginning of the Millennium — Rev. 19:20; but the secular beast (Dragon, Serpent, Devil, Satan) doesn't join false religion in the lake of fire until the end of the Millennium — Rev. 20:10. This is why Pastor Russell speculates that the end-of-Millennium challenge to the Ancient Worthies will be an attempt to set up an opposing GOVERNMENT.

BEHEMOTH, the primarily religious power of Satan, on the other hand, does not seem very capable of functioning well without the aid of the state. Hence, when we first are introduced to him in detail (Rev. 13:1, 2), he looks a lot like Rome! And his characteristics borrow from the first three secular beasts of Daniel 7. This beast also is found in Chapter 16:13 working with the dragon. In Rev. 19:20 he is destroyed forever. He is again mentioned in Rev. 20:10 because it is important for us to see that the Leviathan beast joins him in oblivion.

All of the other "details" of Revelation prophecy about a Two-horned Beast, an Image, a False Prophet, etc., are merely extensions of this BIG TWO beasts picture. It is helpful to remember this simple kernel of prophetic thrust.

FRIENDLY CRITICISM

It is probably good to look at prevailing views of these beasts and their heads, crowns, horns, etc. Here will be represented only a fraction of those in existence, but these views do receive much attention. Criticisms given are in the spirit of honest questioning. This scribe does not know the answers, but he can see difficulties in various views. The existing explanations represent intensive and extensive research and thoughtful application. This scribe has learned much from the brethren who have struggled to come up with and present their interpretations. These interpretations provide things on which to build and are, therefore, of great value. All criticisms of them are offered only so that growth of understanding may continue.

Bro. Eugene Burns offers what seems the best of approaches to the seven heads which he sees to be common to Chapters 12, 13, and 17. In his words, "We believe these three visions show the very same seven heads throughout." He suggests:

1. The Undivided Empire under Constantine **2.** Western Roman Empire of Valentinian. **3.** Byzantine or Eastern Empire of Justinian. **4.** Holy Roman Empire starting with Charlemagne. **5.** Napoleonic Empire. **6.** Empire of Victor Emmanuel I **7.** Nazi-fascist Empire.

It is difficult to find much fault with this kind of interpretation. However, this list presents several difficulties. (1) According to Rev. 17:9, the woman (the Roman Church) SITS ON the seven heads. Since to SIT ON seems to represent a position of control, can we justifiably suggest that the church sat on the first two heads suggested? Once Justinian had given up the title of Pontifex Maximus to the Bishop of Rome, the "SIT ON" description would seem conclusive. (2) Bro. Burns lists the Western Roman Empire (Ravenna) as the second head. Have we not learned, however, and does not Daniel 7 also testify that Western Rome was not a head, but rather one of the horns plucked up to make way for the Papal Horn. (See Vol. III, pp. 76-77.) So, as excellent as is Bro. Burns' approach, it does leave questions.

Bro. Ludlow Loomis' list is similar. It has the same two problems.

Bro. Frank Shallieu diverges considerably from the above approach. He suggests:

1. Imperial Rome (314-395) **2.** Western Rome at Ravenna (403-476) **3.** Heruli (476-489/493) **4.** Ostrogoths (489/493-539) **5.** Papal Rome (539-1799) **6.** French Directory (1799-1870) **7.** Victor Emmanuel's Dynasty (1870 - 1929).

This list creates more problems yet. (1) The idea of the church SITTING ON Rome before 539 is questionable. (2) Heads 2, 3, and 4 are all shown by Daniel and Bro. Russell to be horns, not heads. (3) Bro. Shallieu's list creates an uncomfortable interpretation of the context of Rev. 11:7. (4) If Papal Rome is one of the heads of Rev. 17, we have the improbable picture of the church's sitting on the Papacy. (5) Papacy's part in the Nazi-Fascist Regime seems difficult to ignore. (6) According to Daniel 7:20, Papacy IS NOT a head, but actually an eleventh horn! This however, provides:

A HELPFUL HINT

This aberration in Daniel 7:20 — the appearance of an eleventh horn — helps us to understand that the 10-horn description must be a generalized description. It thus says that these creatures may at times have fewer or more than 10 horns (supporting powers). Thus, in Bro. Frey's NOTES ON THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, p. 190, the list showing an AVERAGE of ten supporting powers seems to be the right idea.

THE SIXTH HEAD

A question has arisen regarding the identity of the sixth head. (See p. 342) This is most understandable and reflects the complexities of the end of the 19th Century in Europe. The question is based upon the terrible relationship between the state and the church in the Victor Emmanuel Dynasty in Italy. To put it simply, the church and the state were at odds — virtually not on speaking terms. How then can we see this arrangement as one part of the woman riding the beast with Victor Emmanuel II as its head?

A Brief Historical Summary

At the time of the French Revolution, the existing beast with its 4th head was the rejuvenated Holy Roman Empire — the beast which had been "healed" from its deadly wound of the Reformation. It was not the old Holy Roman Empire of pre-Reformation days; it was considerably changed. But it was a church-state arrangement upon which the woman rode. France, which had been a part of that arrangement, had rebelled. Its people (the BODY of the beast) had risen up in defiance of the old order and had succeeded in destroying its influence in France — ONE-TENTH of the city. But it must be remembered, the other NINE-TENTHS were still functioning under the name of the Holy Roman Empire. After the French Revolution, Napoleon PUT AN END to the Holy Roman Empire. Its last Emperor abdicated in 1806. Thus that form of the beast, the 4th-headed form, ceased to exist. Napoleon's France signed a concordat with the Pope and became the next form of church-state, the next form of the beast — the 5th head arrangement. Napoleon actually helped the Germanic states toward their eventual union under Bismarck in the 1870's. Thus he sowed the seed for the re-alignment of Europe later in the century. Two new nations appear in the 1870-71 period — both very important to world history. One is Germany. In its new union, it is called the SECOND REICH — the kingdom which was a REPLACEMENT for the old German-based Holy Roman Empire. This Germany was to disappear; thus, its replacement, the Nazi Germany, was to be called the THIRD REICH. At the same time as the emergence of Bismarck's new Germany, Victor Emmanuel II's new Italy was born. There IS NO ITALY before the early 1870's. What is called "Italy" before that time is merely a geographic designation. It is owned in part by Austria and in part by the Papacy. But in 1870 as Italy becomes a nation, the Pope loses the protection of the French army, and the Napoleonic Era has officially come to an end.

Who Replaced the Napoleonic Head?

It might seem natural to suppose that the Second Reich was the natural successor to Napoleon's Europe. But this conclusion has a few major difficulties. Bismarck was a Prussian. Prussia was an almost entirely Lutheran country. As Germany united, it was part Lutheran and part Catholic. It was not a church-state union in the previous sense of the word. Bismarck was very anti-papacy. He wrote a book and conducted a campaign known as KULTURKAMPF — a cultural war. This was, in essence, a reaction against the Pope's 1870 claim of Papal infallibility. Bismarck was afraid the Pope had designs on the new German Reich. Later, Bismarck's fear of the communist influence led him to a political truce with the Papacy. This re-established much of the Papal power in Germany beginning in 1878. BUT, it was not a state church. Bismarck also created the "Triple Alliance" (Germany, Austria, and Italy.) This 3-part coalition was at least 2/3rds Catholic.

Victor Emmanuel had taken away the Papal States which constituted a large part of the land mass of Italy. To pacify the Roman church, he passed the 1871 LAW OF PAPAL GUARANTEES. This included subsidies to the church, paying the clergy's salaries, giving Catholic religious instruction in the public schools, etc. But the Pope did not accept the action and considered himself a prisoner in the Vatican from 1870 until 1929 because this was a NON-CONCORDAT relationship with the state. The "agreement" had been one-sided. HOWEVER, the CATHOLIC CHURCH WAS THE STATE RELIGION. THUS the Victor Emmanuel headship of the beast seems the best answer to the question. Just because the woman was uncomfortable, we have no reason to deny that she was still RIDING. The beast, during its 6th head phase, had shrunk to a pathetically small size. It is NO WONDER the woman felt the need to proclaim that she was no widow and that, above all, she was infallible! HOW PLEASED she must have been when she signed concordats with Hitler & Mussolini (and others) in and after 1929. Her beast was once more growing! It was a new, 7th-headed beast.

ANOTHER LIST!

How dangerous it is to suggest another list of possible heads! Nevertheless, it always seems rather in poor taste to criticize something without suggesting some sort of viable alternative. The following list is based on the assumptions that:

- (a) The woman did not really sit on the beast until Justinian gave her leave to do so (533-39).
- (b) The horns which the "little horn" overcame to bring itself to power, and the "little horn" itself, cannot be heads, but must remain horns.
- (c) The beasts of Chapters 13, 16, 17, 19, and 20, all representing Rome or "Holy Rome," or politico-ecclesiastical Rome, should have heads which are clearly recognized as being part of those empires or their remnants.
- (d) The woman should (to varying degrees) be identifiable historically as exerting the religious control over each of these heads.

The list is as follows:

- 1. Justinian's Rome which first gives the Bishop of Rome the title of Pontifex Maximus.
- 2. Charlemagne's Empire which first allows the Papacy to crown the emperor.
- 3. The Holy Roman Empire, founded by Otto the Great in 962, which lasts (in some Fashion) until 1806.
- 4. The New Holy Roman Empire which began at the time of the Reformation. A few supportive facts will be helpful:

The Reformation caused GREAT UPHEAVALS in the Holy Roman Empire. Some powers (horns) were lost to Protestantism. The whole concept of Divine Right via the Pope's sanction came into question. Charles V began changes to the Empire which continued through the reign of Ferdinand III during whose reign the PEACE OF WESTPHALIA was concluded. Historians call this "the virtual dissolution of the Empire." It caused the sovereignty of all of the states of the Empire to be recognized. This was a new and different Holy Roman Empire retaining only its old name and its relationship to the Papacy. Leopold I was the first emperor under the new arrangement following the Peace of Westphalia of 1648.

- 5. Napoleonic France
- 6. The Victor Emmanuel Dynasty
- 7. The Nazi-Fascist Empire

— IN SHORT —

We do seem to know the identities of the dragon and beasts. It is only their heads and horns which seem to cause us consternation. We should not feel too deprived!

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KINGS OF THE EARTH

This phrase, "Kings of the Earth," occurs eight times in Revelation (9 times in the KJV) plus one interesting variant: "Kings of the Whole World." The interpretive questions are:

- (a) Do these refer to literal kings?
- (b) Does the expression always refer to the same group?
- (c) Who are the "Kings of the Whole World?"

— CONCLUSIONS —

- (a) "Kings of the Earth" is only PARTLY literal. The phrase symbolically probably includes ALL POWERFUL LEADERS OF SOCIETY. (Earth is a symbol for society — most particularly Christian Society.) This can and does INCLUDE, but is NOT LIMITED TO, literal kings. (See comments on 21:24.)
- (b) The expression seems always to refer to the same group. As history progresses, there are more non-royal leaders in society. The term expands to include them. But the term only includes men of GREAT power, not lesser or minor men who cannot personally sway the direction of society.
- (c) The expression "Kings of the Whole World" seems to refer to the royalty and men of great power both in and BEYOND the Christian world.

— REASONS FOR THE CONCLUSIONS —

All uses (except Rev. 1:5) of the expression "Kings of the Earth" give internal clues to the meaning. Most seem quite obvious:

- Rev. 17:2 The woman commits fornication with these kings. History has demonstrated that this happened with the literal crowned heads of Europe as well as with, in a few instances, ruthless men of great power who could further her interests. Thus, church and state is not the only fornication; collusion with any of the world's powers qualifies.
- Rev. 17:18 Babylon reigns over these kings. The conclusion is as above.
- Rev. 18:3 Babylon commits fornication with these kings. Again, this creates the above-stated conclusion.
- Rev. 18:9 A duplicate of Rev. 18:3.
- Rev. 19:19 The Beast and these kings make war with the Lamb. History has not yet gone this far, but the strong implication is that political leaders are here represented. In Rev. 19:21, "the rest" seems to be these kings and their armies. They will be killed AS KINGS by increasing truth revelation.
- Rev. 21:24 Again, history has not gone this far; but, since the Kings were slain AS KINGS

in Rev. 19:21, their "glory" must be passed on to another. It is here passed on to the New Jerusalem. (See notes on 21:24.)

Rev. 1:5 This text simply states that Jesus is ruler over the Kings of the Earth from the beginning of the age. It does nothing to interpret the phrase. Consistency, however, would suggest that, the above applications all being the same, Rev. 1:5 is almost certainly no different.

Rev. 6:15 This is the only use of "Kings of the Earth" which might cause second thoughts. With the above weight of evidence, however, it seems foolish to force an exception here. This verse refers to reactions to the French Revolution. The Kings of the Earth ask the mountains to fall on them. Since, in a sense, they ARE the mountains, this is a strange request. It probably refers to the Royal Houses of Europe trying to bolster power by international cooperation (such as the "Holy Alliance") and by attempts to increase nationalism.

It is interesting to note that since Rev. 1:5, this is the first mention of the Kings of the Earth. It is as if, until the Time of the End, these kings are so secure as to be totally untroubled. Their earlier historical cooperation with Papacy is documented in Chapters 17 and 18, but 1799 seems their first real trauma.

— THE EXCEPTION —

Rev. 16:14 In the KJV "Kings of the Earth" appears, but it is spurious — although the thought is certainly correct in that the Kings of the Earth are part of the "Kings of the Whole World."

The expression "Whole World" is a different Greek word from "earth." It is used two other places in Revelation: 3:10 and 12:9 where its meaning seems to be the "inhabited earth" — i.e., the whole world, NOT just the Christian world or "earth." It is used similarly elsewhere. See Heb. 1:6 and 2:5 for examples.

Therefore, "Kings of the Whole World" is not just rulers of Christian society, but of the entire global habitation.

ALPHA AND OMEGA

For an explanation of this phrase, please see the comments on Rev. 1:7, 8 (pp. 11 & 12). This appendix (Item #74i) is added because a challenge to the thoughts presented necessitates a detailed explanation. The following explanation is a compilation of material gleaned from Hebrew references and discussions with two rabbis.

STRICTLY SPEAKING, the word "ME" in Zech. 12:10 is not spelled aleph tav (the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the equivalent of alpha and omega in Greek.) The Hebrew word for "ME" IS, however, a FORM of the Hebrew particle, ETH, which is spelled aleph tav and which is the word in the Hebrew text immediately following "ME" and preceding "WHOM." This word IS NOT TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH because it is a word of emphasis — a sign that the following noun or pronoun is of unusual importance. While it is NOT exactly like the HO in HO THEOS (John 1:1), it is somewhat similar in function. It is for enforcement or emphasis. Some clues as to its usage can be found in Strong's #853 (Hebrew Dictionary) and especially in Gesenius on pages 92 & 93. IT DOES HAVE OTHER CONFIRMED AND THEORETICAL USAGES.

The attempt to discredit the force of the Zech. 12:10 connection to Rev. 1:8 passes off this untranslated particle as MERELY a Hebrew punctuation device, a relatively unimportant grammatical marking. It IS, in a sense, a punctuation or grammar device; but we cannot say it is MERELY one. Regardless of language scholars' various arguments, (and they, significantly, do not seem of one mind in this matter), it is GOD Who wrote the text and Who had INTENT in every "jot and tittle." The participle, ETH, is an inherent and inseparable part of the holy text. Rather than being ignorable, IT is the very item, the very inseparable part of the phrase " . . . ME (eth) WHOM... " which makes BOTH the ME and the WHOM the code for Alpha & Omega (or, in this case, for Aleph-Tav.) WITHOUT this particle, "ME" does NOT have this significance — although it might be argued that it does since it is a FORM of ETH. Discounting this particle and passing it off as MERELY a Hebrew writing device is as deplorable as ignoring the THE in THE GOD — perhaps worse!

It is MOST SIGNIFICANT that Hebrew scholars DIFFER on the meanings and usages of ETH — sometimes with vehemence! The word itself, usually untranslated and usually thought untranslatable, has its usage origins lost somewhere in antiquity, thus accounting for the uncertainty of its real meaning and possibilities. Obviously, if the experts cannot agree, WE cannot solve the problems of its functions in Hebrew. But that is not our purpose. Experts also argue about the definite article in John 1:1; we, on the other hand, KNOW what the verse means. It doesn't always take an expert! The fact that possibilities exist in some Hebrew minds concerning this word which don't exist in other Hebrew minds, ALLOWS us to speculate as to what GOD intends for us to learn from it. The thought expressed by one rabbi is excellent: The fact that we do not know a function does not mean that it does not exist. The fact that the word exists proves that it has a function. It is SAFE TO CONCLUDE that God did not construct the Hebrew text for Jewish comprehension (yet) but FOR OURS! (I Pet. 1:12).

A very literal rendering of Zech. 12:10 IF WE TRANSLATE "ETH" into its Greek alphabetical equivalent, would be:

"They shall look upon ME, Alpha-Omega, WHOM they have pierced."

Is it possible to be more explicit? Is it possible to deny the connection of this idea to Rev. 1:7, 8? Of course it IS possible. One rabbi feels confident that Zechariah teaches that the Gentiles are the pierced ones! — and he does so BASED ON the usage of ETH which he prefers. But his prophecy is NOT (now) for the Jews to understand. Nor can we reason with rabbis on New Testament antitypes!

It should be noted that ETH is used in the first verse of the Bible. It appears (untranslated) in the middle of the sentence. "In the beginning God (eth) created the heavens and the earth." To show the futility of pursuing this with a rabbi, it is interesting to note that one Rabbi suggested that the ETH in this sentence is to show that God created the heavens and the earth rather than that the heavens and the earth created God! (Do we really think someone would have made that mistaken conclusion?) Another explanation, based on the SYMBOL of the first (aleph) and last (tav), is found in Adam Clark's notes on Genesis 1:1. There it is suggested that ETH symbolizes SUBSTANCE — the beginning and ending, the essence or totality of everything. Thus the translation would read "God created the substance of the heavens and the substance of the earth." This is a nice thought, although the rabbi cited above did not think so! Apparently it is speculative and/or awkward to translate or explain ETH. But it seems definitely irresponsible to IGNORE it when a CLOSE STUDY is being made of a passage. After all, it IS God's Word. It is a sign of special emphasis; it is a stop sign in a sense. It frequently seems to say, "reconsider this; it has a special significance." Indeed, in Genesis 1:1, it is not beyond reason to suspect that God (Elohim) is INITIALLY drawing attention to the fact that HE IS the ALPHA and the OMEGA — a claim which He specifically makes in Isaiah 44:6. Thus Genesis 1:1 COULD very aptly read: "In the beginning, God, Alpha & Omega, created" Christian students of Scripture should like that thought although Trinitarians would, no doubt, spoil the meaning!

The particle, ETH, according to Strong's (#852), means SIGN in Chaldean. Gesenius confirms this same meaning in Hebrew also. Is it not likely that this emphasis particle IS, indeed, a SIGN to us?

The hard facts of Zech. 12:10 are these:

- 1) The Lord put a change of pronoun from ME to HIM in the sentence for SOME REASON. It certainly draws our attention because of the awkwardness of the passage!
- 2) The Lord then placed ETH (aleph-tav or alpha-omega) immediately after the word "ME" (the awkward pronoun) further yet to emphasize it in connection with "WHOM."
- 3) It JUST SO HAPPENS that ETH is spelled with the two letters which, in themselves, are a CODE for FIRST and LAST. It JUST SO HAPPENS, additionally, that "ME" is a FORM of ETH. Coincidence in Scripture is rarely (if ever) coincidence!
- 4) The Revelator quotes this text JUST BEFORE someone CLAIMS to be the Alpha & Omega. Another coincidence?!? We think not. It seems very poor Bible study to suggest that it might be a coincidence. It was NOT Zechariah which drew our attention to this item (except by its strange grammar.) It was Revelation. NO OTHER known explanation accounts for the out-of-place interruption of Rev. 1:8. This explanation not only accounts for it, but enhances it.

A LOUD VOICE

Among the many sounds or voices heard in Revelation, 21 of them are specified to be LOUD VOICES. A topical study of this term shows that it always means a VERY MARKED date and/or event in the Divine Plan. Following is a comprehensive list of its occurrences:

- Rev. 1:10 Jesus' voice saying to write to the seven Churches.
- Rev. 5:2 Jewish Age time of trouble.
- Rev 5:12 All creation acknowledging Lamb at end of age.
- Rev. 6:10 Souls under altar (speaking through Luther's 95 theses?)
- Rev. 7:2 French Revolution.
- Rev. 7:10 Victory of the Great Multitude.
- Rev. 8:13 Announcement of three WOE trumpets.
- Rev. 10:3 1799.
- Rev. 11:12 Freeing & exaltation of Scriptures after French Revolution.
- Rev. 11:15 Announcement of reign begun.
- Rev. 12:10 COUNTERFEIT announcement of kingdom begun.
- Rev. 14:7 1878 (or possibly beginning of Harvest).
- Rev. 14:9 1878 Harvest message.
- Rev. 14:15 1874 - beginning of Harvest.
- Rev. 14:18 Glorified Church telling the Gt. Multitude to reap the vine of earth.
- Rev. 16:1 1914 - beginning of seven last plagues.
- Rev. 16:17 Completion of Church
- Rev. 18:2 1878 - Babylon's fall from favor.
- Rev. 19:1 Marriage of the Lamb.
- Rev. 19:17 Armageddon.
- Rev. 21:3 Announcement of the peaceable kingdom.

"THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS"

— (Rev. 1:1) —

— The Problem —

It has bothered many, and justifiably so, that Bible student interpretations of Revelation tend to ignore the above phrase of Rev. 1:1 when these interpretations explain the message to Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7) with Paul's being its "angel." Since Revelation was written at the very end of the first century, by that time the Ephesus stage of the Church was almost all history, and the Apostle Paul was long dead. How then could this be something "which must shortly come to pass?" Clearly this is a most legitimate and pertinent question.

— A Possible Answer —

1. Perhaps the most valuable part of an answer is given internally. When Jesus instructs John to "write," (Rev. 1:19), he very carefully specifies that

THREE THINGS BE WRITTEN:

- (a) "The things which you HAVE SEEN" (things already having occurred — history.)
- (b) The things which ARE" (things going on all around John — contemporary to him.)
- (c) "The things which SHALL TAKE PLACE after these things" (the remainder of the age in prophecy.)

Not only does this QUALIFY verse 1 because it adds to its meaning, but it gives a very good reason for verse 19. Verse 19 becomes the ANSWER to a question that would be legitimately asked — the question which we are now asking. Verse 19 actually says that Revelation would contain things which happened PRIOR to its writing — things John HAD SEEN. Rev. 5:6 & 7 is an example of this, PROVING that Revelation covers a period PRIOR to its writing. Thus Rev. 1:19 and Rev. 5:7 BY THEMSELVES should be sufficient proof that explanations of Revelation which interpret part of it as having happened before its writing are not only correct in doing so, but that such interpretation is SANCTIONED.

2. Still, questions remain. If Rev. 2:1-7 was already history when it was written, how can it be said to "Write to the angel in Ephesus?" Clearly, Paul derived no benefit from this passage. Paul DID, however, if we examine the matter carefully, treat ALL of the parts of this message as he served the early Church. He got this message SOME OTHER WAY! Is it a coincidence that Paul actually used the same word as the title of the Bible's last book? Look at II Cor. 12:1 and 7. Paul had "visions and REVELATIONS OF THE LORD." And these were so grand as to require his terrible eyesight to keep him from being "exalted above measure." Paul got the message (and MORE) EARLY — before John ever wrote it down. Thus we need not worry that the message to Ephesus and its angel came too late. But why then record it?

The answer is implied in Rev. 1:10. John's perspective is ours — standing in the Millennium (on the Lord's Day) and looking back, The Lord wished ALL of the Church to learn from the experience of the various parts of the Church. He WANTED us to look back and, hence, HAD TO RECORD the ENTIRE HISTORY. How else could he admonish, "Hear what the spirit says to the ChurchES?"

We would all feel an imbalance if the first Church, Seal, and Trumpet were left unrecorded — if Revelation simply said there were seven Churches, seven Seals, and seven Trumpets, and then proceeded to begin with the SECOND of each series and told us nothing of the first. Not only would we miss this information from which to learn, but we would miss it because we would fail to see how each step built to the next. Revelation is an exquisitely constructed work besides being an amazing prophecy and a spiritual treasure. It would have been a strangely constructed work with many missing lessons without the histories of the Ephesus Church.

Thus we should feel comfortable with interpreting Revelation as a chronicle of the ENTIRE AGE since Jesus' death. We must interpret "things which must shortly come to pass" as a statement of comfort and warning to the saints that, WHENEVER they consider this book, it will contain things "shortly to come to pass" — things of vital interest to the character growth and safety of the saints. It was written FOR THAT PURPOSE. It was written to show his bond-servants (ALL OF THEM — not just those in John's day) what would next occur. To this day we use it for that purpose, among others. Verse one is there to show us NOT specifically that the fulfillment of Revelation would begin just after John wrote it down, but that it will ALWAYS show us the things which are shortly to come to pass. This is a distinction with a VAST DIFFERENCE!

THE RELATIONSHIPS OF CHAPTERS 12-20

Chapters 12-20 contain varying references to the final days of the age. The question naturally arises as to why the various perspectives of end-time events are given. The purpose of this appendix is to suggest an overview of these chapters to see why the focus changes from chapter to chapter. The Harvest is a complex time. It wraps up the histories of many elements in the plan of God. Seeing how each of these chapters focuses on one or more of these elements may help to understand the construction of Revelation.

CHAPTER 12

A Hint of Civil Persecution

Most of Chapter 12 deals with events during rather than at the end of the age. The chapter focuses on the relationship of civil and ecclesiastical powers with a secondary emphasis on how this affects the true Church. Rev. 12:17 refers to events beyond the French Revolution and, apparently, into the Harvest. This verse rightly includes the first statement of Rev. 13:1, "And he stood on the sand of the sea."

HARVEST IMPLICATION: Rev. 12:17 suggests that we should be aware that the civil power has no love for the Church and WILL "make war" with her when possible. Rev. 13:1 also shows that this civil power will continue to suppress the world of mankind, to "stand on" them, until the end. This has implications in the fulfillment of Rev. 17:8, 11.

CHAPTER 13

A Hint of Religious Persecution

Again, this chapter is primarily about the age as a whole. It deals with the inseparable combination of church and state as a persecuting power, but with emphasis on the religious — a perspective not so clear in Chapter 12. Rev. 13:15-17, however, seems to take us into the Harvest.

HARVEST IMPLICATIONS: From these verses we are alerted to watch for a rather universal religious cooperation. Rev. 14:1-5 (which is functionally a part of Chapter 13) shows that the faithful will rise above the fears and temptations of this confederacy of churches.

CHAPTER 14

The Relationship of Judgment to Harvesting

(The first five verses belong to Chapter 13.) Beginning in Rev. 14:6 we are informed that the Harvest will see the beginning of churchianity's downfall because increased truths will eat away at her. This is in marked contrast to Chapter 13 which emphasized churchianity's power rather than its judgment. The POINT IS that BOTH works are simultaneous.

The **HARVEST IMPLICATIONS** from these verses are that it is our vital duty to separate from Babylonish influences and to WAIT (Rev. 14:12) for the ultimate fall without discouragement.

The last part of this chapter shows us the **SEQUENCE** of harvesting. The true Church will be completed (Rev. 14:16) and THEN the false church will receive its harvest — the burning of tares, crushing of grapes, etc.

The HARVEST IMPLICATIONS of these verses are strong. If we miss the SEQUENCE, our own Harvest works will be misguided and misdirected.

CHAPTER 15 & 16

The Historical Overview

These chapters are here to show us the gradual disintegration of the old order during the 20th Century in terms of what we would see as we look at current events around us — i.e., history written in advance, headlines written in advance. This information was only hinted at in Rev. 14:6-12. Now it is given in minute detail. Chapter 15 shows us that the glorified seven angels will direct the disintegration and that the glorified saints will participate. It shows us to be patient because this plaguing will END God's wrath — the day for which we pray. It emphasizes (Rev. 15:8) that that glorious day must await the complete pouring out of the plagues. This corroborates Rev. 14:12. Then Chapter 16 leads us step-by-step through this century.

The HARVEST IMPLICATIONS are momentous. These verses allow us to know what is happening and what will happen next. This gives us remarkable spiritual stability. It also fulfills Rev. 1:1 in that it shows us "things which must shortly take place." The warnings of the 6th plague are particularly vital to us now, and they make cohesive the loose ends from Chapters 12 & 13 (Rev. 16:13-16).

CHAPTER 17

The Political Viewpoint

While the plagues showed us the decline in terms of world history, Chapter 17 shows it to us in detailed specifics of how church-state cooperation will come to a dramatic end. It does so in terms of political (heads, horns, etc.) and social (the people) factors.

The HARVEST IMPLICATIONS are again important. The political details help to corroborate the time line we learned from Chapter 16. The final verses (12-18) let us know that dramatic history has not ended! Persecution of religion (as in the French Revolution) is not a thing of the past. We also see from this prophecy how Babylon will end: the people themselves will devour her.

CHAPTER 18

The Economic Viewpoint

This is the next-to-last narrative of Babylon's fall. It is also the longest. This chapter is the "Fourth Volume" of Revelation. Chapter 18 tells us that economics are a (if not THE) major factor in Babylon's collapse. Here we see a detailed inventory of economic interests losing their stability because of the political weakness of Babylon in this century. The violent end of her (Rev. 18:21) parallels the descriptions of Rev. 17:16, Rev. 16:18-21, and Rev. 14:19, 20.

The HARVEST IMPLICATIONS for the saints are more subtle. It clearly shows the folly of spending time, money, or thought on financial matters. It also shows (verses 4-8) the need for our separateness and our WORK in spreading the truths which will help further her judgment.

CHAPTER 19

The Spirit-born & Spirit-begotten Viewpoint

The first part of this chapter belongs with Chapter 18. Rev. 19:1-10 shows the wonderful rejoicing which will follow Babylon's death.

The primary HARVEST IMPLICATION for us in this section is verse 10 where we are admonished to learn the PROPER USE of the works of the 7th messenger.

The last half of this chapter (11-21) shows us the last view of Babylon's destruction — not so much from the history, chronology, sociology, politics, and economics of the previous views, but now from the simple view of our King's conquering.

The HARVEST IMPLICATIONS are these: It is clear that TRUTH is the major weapon. We must wield it! It is clear that the Great Company class will play an important role (Rev. 19:17-18.) We must help it be prepared by making as clear as possible the truths they will need to do the job. The beast and false prophet will go out QUITE ALIVE. We must be prepared, as must the Great Company class, for the coming deceptions. This world will not end with a whimper!

CHAPTER 20

One Loose End

Since Chapter 19 sees the end of beast and false prophet, we still have the dragon (which we met in Chapter 12 and found as a major factor in Rev. 16:13) not having been dealt with. Thus, Chapter 20:1-3 and 7-10 is needed to complete the story.

The HARVEST IMPLICATIONS are prophetically important. Chapters 12:17 and 16:13 warn us that this dragon will be one of our major opponents. While the returned Jesus (Rev. 20:1) BEGINS to restrain this influence upon his return, it is TRUTH which does the restraining, and the restraining is a five-part (Rev. 20:2, 3), long-term, serial process during which the dragon is not the least bit cooperative. Civil power persecutions are to be expected. Note verse 3 carefully. He is restrained SO THAT he won't deceive the NATIONS. Thus his restraint need not be accomplished until the mediatorial reign begins. This very statement DATES his binding as NOT BEING COMPLETE until the mediation. He CAN deceive the saints during the forepart of the thousand years — during the binding PROCESS.

It is hoped that this overview is helpful in seeing that, while MANY VIEWS exist of Babylon's fall, they are all from differing perspectives allowing us to appreciate the complexities of the Harvest. There is a lovely logic in showing us in order:

- (1) The civil enemy (Chapter 12).
- (2) The ecclesiastical enemy which cannot function without its civil partner (Ch. 13).
- (3) The relationship of judgment and harvesting (Ch. 14).
- (4) The progress of 20th Century HISTORY (Chs. 15 & 16).
- (5) The part of POLITICS & SOCIOLOGY in judgment (Ch. 17).
- (6) The part of ECONOMICS in judgment (Ch. 18).
- (7) The relationship of the Incoming and Outgoing POWERS (Ch. 19).
- (8) The destruction of the RELIGIOUS powers (Ch. 19).
- (9) The destruction of the CIVIL power (Ch. 20).

FIRST PERSON, SINGULAR

It is interesting to note that the pronoun, "I," is used (with one notable exception) in Revelation by only three beings. They are, in order of usage:

1. Jesus.
2. John — as representing himself, or symbolically as representing the Church class in the flesh.
3. "One of the seven angels" — apparently symbolizing the seventh messenger (See Item 74b.)

THE ONE EXCEPTION is in Rev. 18:7 where the harlot speaks in the first person saying, "I sit as a queen . . ." — a claim which the context shows would better not have been uttered.

The significance of "I" seems to be that we KNOW the speaker (as opposed to an unnamable angel,) and that that speaker has a delegated RIGHT to speak (with the exception of the USURPED RIGHT taken by the harlot.) Thus the word "I" helps us understand who might or might not be speaking in a given passage. It also helps to place significant importance on the place of Bro. Russell in the scheme of Revelation interpretation — an import many of us might be reticent to assign to a human being known personally by us or by our parents.

The use of "I" by John is so common as to make a listing of it too large. The listing which follows of "I" used by the angel or by Jesus is, however, short and quite revealing, showing, among other things, the distribution of direct quotes by Jesus:

JESUS:	"ONE OF THE ANGELS"
Rev. 1:8, 17, 18.	
Rev. 2:1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.	
Rev. 3:1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.	
Rev. 4:1.	
Rev. 11:3.	
Rev. 16. 15.	
	Rev. 17:1, 7.
	Rev. 19:10.
Rev. 21:5, 6, 7.	Rev. 21:9
Rev. 22:7, 12, 13, 16, 18, 21.	Rev. 22:9.

5 + 5 + 5**or****Maybe It's Not Quite So Difficult To Find Our Way Through Revelation**

It is of interest and of help in learning to note that Revelation has FIVE VIEWS of the entire Gospel Age, followed by FIVE VIEWS of the Gospel Age Harvest, followed by FIVE VIEWS of the Millennium. Following is a listing of the FIVE PARTS of each of Revelation's three main sections:

SECTION ONE OF REVELATION

— Five Times through the Entire Gospel Age —

- (1) THE 7 CHURCHES (Rev. 1:9-Rev. 3:22). This is Jesus' PERSONAL MESSAGE to the "angels" who must admonish the seven stages of the Church throughout the age regarding conditions, needs, and experiences in overcoming.
 - (2) THE 7 SEALS (Rev. 4:1-Rev. 8:1) This is history in advance. It stresses the effects this history will have on the consecrated. God arranged (and recorded in advance in His sealed scroll) pre-ordained changes in history and the catalysts which would accomplish them.
 - (3) THE 7 TRUMPETS (Rev. 8:2-Rev. 11:19) This series shows the EFFECTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTHS on the surrounding society.
 - (4) THE WOMAN, DRAGON, & APOSTATE "MICHAEL" (Chapter 12) This view of the age is presented to show how the false church grew out of the true Church and eventually gained dominance even over the civil power which it used then as its persecuting agent. This chapter is mainly from the civil power viewpoint.
 - (5) TWO BEASTS, AN IMAGE, AND THE OVERCOMERS (Rev. 13:1-Rev. 14:5) This final view of the entire age focuses on how the church-state monolith, even though later divided, continues its objective of creating a blasphemous "Christian Unity," the opponents of which experience various persecutions. This chapter is mainly from the "orthodox" religious viewpoint.
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SECTION TWO OF REVELATION

— Five Times through the Harvest Period —

- (1) JUDGMENT & HARVESTING (Rev. 14:6-20) This presentation is the first in the series of Harvest over-views. Its primary purpose is to show the relationship between Babylon's judgment and the work of harvesting.
- (2) HISTORICAL EVENTS TO WEAKEN BABYLON (Rev. 15:1-Rev. 16:21) These chapters we usually call The Seven Last Plagues. This account is to show the world's history during the Harvest. It is a list of 20th and 21st Century events which successively and cumulatively weaken Babylon until its final collapse. It is written to help us understand the events of our century and to let us know "things which must shortly come to pass." Chapter 15 specifies the parts played in this plaguing by the saints on both sides of the veil.

- (3) POLITICAL-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS (Rev. 17:1-18) This narrative is to show how events will culminate when both leaders and people turn against the apostate church. It shows the sequence of political turnovers since Bro. Russell's day, thus letting us know where we are on the stream of time and what we can next expect.
 - (4) THE ECONOMIC VIEWPOINT (Rev. 18:1 - Rev. 19:10) This is the "4th Volume" of Revelation. This chapter shows the reactions of various groups to Babylon's post-1914 inability to provide the kinds of political and economic stability of the past. It concludes with Babylon's total destruction and the ensuing rejoicing throughout heaven and earth.
 - (5) THE SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN VIEWPOINT (Rev. 19:11-21) This picture shows the judgmental and destructive power and authority of the returned Lord who, with his saints — both in the flesh and glorified — and with the remaining Great Multitude, is victorious in destroying the old order.
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SECTION THREE OF REVELATION

— Five Times through the Millennium —

- (1) THE MILLENNIUM & "THE DEVIL" (Rev. 20:1-10) This section deals with the binding and final elimination of the "dragon" — that part of the trio from Rev. 16:13 which was NOT destroyed in Rev. 19:20.
 - (2) THE THRONE OF JUDGMENT (Rev. 20:11-Revel. 21:1) In these verses are summarized the standards and process of the judgment of individuals.
 - (3) THE NEW ORDER (Rev. 21:2-8) This section shows the joys awaiting the resurrected as well as the fate of the incorrigible. It deals with the mediation and with the years before mediation for the understanding needed by the Church yet in the flesh.
 - (4) FOCUS ON THE BRIDE (Rev. 21:9-21) In these verses are symbolized the "New Jerusalem" — the Bride of Christ who, with him, will govern during the peaceable kingdom.
 - (5) FOOD, WATER, AND LIGHT (Rev. 21:22 – 22: 5) The sustaining elements for life everlasting are shown in this final picture with the concluding promise to resurrected mankind that "they shall reign for ever and ever."
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As the first 8 verses of Revelation formed an introduction to the book and a greeting to its readers, the last 16 verses (Rev. 22:6-21) are necessary concluding thoughts for the understanding of those pursuing discipleship.

It is difficult to communicate how vital this kind of "big picture" is to ease understanding and interpretation. Just seeing the relationship (for example) of Rev. 19:1-10 to Chapter 18 helps to prove that Babylon is not yet destroyed (even from God's viewpoint) as well as to interpret the groups represented in the first half of Chapter 19. Likewise (for another example), the consistency of the Harvest pictures makes the placement of the plagues in the future unlikely. An explanation of them which keeps the Revelation construction consistent is much more appealing. We cannot recommend too strongly the meditation of these section divisions to all sincere students of Revelation.

REVELATION STUDY:**NAMES & MEANINGS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

Reference Code:

S	=Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
Y	= Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible.
HBD	=Harper's Bible Dictionary.
SBD	=Smith's Bible Dictionary.
McCl/S	=McClintocks & Strong Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, & Ecclesiastical Literature.
EBC	=Expanded Biblical Comments. (Chicago)
MEGG	=J. Meggison Notes.
HG	=Harvest Gleanings (reference work cited by several sources; not copied from in these notes.)
R	=Reprint (same as above)

PLEASE NOTE: THE ABOVE REFERENCES ARE QUOTED, FOLLOWING, FOR PURPOSES OF INFORMATION. THEY DO NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY CORRECTNESS OF INTERPRETATION.

1. **EPHESUS:**(Rev. 2:1 - Rev. 2:7)

- a. S # 2181: Ephesus, a city of Asia Minor. [Gateway city to Asia Minor.]
- b. Y: A famous city in Ionia nearly opposite the island of Samos, and about the middle of the W coast of Asia Minor. The "Asia" of the N.T., was the western province of the peninsula, with Ephesus as its capital.
- c. HBD: One of 3 great cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. Transportation junction between seas and highways. Became racial melting pot and battlefield of religion. Cosmopolitan commercial center of the Roman Empire. Site of superstitious and immoral practices. Demetrius protested vs. Paul, whose preaching hurt Demetrius' silver-smith trade in images of Diana. People recognized Paul's message as ethical and a positive way of life. Many converts to Christianity were made here. Paul realized Ephesus was the open door to all Asia Minor. His farewell to church officials at Miletus was here. Ephesus was first of Christian churches of Asia Minor.
- d. SBD: Capital of Asia. Paul established a church here, of which Timothy was at one time the head. It is supposed that St. John wrote his Gospel and Epistles here. Ephesus is one of the seven Churches, and is named first.
- e. McCl/S: (Vol. III, pp. 241-247.) Included in the dominions of Lysimachus, following Alexander the Great's empire divided. First seeds of Christian truth were possibly sown at Ephesus immediately after the great Pentecost (Acts 2).
- f. (R. 491, by W.I.M.): *first desirable*.
- g. EBC; *first, desirable*. R5992:3; 4870:2; 3569:2; HG97:2. Covers period of the lives of the apostles.
- h. MEGG: same as f, g.

REVELATION STUDY:

NAMES & MEANINGS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES, p. 2

2. **SMYRNA:** (Rev. 2:8 - 2:11).

- a. S: In Rev. 1:11: S # 4667 = a place in Asia Minor; (Smyrna); in Rev. 2:8: S # 4668 = from 4667; a Smyranean.
- b. Y: *myrrh* (means bitter). A city in Ionia, in the W of Asia Minor, on the E of the Aegean Sea, 50 mi. N of Ephesus. Now called Ismir.
- c. HBD: words (in Script.) suggest material poverty and tribulations, due to their refusal to worship the Roman emperor. Last city of Asia Minor to yield to the Moslem conquest.
- d. SBD: designed by Alexander the Great; built by his successors Antigonus and Lysimachus. In ruins now.
- e. McCl/S: (Vol. IX, pp. 831-834) — p. 834:2: During one of the Roman persecutions many Christians suffered the most dreadful torments here . . . and the only test applied to them was whether they would throw a few grains of incense into the fire as a sacrifice to the genius of the emperor, or whether they would refuse.
- f. (R. 491, by W.I.M.): *bitter*, [*Myrrh* and *Marah*, (Exo. 15:23) are kindred words] Period of most bitter persecution, under the Roman Emperors from Nero to Diocletian. "The *devil* [Pagan Rome] shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried and ye shall have tribulation ten days" (last and most severe persecution, A.D. 303 to A.D. 313).
- g. EBC: "*bitter*" . . . referring to the period of most bitter Pagan persecution under Roman Emperors from Nero to Diocletian reaching to about 325 A.D. when Constantine declared in favor of Christianity. R. 5992:3, 5. Means a "sweet odor," and represents the Church in the first persecution under the Roman emperors, before the corruption and "falling away" of which Paul speaks, HG 97:2. The 2nd stage of the Church from the beginning of the second century to the conversion of Constantine A.D. 312. HG 97:3.
- h. MEGG: Bitter herbs, myrrh.

REVELATION STUDY

NAMES & MEANINGS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES, p. 3.

3. **PERGAMOS:** (Rev. 2:12-2:17)

- a. S #4010: from 4444; *fortified*; *Pergamus*, a place in Asia Minor.
- b. Y: A celebrated city of Mysia, near the river Caicus. Here parchment* was first perfected, and a library of 200,000 volumes was formed, which was eventually sent to Alexandria. * Under Constantine, the first copies of Bibles were made.
- c. HBD: Pergamum (the modern Bergama in W Anatolian Turkey), an ancient city in the district of Mysia. The Romans inherited this realm (area described) and formed it into the Province of Asia, of which Pergamum was capital for a time, and Ephesus and Smyrna, chief cities. In spite of its pagan cults and apostasies, it became an early Christian center. Antipas became a Christian martyr here [see Antipas, following Church names/descriptions]. Pergamos had public structures with a 1,000-ft. high acropolis. It had a shrine of Aesculapius, god of medicine, symbolized by a serpent; thousands came to be cured. Pergamum became a great parchment-making center; the word "parchment" is from *pergamena*.
- d. McCl/S: (Vol. VII, pp. 946-948) — p. 946:1: Pergamos, properly Pergamus, a town of the Great Mysia . . . in Asia Minor . . . The name was originally given to a remarkable hill, presenting a conical appearance when viewed from the plain. The city itself was originally a fortress of considerable natural strength, being situated on the summit of a hill . . . Lysimachus chose Pergamos as a place of security for the reception and preservation of his treasures. p. 947:c. 2: Aesculapius probably was worshipped in the form of a living serpent, fed in the temple, and considered as its divinity. Hence, Aesculapius was called the god of Pergamos, and on coins . . . often appears with a rod encircled by a serpent. (Here follows an explanation of Rev. 12:9 re: serpent and dragon, "where Satan's seat is" [Rev. 2:13], as a reference to worship of the serpent.)
- e. (R. 491, by W.I.M.): Pergamos = an *earthly elevation*.
- f. EBC: "*earthly elevation*." Referring to a period in which the nominal church was growing popular and Papacy had its rise. R. 5992:6, 3 . . . All the vile doctrines that have saturated the papal church, and that still permeate Protestantism had at least their origin in this period. R. 359:3*
- g. MEGG: Earthly elevation. Pergamos was the name given to the citadel of Troy . . . The Pergamos period dates from the time Constantine embraced Christianity, which being thus popularized became the nominal religion of the people. The church of the period was exceedingly exalted, but only from an earthly standpoint. Persecution having ceased, the policy of the emperor became the policy of both priest and people.

REVELATION STUDY:

NAMES & MEANINGS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES, p. 4.

4. **THYATIRA:** (Rev. 2:18-2:29)

- a. S # 2363: a place in Asia Minor.
- b. Y: A city of Lydia in Asia Minor, near the river Lycus, 27 mi. N W of Sardis, and 56 mi. N E of Smyrna. Once called *Pelopia* and *Euhippia*, now *Ak-Hissar* ("white castle"); famous for the of dyeing purple. In A.D. 69 Christ sent a message to it through the Apostle John, recorded in Rev. 2:18-24.
- c. HBD: Key highway of commerce. Established by Seleucus I who brought in a colony of Macedonians (3rd Cent. B.C.); town gained prestige from its guilds of weavers and dyers of wool and linen textiles for clothing, and for its leather-workers and metal craftsmen. Lydia, Paul's first convert in Europe, was a cloth merchant from Thyatira who did business in Macedonian Philippi (Acts 16:14). From the large Jewish colony in Thyatira a cell of devout Christians was formed.
- d. McCl/S: (Vol. X, pp. 395-397) — p. 395: Thyatira was founded by Seleucus Nicator, and was regarded as a Macedonian colony . . . it being one of the many Macedonian colonies established in Asia Minor, in the sequel of the destruction of the Persian empire by Alexander. Many corporate guilds were established in the city, including bakers, potters, tanners, weavers robe-makers, and dyers. Famous for Lydia, the seller of purple, dyeing of scarlet cloth; also for leeches, used in medicinal treatment.
- e. (R. 491, by W.I.M.): "*the sweet perfume of a sacrifice.*" Period of the Papal persecution. "*And I gave her space [chronos, time] to repent . . .*" = 360 years.
- f. EBC: Thyatira means "*the sweet perfume of sacrifice.*" Referring to the period of Papal persecution in which the virgin Church was enduring hardships in the wilderness while the apostate church sat on the throne of her royal paramour. R. 5993:2; R. 491:4* Meaning "*sweet savor of labor.*" Applies to the first part of the period during which the Church was said to be in the wilderness; the time also in which the Papacy was in power. R 388:3* Meaning "*sacrificed,*" and refers to that phase of the Church when the "woman fled into the wilderness," where she was to be fed of God. HG 97:2.
- g. MEGG: Sweet savor of labor, a perfume of sacrifice. This was the period of Papal persecution. The antichrist had seated himself in the temple of God, announcing himself through his minions as "Our Lord God the Pope". (II Thess. 2:4) He ruled the nations with a rod of iron, and dashed in pieces as a potter's vessel those who would not acknowledge his authority. The virgin Church was enduring the hardships of the wilderness, while the harlot, reveling in her lewdness, sat on the throne of her royal paramour. Thyatira would thus cover a period during which the true church . . . was fully harnessed and faithfully laboring in the Lord's work.

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NAMES & MEANINGS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES, p. 5

5. **SARDIS:** (Rev. 3:1-3:6)

- a. S # 4554 = Sardeis; plur. of uncert. der.; a place in Asia Minor.
- b. Y = the capital of *Lydia* in Asia Minor, which had Smyrna on the W, Thyatira on the N, and Philadelphia on the E, at the foot of Mt. Tmolus on the river Pactolus. Now called *Sest-Kalessi*. In 283 B.C., taken by Seleucus; in A.D. 14-37 it was destroyed by earthquake and rebuilt by Tiberius; taken by the Turks in the 11th century, and again in the 14th.
- c. HBD: a highland city of W Asia Minor. Situated at the trade crossroads running E & W through the powerful Kingdom of Lydia, of which it was the capital. Enriched by commerce, productive plains, and by extensive manufacture of textiles and gold jewelry. Credited with minting the first coins, under the fabulously rich Croesus. Its rich citizens were patrons of mystery cults. The Christian colony degenerated until the majority had reverted to paganism.
- d. (R. 491, by W.I.M.): Sardis is said to mean, "*that which remains*," as if it were perhaps a useless remnant; or something out of which the life or virtue had gone. They had the appearance of being what they were not, having the form of godliness, without the power.
- e. McCl/S: (Vol. IX, pp. 354-356) — p. 354: of uncertain etymology . . . a city of Asia Minor, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia. Situated . . . just below the range of Tmolus (Bos Dagħ . . . p. 355: "The inhabitants of Sardis bore an ill repute among the ancients for their voluptuous habits of life. Hence, perhaps, the point of the phrase, ' . . . *even in Sardis* . . . ' . . . From what is said, it appears that it had already declined much in real religion, although it still maintained the name and external aspect of a Christian church, 'having a name to live, while it was dead'. (Rev. iii:1)."
- f. EBC: Meaning "*that which remains*," as if it signified a useless remnant, something out of which life or virtue has gone. Sardis includes a short interval just before the Reformation. Rev. 5993:3; 5992:3; 491:1, 6*; HG 97:2. The little remnant, after its almost complete extermination. HG 97:4
- g. MEGG: That which remains, as it were perhaps a remnant, almost dead, in which the life or virtue had nearly all gone.

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6. **PHILADELPHIA**: (Rev. 3:7-3:13)

- a. S # 5359: from Philadelphos (the same as 5361 = fond of brethren, i.e., fraternal). A king of Pergamos; *Philadelphia*, a place in Asia Minor.
- b. Y = The second city of Lydia in the W of Asia Minor, 26 mi. S E of Sardis, and 70 mi. N E of Smyrna; it was founded by Attalus Philadelphus king of Pergamos; In A.D. 17 it was almost destroyed by an earthquake; it was taken by Bazaset I in A.D. 1390; it is now called *Allah shair*, "city of God," and still contains about 15,000 inhabitants, and the ruins of many ancient churches.
- c. A city in Lydia (the modern Alashehir) . . . [same information as under b. above]; one of the 7 Churches to whom messages in the Revelation were addressed.
- d. McCl/S: (Vol. VIII, pp. 79-80) — p. 79: "*brotherly love* . . . Philadelphia still exists as a Turkish town, under the name of *Allah-shehr*, "city of God," i.e., High-town. The region around is highly volcanic, and, geologically speaking, belongs to the district of Phrygia . . . [The city] . . . is principally built on four or five hills, extremely regular in figure, and having the appearance of truncated pyramids . . . This district is even yet famous for the growth of the vine, which delights in a light and sandy soil; and, though incapable of extensive cultivation, as a few fertile oases. Close to Philadelphia the soil is rich, and fruits as well as corn are abundant . . ."p. 80: "One solitary pillar of high antiquity has often been noticed as reminding beholders of the remarkable words in the Apocalyptic message to the Philadelphia Church: (Rev. 3:12) . . ."
- e. (R. 504, by W.I.M.): "*Love of a brother*." This stage of the Church's history evidently began at the great Reformation . . .
- f. EBC: Meaning "*brotherly love*." R5993:4; HG 97:2. Referring to the period of the Reformation until recent times R5992:3; 491:1*
- g. MEGG: Brotherly love. This stage of the Church's history began at the great Reformation.

REVELATION STUDY:

NAMES & MEANINGS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES, p. 7

7. **LAODICEA:** (Rev. 3:14-3:22)

- a. S # 2993 (Rev. 1:11) = from a comp. of 2992 [a people] and 1349 [*right*, (as self-evident), i.e., *justice* (the principle, a decision, or its execution)]; Laodicea, a place in Asia Minor. S # 2994 (Rev. 3:14) = from 2993; a Laodicean, i.e., inhab. of Laodicia.
- b. Y = The chief city of Phrygia Pacatiana in Asia Minor, on the river Lycus, a little above its junction with the Meander, and not far to the S of Colosse and Hieropolis. Its earlier name was Diospolis, and afterwards Rhoas; it was enlarged by Antiochus II, and called by him Laodicea, after his wife. About A.D. 64 it was destroyed as was Colosse and Hieropolis, by an earthquake, but was rebuilt by Marcus Aurelius. Its ruins are called *Eski-hissar*.
- c. HBD: A city of Asia Minor, situated in the Lycus River Valley at the crossroads of the great trade route from the E to Pergamum and Ephesus . . . Its products were a famous black wool cloth made of local sheep's wool (compare vs. 18), embroidered garments, and a well-known eye medicine, called Phrygian powder (compare vs. 18). Its bankers negotiated with the whole empire. [Compare vs. 17 — "thou sayest I am rich"] Laodicea had a Christian church (in the house of Nymphas, Col. 4:15) . . . Its early Christian zeal cooled through its sense of self-sufficiency . . . The city has not been excavated, though Roman and Seleucid ruins (up to 160 A.D.) are extensive.
- d. SBD: Its site was on seven hills, which were drained by two brooks, Asopus and Caprus . . . Its original name was Diospolis (the city of Jupiter), which was changed to Rhoas, under which title it became the largest city in Phrygia (Pliny). Antiochus II gave it the name of his wife, Laodike . . . Two rulings cited: 1) system of supplying villages or small societies with church services via "intenerating presbyters." 2) "Christians should not Judaize by resting on the seventh day, but to work on it as usual, and rest on the Lord's day as far as possible, like Christians."
- e. McCl/S: (Vol. V, pp. 236-238) — p. 236: *justice of the people* . . . Towards the end of the [Roman] republic and under the first emperors, Laodicea became one of the most important and flourishing commercial cities of Asia Minor, in which large money transactions and an extensive trade in wool were carried on. The place often suffered from earthquakes . . . The wealth of the citizens created among them a taste for the arts . . . science, and literature . . .
- f. (R. 505, by W.I.M.): Laodicea is interpreted as "a tried, or judged, people." The description shows us that they were tried and found wanting.
- g. EBC: Meaning, "a tried or judged people." R5993:5; 505:2*. Meaning "justice for the people." R110:2. Means "judgment," and refers to the Church of the "time of the end," which

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LAODICEA continued:

includes the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, with its advent proclamation, its time of trouble and day of wrath, the rewards, and destruction of those who destroy the earth. HG 97:3. The last stage of the great nominal Gospel church of wheat and tares. D41. The Church in the end of the Gospel age. R4870:2; 5651:5.

- h. MEGG: Laodiceans — A tried and judged people. This description shows that they were tried and found wanting.

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NAMES AND MEANINGS RELATED TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES, p. 9

1. **ANTIPAS:** (Rev. 2:13)

- a. S #493 = contr. for a comp. of 473 (*opposite*, i.e., *instead* or *because of*) and a derivative of 3962 (pater: a "*father*"[lit. or fig.]). A Christian.
- b. Y = A martyr in Pergamos. The name is an abbreviation of Antipater.
- c. McCl/S: (Vol. I, pp. 275-276) — p. 275: name of 3 men. Third: A "faithful martyr," mentioned in Rev. 2:13, A.D. ante 100. He is said to have been one of our Savior's first disciples, and a bishop of Pergamus, and to have been put to death in a tumult there by the priests of Aesculapious, who had a celebrated temple in that city. Tradition relates that he was burned in a brazen bull under Domitian.
- d. EBC: *Anti* [against] *papas* [father or pope]; one who protests against the pope. The true followers of the Master denounced the attempt to disobey the direct command of Jesus, "Call no man Father." (Matt. 23:9) R5993:2; 491:3*; 359:5*. Would evidently mean "against the father," or "opposed to the Pope or Patriarch," as we use the name anti-christ, the opponent of Christ. R359:5*
- e. MEGG: (Greek: *anti* meaning against, and *Pater*, contracted to *pas* meaning father); an antipapist, one who opposed, or protested against the pope or father, those who fought against and denounced the corruption creeping into the church.

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2. **NICOLAITANES**: (Rev. 2:6, 15)

- a. S # 3531 = (NOTES: typo. in Concordance, which says 2531.) Nicolaites, from 3532 (*victorious* among his *people*); a Nicolaite, i.e., adherent of *Nicolaus*.
- b. Y = The followers of one Nicolas, whose deeds are condemned without being mentioned.
- c. McCl/S: (Vol. VII, pp. 74-75) — p. 74: Nicolaitans — a class or sect . . . Irenaeus, the first author extant who refers to these passages, says that Nicolas, one of the seven deacons of the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 5:5), was the founder of the sect. [Controversy abounds in the writings Re: the beliefs of this sect.] Michaelis... "supposes that by Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6, 15), the same class of persons is intended whom Peter (II Peter 2:15) describes as *followers of the way of Balaam*; and that their name, Nicolaitans, is merely a Greek translation of their Hebrew designation, the noun . . . being a literal version of, . . . that is, *the master of the people*; or according to another derivation, *the devourer of the people*."
- d. EBC: Nicolaitans: Those who lord it over the Lord's heritage. (I Peter 5:3) The word *Nicolans* means "A conqueror or lord of the people." R336:5* *Nicolans* in Greek, has the same meaning as *Balaam* in Hebrew. R336:5*
- e. MEGG: Nicolaitanes — Those who desire to "lord it over God's heritage." (Nicholas means a lord.) God hates that spirit. It was the old contention as to who should be greatest in the Kingdom. (Rev. 2:6.) Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes (Rev. 2:15) — "The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes seems to be that of lordship and leadership in the church. (Nicholas means a lord.) The strife as to who should be greatest existed among many of the fathers of the churches in prominence. At their councils there was a bitter strife for supremacy, the tendency was toward an earthly head, and of course many wanted the honor. The patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Byzantium (afterwards Constantinople) and Rome were among the most prominent. The first two dropped out, but the strife between the last two continued for several centuries, and was settled only by a division of the church. The eastern, or Greek church acknowledged the patriarch of Byzantium as head of the church; the Western or Papal church acknowledged the bishop (pope, father) of Rome. Many of the true in the church denounced this attempt to disobey the direct commands of the Savior (Matt. 23:7) and of course received the persecution foretold. (II Thess. 1: 12.) These are the "Antipas" class. "This noticed in the Ephesus message found its development in this period, and has been a burden to the church ever since. In the church of Rome the laity or people are much the subjects of the pope, both in spiritual and temporal things, as any of earth's conquerors ever dreamed of demanding, and this is in the face of Christ's plain statement that there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one master, one Father, and all ye are brethren."

CHANGES OF FUNCTION

When considering the timing of the Seven Last Plagues of Revelation 15 and 16, there are numerous factors entering into the question. One, of course, is the architectural balance in the Harvest chapters (14 through 19). Since (excluding the plagues) the remaining four pictures ALL cover details from the beginning to the end of the harvest in a progressive manner, it seems a great inconsistency if the plagues do not do likewise rather than all happening at the close of the Harvest. There are also other arguments against the plagues' being concentrated at the end of the Harvest. The following is one of those which more subtly deals with the question.

There are (at least) three symbols in Revelation which are used in a rather dramatic way to stress how God intended to focus destruction on the old order at the end of the age. These three symbols are used for one function (the building of the Church) during the age, and another function (judgment) at the close of the age. Some may assume that the judgment functions occur once the Church is complete, but, in addition to subtle hints in these contexts that that is not the case, it should be remembered that Bible students have for more than a century tried to make the point that the judgments began with 1914. Do we wish to back out of this position now? It is true, of course, that there must be a final, horrible, cumulative judgment at the end of the trouble, but it is nowhere stated that this is represented by the plagues. The judgment function of the three symbols we will note seems best to apply in each case to the period beginning as the "Times of the Gentiles" come to a close (i.e., 1914).

The three symbols under consideration are:

- (1) The CENSER of Rev. 8: 2-6;
- (2) The SEA OF GLASS of Rev. 4:6 and 15:2-4
- (3) The PLAGUES of truth as first TRUMPETED in Chapters 8-11. and as later POURED OUT as in Chapters 15 and 16.

Regarding the third symbol, it is necessary to keep in mind certain facts (sometimes ignored because of our less-than-careful use of terms.)

- (a) Please recall that an indisputable link exists between what we usually term TRUMPETS and PLAGUES. In numerical order, each affects the same entity: the first on the earth, the second on the sea, the third on the fountains, etc.

(The symbol of the Censer, which is part of the Introduction to the Trumpets of Rev. 8:1-6, is thus closely linked to both Trumpets and Plagues. Please see the discussion on pages 50-53).

- (b) The seven angels which pour out the plagues in Chapter 16 are said to HAVE THE PLAGUES before they are given the VIALS or BOWLS from which to pour them. STRICTLY, the plagues ARE TRUTHS – truths possessed by the seven angels in the past (when they, still in the flesh, spread them as trumpet blasts), but which at the Harvest serve a new function as they are poured out from vehicles (bowls, vials) supplied for this special judgment use of truth.

Thus, these plagues (truths) have, indeed, functioned one way (distributed by Trumpets) DURING the age, and another way (distributed by bowls) AT THE END of the age.

It would, obviously, help greatly if we were to refer to what we usually call the Plagues as vials or bowls.

—An Aside—

It has often been said (correctly) that the three “woes” are not only the final three trumpets (Rev. 11: 14), but that they (the woes or final trumpets) are the first three plagues in a series of ten plagues (as was pictured in Egypt.) Frequently we refer to the “plagues on Babylon.” The thought is not incorrect (as is shown in 18:4), but it should not be forgotten that, in the type, the plagues were on Egypt (as they likely are in the antitype also). Therefore, the object of God’s wrath in Rev. 16 seems clearly not only Babylon, but more particularly Egypt (the Western, “Christian” world) — a much broader focus.

Sometimes Joshua’s destruction of Jericho is mentioned in a discussion of the plagues. We have already seen how TRUMPETS and PLAGUES (vial pouring) are closely related. However, the thought of some that the seven trumpets in Jericho’s final day equate to the seven last plagues does not fit. If that concept were intended, there would have to be EIGHT trumpets on the last day; seven would represent the plagues, but one extra one would be needed to represent the third woe which IS the seventh trumpet AND is also the third of ten plagues. Thus we are not faced with the problem of too many trumpets when New Testament prophecy makes abundantly clear that there are no more than 7.

End of the Aside

The Changes of Function can be shown thusly:

SYMBOL: CENSER

During the Age

Used to lift the prayers of saints(8:3,4)

Beginning in 1914

Used to destroy the old order (8:5) (Compare Ezekiel 10:2)

SYMBOL: SEA OF GLASS

During the Age

Refers to the LAVAR in the Temple used to hold forth the water of truth for cleansing the saints. The “glass” probably recalls the tabernacle’s lavar having been made from mirrors. Hence, this was a place to look at self against the perfect standard of truth. (Rev. 4:6 shows this “sea” as one of the many tools which serve God in the building of His Church during the age.)

Beginning in 1914

The sea of glass (Rev. 15:2) retains the idea of comparison to a perfect standard; but now it is the world looking at the mirror in a judgment sense (like Dan. 5:27). Now the sea is mingled with the element of judgment and destruction (fire). Those glorified (a carry-over from 14: 13 to show what they are now doing) are STANDING (i.e., having control) over these truths (water) for a new function: Thus, while only the 7 angels pour out the vials, the glorified saints DO PARTICIPATE in the old order’s destruction by being allowed to pour this “fire-water” on them. Those yet in the flesh spread the audible message which also helps to bind kings and nobles. (Psa. 149 and Rev. 20:1)

SYMBOL: PLAGUES

During the Age

The truths (plagues) which the 7 angels HAD (15:1) during the age were trumpeted by the fact of the angels' religious prominence. (Chapters 8 -11) Thus the messages reached the saints even though the trumpetings were abhorred and ignored by the world who also heard them. Because the world ignored the truths, the same truths must be more forcibly brought to their attention in the Harvest. Thus, DURING THE AGE, the function of these truths (later called plagues) was to build the Church.

Beginning in 1914

The same truths (plagues) which these angels HAD during the age are now forced on the world via historical traumas (vials or bowls) poured out on the various parts of society. The angels are now glorified and empowered with the MEANS to be heard as their trumpeting could not quite achieve during the age.

THE BEAST AND THE IMAGE QUESTION

Preface

The proponents of the future plagues often use Revelation 15:2 as meaning that the plagues cannot occur until the vivified image of Revelation 13 becomes a reality. This is (if not THE primary) one of the primary objections to gradual plagues during the Harvest period. (It might be noted initially that if this verse applied to the vivified image, it SHOULD call it the False Prophet.)

The purpose of this article is to address this objection by showing that this is not the meaning of 15:2 nor of any like citation.

The Approach

As is almost always the case, an exhaustive examination of every occurrence of “beast,” “image,” etc. helps best to understand the matter. This appendix ends with a listing of all of these texts along with brief summaries of their import. Before this listing, however, the conclusions drawn from their consideration will be stated.

Conclusions

Perhaps the most imperative lesson to be drawn from “beast” texts is that ALL (Yes! All 144,000) saints are said to have been free from the worship of the beast, his image, and their mark! Rev. 20:4 makes this clear. How can this be? It can be because this is the VERY CRUX of the matter prophetically. The SYMBOL of not worshipping the beast or the image or of having the mark is a SYMBOL of being free from apostate Christianity AT ANY TIME DURING THE AGE – even BEFORE there officially IS a beast or an image. When Paul stated that the “mystery of iniquity doth already work,” he was saying this very thing; it has been possible to be “marked” since the beginning of the Church.

Because of the strength of Revelation 13 on the subject, many have assumed that this symbol applies ONLY to the Harvest saints. But the texts of Revelation simply do not justify so narrow a view.

The EXTENSION of Revelation 13 (which is 14:1-5) actually gives support to the testimony of 20:4. Chapter 13 has shown us those who do receive the mark and who do worship the beast and his image. But 14:1 CLEARLY SHOWS the opposite class. Their mark is the Name of Jesus and the Father in their foreheads. And how many are there? 144,000. This is the WHOLE CHURCH which has not received the beast’s mark.

Much is often made of the ability of the beast and the image to “kill” those who do not cooperate. But this killing ability is not new to 13:15. In 6:8 the Papacy uses the beasts of the earth to “kill.” This is back during the fourth seal times. In 11:17 the body of the beast (the French Republic) is able to “kill” the practice of religion. 13:15 simply EXTENDS what has been going on during the age. BEFORE it was all a function of the 10-horned beast; this EXTENSION conveys the same to the 2-horned beast and the image.

The worship of the apostasy we have shown can go all the way back to the Ephesus Church. (See also 2:6) Other references show the beast has been around long enough to have been a test on ALL 144,000. 13:1 shows the beast coming out of the Roman sea (probably about the time of Constantine.) 13:3 shows its Reformation history. 14:9-12 shows the worship of the beast and image SINCE 1878. 17:3 shows us the beast DURING THE ENTIRE 1260 YEARS; therefore, it was possible during that whole period

either to worship the beast or to overcome it. 17:7 shows its presence during the period of all seven heads. At ANY TIME during those heads, the worshipping or overcoming of the beast was possible.

It is in THIS spirit and context that 15:2 applies. Those in 15:2 are the RAISED SAINTS – saints all the way back to Stephen! And they ALL are characterized as being victorious over the beast or his image, or his name. To characterize 15:2 as representing ONLY those who have lived since the appearance of the 2-horned beast, or worse yet, those who finish their courses sometime yet in the future, goes against all the lessons we have learned from the Seventh Messenger about topical study application. 15:2 does NOT stand in the way of the plagues' having begun in the past; its only time restraint is that it could not have happened prior to 1878 when the sleeping saints were raised.

An Exhaustive Listing of the Revelation Texts on the Matter **(Along with Brief Interpretive Comments)**

CHAPTER AND VERSE:

6:8	Papacy uses beasts to "KILL" (Thus RIDES these beasts.)
11:7	French Republic body of beast – able to " <u>KILL</u> "
13:1	Primary beast of 10 horns: <u>originates back about Constantine's time.</u>
13:2	
13:3	
13:4	
13:11	
13:12	Its Reformation history Its almost-inseparableness from dragon ultimately 2-horned beast born about time of Reformation; its link to dragon
13:13	
13:14	
13:15	Like the 10-horned beast and promotes its worship Instructs to make image of 10-horned beast
13:17	
13:18	Gives breath to image which can " <u>KILL</u> "
14:1-5	Buying & selling restricted to those with mark
14:9, 11, 12	Identifying number of beast
15:2	144,000 share ANOTHER KIND of mark
16:2	Worship of beast and image and receiving of mark <u>SINCE 1878</u>
16:10	Faithful of PAST; a GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WHOLE GROUP;
16:13	Can go back to Ephesus and/or 13:1
17:3	First bowl poured when STILL called "image, <u>not</u> "false prophet." Those who worshipped and received mark are WESTERN WORLD = "EGYPT."
17:7	Poured on the AUTHORITY OF JUDGMENT exercised by the beast
17:8	FALSE PROPHET never mentioned before 6 th plague – probably because it DOES NOT EXIST before this time. Image has disappeared.
17:11-17	Beast DURING ENTIRE 1260 YEARS – therefore could be overcome all this time
19:19	Beast during ALL 7 heads; therefore could be overcome all that time
20:4	Reference to 11:7
20:10	Beast shown to have gone way back into history as well as into future.
	Beast rises up against Lord during Harvest
	Beast and False Prophet destroyed at end of Harvest
	<u>All saints characterized as having overcome beast and image, All 144,000 of them!</u>
	Civil power eventually (1000 years later) destroyed to join beast and false prophet in "torment."

END OF STORY

APPENDIX C

RELATED ITEMS

APPENDIX C

The material in this section is by outside sources. Therefore the initial statement on copyright made in the Preface does not apply to items in Appendix C.

Founders of "Mainline" Churches Knew Who Anti-Christ Was

THE FOLLOWING QUOTES SHOW JUST HOW FAR THE CHURCHES OF TODAY HAVE STRAYED FROM THE WISDOM OF THEIR FOUNDING FATHERS.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) (Lutheran)

"We here are of the conviction that the papacy is the seat of the true and real Antichrist . . . personally I declare that I owe the Pope no other obedience than that to Antichrist." (Aug. 18, 1520) Taken from "*The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*," Vol. 2, pg. 121 by Froom.

John Calvin (1509-1564) (Presbyterian)

"Some persons think us too severe and censorious when we call the Roman pontiff Antichrist. But those who are of this opinion do not consider that they bring the same charge of presumption against Paul himself, after whom we speak and whose language we adopt...I shall briefly show that (Paul's words in II Thess. 2) are not capable of any other interpretation than that which applies them to the Papacy." Taken from "*Institutes*" by John Calvin.

Cotton Mather (1663-1728) (Congregational Theologian)

"The oracles of God foretold the rising of an Antichrist in the Christian Church; and in the Pope of Rome, all the characteristics of that Antichrist are so marvelously answered that if any who read the Scriptures do not see it, there is a marvelous blindness upon them." Taken from "*The Fall of Babylon*" by Cotton Mather in Froom's book "*The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*." Vol. 3, pg. 113.

John Knox (1505-1572) (Scotch Presbyterian)

Knox wrote to abolish "that tyranny which the pope himself has for so many ages exercised over the church" and that the pope should be recognized as "the very antichrist, and son of perdition, of whom Paul speaks." Taken from "*The Zurich Letters*" pg. 199 by John Knox.

Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) (Anglican)

"Whereof it followeth Rome to be the seat of antichrist, and the pope to be very antichrist himself. I could prove the same by many other scriptures, old writers, and strong reasons." (Referring to prophecies in Revelation and Daniel.) Taken from "*Works*" by Cranmer, Vol. 1, pp. 6-7.

John Wesley (1703-1791) (Methodist)

Speaking of the Papacy he said, "He is in an emphatical sense, the Man of Sin, as he increases all manner of sin above measure. And he is, too, properly styled the Son of Perdition, as he has caused the death of numberless multitudes, both of his opposers and followers . . . He it is . . . that exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped . . . claiming the highest power, and highest honour . . . claiming the prerogatives which belong to God alone." Taken from "*Antichrist and His Ten Kingdoms*" by John Wesley, pg. 110.

Roger Williams (1603-1683) (First Baptist Pastor in America)

He spoke of the Pope as "the pretended Vicar of Christ on earth, who sits as God over the Temple of God, exalting himself not only above all that is called God, but over the souls and consciences of all his vassals, yea, over the Spirit of Christ, over the Holy Spirit, yea, and God himself . . . speaking against the God of heaven, thinking to change times and laws: but he is the son of perdition (II Thess. 2)." Taken from "*The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*" by Froom, Vol. 3, pg. 52.

Quoted from GREAT PROPHECIES OF
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The Twenty-Four Elders

"Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones and seated on them were twenty-four elders." (Revelation 4:4, NIV)

Various thoughts have been expressed about the meaning of these twenty-four elders. At first sight, we may believe that the elders represent the Church of Christ, because they were sitting on thrones and had crowns of gold on their heads. Moreover, this concept seems to be supported by Revelation 5:9, 10: "The four and twenty elders . . . 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" (Authorized version).

The revised version and several contemporary versions render these verses differently. We quote the revised version: "The four and twenty elders . . . sing a new song saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth."

In the notes of Prof. C. Tischendorf we learn the word us in the ninth verse is omitted by the Alexandrian manuscript, whereas the words us and we in the tenth verse are omitted by the Sinaitic manuscript and should be replaced by them and they (Spurious Passages of the New Testament, page 12).

We must not forget that the vision of John is symbolical. There are not elders with beards in heaven: the elders personify something. Likewise the thrones and the crowns are symbolical and represent something. The old age of these personages seems also to stand for something.

In the case of the elders, they are not the portrayal of anything which pertains to the time of the Lord's second presence, because they are present when the Lamb takes the scroll from the right hand of God.

In our opinion, the elders do not represent the Church of Christ; they do not symbolize her for

several reasons. (1) In Revelation 5:5 one of the elders said to John: "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." At that time, the Church was not yet either in heaven or on earth. The Church of Christ, as new creatures, came into existence at Pentecost, when the holy Spirit came upon the disciples, ten days after the Lord's ascension, after the Lamb took the scroll from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

(2) From verse 8 of the same chapter, we learn that when the Lamb had taken the scroll the twenty-four elders fell down before Him. We believe that the Lord took the scroll from the right hand of his Father after his resurrection, and specially after presenting the merit of his sacrifice to the Father. The Church could not then exist.

(3) Besides, the Church is not raised up before the second coming of our Master, as it is written: "For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16). The church could not be in heaven beforehand.

(4) In Revelation 14:4, John writes that he saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the elders. The members of the Church are represented by the 144,000 singing a new song. They were singing before the elders. It follows that the elders do not typify the Church.

Someone might say that these twenty-four elders, on account of their old age, represent the Prophets of the Old Testament, the ancient worthies. According to this statement, their resurrection should have taken place before the ascension of our Lord, before the presentation of the ransom price to Divine Justice. We know that Christ had first to enter heaven to appear for us in God's presence. He was to come a second time to bring salvation to the Church, the ancient worthies and the world of mankind (Hebrews 9:24, 28; Revelation 11:18). Therefore, the elders do not represent the Prophets.

The elders cannot symbolize angels either, for in that case they would not be symbolical and they would represent nothing. Yet we know that the vision is symbolic.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES

In the present light of the Truth, we perceive that the elders are the personification of some of God's teachings, predictions or prophecies of the Old Testament, as the two Witnesses, mentioned in the eleventh chapter, are the personification of the Word of God, of the Old and the New Testaments. In both cases the Word of God is illustrated by living beings. The two Witnesses stand before the Lord of the earth, they have mouths and prophesy, they give a testimony, they have feet and are exalted to heaven. The fact that the elders were well on in years denotes the ancientness of the prophecies which they personify. Their old age gives us to understand that these prophecies were written long ago, before the Lamb had triumphed. (Revelation 5:4, 5)

If the elders personify some predictions or prophecies emanated from God in the Old Testament, their utterances should be found more or less distinctly in the Law and the Prophets.

The first utterances of the elders is: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being" (4:11). This is the first teaching of the Old Testament: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created" (Genesis 2:4). This first utterance of the elders is found in the Old Testament in many places, under different forms. David said: "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture." (Psalm 100:1-3). Isaiah, reminding the Israelites of the power of God, said to them, among other things: "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal? Says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name" (40:25, 26). "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth" (40:28).

Then one of the elders said to John: "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed, He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals" (Revelation 5:5). The elder undoubtedly quoted words of the Old Testament, when he spoke of the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Root of David. In the prophecy of Jacob we read: "You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down like a lioness - who

dares to rouse him? The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes and the obedience of the nations is his" (Genesis 49:9, 10). This prophecy already predicts the triumph of Shiloh, of the Messiah, because all nations will obey Him. The elder, who spoke to John, also mentioned this prophecy of Isaiah, when he called the Lamb a Root of David: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit" (11:1). And concerning the opening of the scroll, David said: "The secret of the Lord have they who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant" (Psalm 25:14, Amplified Bible). There are other similar testimonies in the Old Testament, but we only quote these ones.

In Revelation 5:9, 10, we learn that the twenty-four elders, along with the four living creatures, fell down before the Lamb and sang a new song. They said: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." The elders were visibly singing the song of Moses. In the Old Testament we find plenty of statements, types, figurations, images foretelling what the elders said, singing.

We will mention only a few excerpts: "But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end" (Daniel 12:4, 9). "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him" (Daniel 7:13, 14). "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days. . . by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many" (Isaiah 53:10, 11). "I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth" (Psalm 89:27). "You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). The elders revealed to John what the Old Testament shows in shadows (Hebrews 10:1).

Further on, in the seventh chapter, we still read: "Then one of the elders asked me, 'These in white robes - who are they, and where did they come from?' I answered, 'Sir, you know'. And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he

who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:13-17).

We do not intend to explain each verse of this Scriptural passage, but we only want to call attention of the fact that in each utterance of the elders we find references to the Old Testament. In verse 14, the elder is teaching John, who particularly represents the last members of the Body of Christ. The elder refers to a class who came out of tribulation, out of pains, as Isaiah said: “Yet no sooner is Zion in labour than she gives birth to her children” (66:8). Then he mentioned the words of Daniel who predicted the great tribulation: “There will be a time of distress such as has not happened for the beginning of nations until them” (12:1). Afterwards he spoke of a washing of robes in the blood and might refer to this prophecy of Jacob: “He will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes” (Genesis 49:11). Indirectly he hinted to the Levites, who typify the Great Multitude after the Gospel age, and who did not serve in the Tabernacle, but before the Tabernacle, that is in the Court (Hebrews 9:6; Numbers 3:6, 7). Verse 16 may concern the prophecy of Isaiah, where it is written: “They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water” (49:10). Verse 17 contains words similar to those of the prophet Jeremiah, when he said that the spring of living water was the Lord. “They have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water” (2:13, 17:13).

One more utterance is found in Revelation 11:17, 18. On this occasion, all the elders are speaking. In verse 18 we find the evidence that the elders represent neither any servants of God, nor the prophets of the Old Testament, nor the saints of this Gospel age, nor any class of persons fearing God’s name, because they do not identify themselves with them. We quote the whole utterance: “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great — and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” We see here the portrayal of the time of the Lord’s second presence and the work of the entire Millennial age. Our Lord Jesus Christ, as a representative of His Father, who gave Him all authority in heaven and on earth, and all judgment (Matthew 28:18; John 5:22), will accomplish this work. Indeed, He has already begun

it, inasmuch as, being present a second time, He is rewarding His saints (I Thess. 4:16).

The elder’s utterance, aforementioned, is connected with Peter’s proclamation to the Jews: “When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21, KJV). Which texts of the Old Testament did the elders use in their utterance now under consideration? We think that the elders often summarized the statements or predictions of the prophets. Consequently we cannot always expect to find texts which would be word for word parallel to the utterances of the elders. Nevertheless, we can always find similar texts. We will quote some of them briefly: “He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped Him.” (Daniel 7:14). “The Lord reigns; He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is robed, He has girded Himself with strength and power.” (Psalm 93:1, Ampl. Bible). “Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? . . . The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then He rebukes them in His anger and terrifies them in His wrath, saying, I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill” (Psalm 2:1, 4-6). “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens” (Daniel 12:2, 3). “He will bless those who fear the Lord — small and great alike.” (Psalm 115:13). “Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evil-doer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire. Nor a root or a branch will be left to them” (Malachi 4:1).

FOUR LIVING CREATURES

It is interesting to notice that the elders, in many places, and even almost everywhere, are mentioned in the book of Revelation in conjunction with the four living creatures who symbolize the four attributes of God, Justice, Power, Love and Wisdom. The Scriptural passages where we can notice this close connection between the ones and the others are these: Rev. 4:9, 10; 5:6, 8, 11, 14; 7:11; 14:3; 19:4.

We see two reasons why the elders and the living creatures are often mentioned together. The first reason is that all the teachings of God as well as all the prophetic testimonies are in accordance or in harmony with God’s attributes and they reflect God’s character. The second reason is that if the living

creatures, who are living beings, symbolize not God, but His attributes, then the elders, who are also living beings, symbolize not the Prophets, but their predictions or utterances, that is to say the teachings or oracles of God.

-Antoine Papajak, France

*(The following comments, extracted from the book **The Keys of Revelation**, are harmonious with and supplementary to the above. Please see the article **Two Treatises Available**, later in this issue, for details regarding this book.)*

In preparation for the Solomonic Temple services, David established twenty-four courses or time periods throughout the ecclesiastical year, in which portions of the priesthood would take turns at full-time employment in Temple work. This plan ingeniously afforded an opportunity for all the priestly family, which had grown to considerable numbers since the initial establishment of the priesthood five centuries earlier, to actively participate in the Temple ceremonies. It also helped to minimize jealousy, partiality, and contention within the priestly family itself.

Since the twenty-four thrones do call to mind this former priestly arrangement of the courses, it is natural to infer that the twenty-four elders of Revelation are somehow associated with the priesthood and that, therefore, they actually represent the Church or priesthood of the Gospel Age. However, this conclusion is inaccurate and fails to satisfy all the requirements everywhere the expression "four and twenty elders" is found in the Apocalypse.

It is important to reiterate that Revelation is a book of symbols, replete with imaginative language; sometimes the descriptions employed are seemingly of personalities or beings, whereas the internal theme of the vision indicates otherwise. Thus, correctly reasoned, the twenty-four elders personify the canon of Scripture. More specifically, the number "twenty-four" indicates the *twenty-four* books of the Hebrew Testament. The term "elders" is associated not with the prophets but with the *prophecies* or books of the Old Testament; the "white raiment" alludes to the *Holy* Scriptures; the "golden crowns" point to the *divine authority* of the Word of God; and the "thrones" provide assurance of infallibility or *surety of fulfillment*.

However, it is important to state that a deliberate association is intended between the twenty-four elders of Revelation and the twenty-four courses of David. The lesson is that the Word of God itself performs a priestly function in connection with the Temple, that is, on behalf of the true Church or Temple class.

The twenty-four elders are personified

abstractions of the Word of God in their component parts in the books of the Old Testament. The accepted Jewish canon is divided into three parts comprising the following books: (a) *five* in the Pentateuch, (b) *eight* in the Prophets, and (c) *eleven* in the Holy Writings. Thus the sacred canon consists of twenty-four rolls in all. The following title page is submitted as substantive evidence:

TWENTY-FOUR BOOKS
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES
Carefully translated after the best
Jewish authorities
By
Isaac Leeser
Hebrew Publishing Company
50-52 Eldridge St. New York
1923

Since at the First Advent there was no New Testament, the twenty-four elders were emblematic of the *whole Word of God*. The prophetic utterances of the Bible concerning the Kingdom, particularly those of the Old Testament, which contains the bulk of prophetic testimony, will culminate and /or be fulfilled at the time the kingdoms of the world become those of Jehovah and His Anointed. It is then, when these prophecies are fulfilled, that the twenty-four elders will bow down and give homage to their Author and Sponsor, the Lord God Almighty.

Frank Shallieu

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(pages 373-375)

THE BEASTS OF JOB

By Bro. Carl Hagensick

When one wants to study prophetic beasts in the Bible, it is customary to turn to either the books of Daniel or the Revelation. However, other books of the Bible also speak of beasts in a prophetic sense. In this article we want to address two beasts who figure prominently in the story of Job - behemoth and leviathan.

Outline of Job

While the book of Job is generally treated as a general lesson as to why God permits evil, with Job representing all of mankind; the story may be treated equally well with Job picturing the nation of Israel. After all, Israel is a microcosm of the human race and their experiences; and if mankind has suffered from the permission of evil, Israel has done so even to a greater degree.

The book itself divides into five sections: (1) the introductory narrative; (2) the discussion with the three comforters; (3) the monologue of the fourth man, Elihu; (4) the voice of God speaking out of the whirlwind; and (5) the repentance and restoration of Job.

It is in this latter section, covering chapters forty through forty-two that we meet behemoth and leviathan.

Job's Repentance

The repentance of Job comes in stages. First, after God speaks from the whirlwind we find Job uttering these words: *Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further* (Job 40:3-5).

Although this is an admission of his own failures it falls far short of the abject repentance he expresses in chapter 42:6 *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

The natural inquiry is to ask what produced this further degree of repentance. The obvious answer is God's continued discussion with Job in the intervening chapters. This is the presentation of God concerning behemoth and leviathan.

If Israel, indeed, be the antitype of Job, what will bring them to the state of abject repentance necessary for them to assume their kingdom role? The answer lies in examining these two beasts.

Both of these two animals are described as being virtually invincible. In fact the point of chapters 40 and 41 is that God alone is able to handle these two creatures.

Leviathan

Although leviathan is introduced last, we will discuss him first since he is the easiest to identify. Two clues establish firmly who is represented by this beast.

First, in verse 34 of this 41st chapter of Job, we have a summary of his description: *He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.* Can there be a better description of Satan himself? (See Isa. 14:13, 14.)

Second, we have a further description of leviathan in Isaiah 27:1: *In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.*

Here the double identification of leviathan with both the serpent and the dragon links the image with not only Satan, but more particularly with his activity as the dragon, midst the civil governments of the world.

Job Describes Leviathan

From verse one through the first half of verse 10, God shows Job the futility of man trying to tame leviathan. His strength is just too great.

But, beginning with the latter half of verse ten, God shows that he is in control of the entire situation and he will "repay" or recompense leviathan for all his evil deeds.

Who then is able to stand before Me? Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine. I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion - Job 41:10-12.

Fearsome as is this beast, God admits that he is of "comely proportions." This is reminiscent of the description of Satan in Ezekiel 28:12-15.

The portrayal of leviathan calls special attention to four physical features; (1) his sharp teeth; (2) his tight-fitting scales; (3) His fiery breath; and (4) his hard heart.

The sharp teeth show the unsated appetite of the Adversary. The tight-fitting scales emphasize his invincibility. The fiery breath emphasizes the ferociousness with which he intimidates all opposition. And the hard heart shows not only his lack of compassion, but also his self-confidence and lack of fear.

It is the teeth and scales that cause many commentators to assign leviathan to being a characterization of the crocodile. The fiery breath, not common to any natural beast, lends itself to the mythological image of the fire-breathing dragon.

In fact this fire shows the bold and intimidating claims by which the Adversary has imposed himself as the “god of this world.”

In verse 18, the expression *his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning* could with equal ease be translated *his outward appearance is as the rays of dawn* or *his focus is on the first rays of dawn*.

If the first of these suggested translations is intended, note the similarity with 2 Cor. 11:14 - *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*.

If the second interpretation be correct, this also matches with other Scriptures, most notably with 2 Thess. 2:8, 9 RSV - *And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming. The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders*.

In verses 31 and 32 we have Satan’s techniques in this final battle of the ages: *He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary*.

The boiling of “the deep,” the sea, is prophetic of the rolling up of humanity to the furors of anarchy - “the sea and the waves roaring” (See Luke 21:25).

The shining path, making the deep appear to be “hoary,” or having white hair refers to the pseudo-knowledge and philosophy which make evil appear as good, again the technique of appearing as “an angel of light.”

Behemoth

This animal, described in Job 40:15-24, is more difficult to identify. We only meet up with him here in Job. Like leviathan, he is invincible. Otherwise he can best be described as “undescribable.” That very lack of specific identification helps to link him with

another beast, this one from the book of Daniel.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. - Daniel 7:7.

This fourth beast of Daniel, particularly after the little horn rises and displaces three other horns, represents the Papal religio-political government, especially as seen in the so-called Holy Roman Empire.

Like Satan this mammoth defies domesticating. God is showing to Job that once again only Jehovah is strong enough to control the uncontrollable forces which have been unleashed on the earth.

In verse nineteen he is described as the most powerful of the creations of God, again an apt description for the wealth and power amassed by this great universal empire. But, as the better translation put the latter part of the verse, the one who made him has power to raise the sword against him. How true that will be in the final collapse of Babylon the great!

The self-confidence of this “behemoth” is shown in verse 23 where he defies even the flood, yea, even the swelling of “the river Jordan.” The river Jordan represents humanity, those under the death sentence, those who have been “judged down” as the name Jordan signifies. Even when these rise up in anarchious rebellion, behemoth retains his confidence. However it is a false confidence and this very rising up of the populace brings about the downfall of behemoth - the anti-Christ system of Papacy.

The Effect on Israel

As the developments of the second presence have brought Israel to an hour of judgment, they have responded increasingly with a vocalized knowledge of their need of God to pull them through, but not with the degree of repentance fitting them for the illustrious role they will play in God’s kingdom on earth.

They still have natural bitterness for the success of their two greatest tormentors during the dark days of their Diaspora - Satan and his masterpiece, the anti-Christ church-state governments. But when God will show, through the means of fighting for Israel against these very enemies in Jacob’s trouble, that He is in charge, that He can indeed bring about the recompense which justice requires, then Israel will bow the knee and say, *I repent in sackcloth and ashes*.

REVELATION 13:18

The following, by Bro. Jerry Leslie, is excerpted from the November, 1994

BEAUTIES OF THE TRUTH

SECRET TWO

Some believe that every word and letter of Scripture was divinely directed. This led to a method of reading Scripture called "Gematria." This is a method of adding the numeric value of each Hebrew or Greek letter in a text to determine a clue to some extended meaning of the text. Here we must be very careful not to use some value to insert a private interpretation or to fanaticize with the many mystical interpretations of the Cabalistic branch of Judaism. Any teaching must have a firm basis in the written word.

Yet there are some texts that invite our pursuit to a level deeper than the surface. And some uses of numbers do not relate to time at all. One of these is Revelation 13:18.

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

This follows the prophetic symbols of the seven-headed beast, a two-horned beast and an image of the beast. Finally this "image of the beast" receives power to mark both small and great in the hands or forehead to control a certain commerce.

Following Bro. Russell's suggestion (and many earlier reformers), we understand the beast to represent Papacy, the Man of Sin, a most beastly church-state government. The other images are extensions of the ideology of the first beast, and even of the dragon, pagan Rome, who fostered the whole system.

The number 666 in some Greek texts is written out with the words for each number, as we would say, "six hundred sixty six." In others, they are the three Greek letters which are used for the positional value of numbers. The Greeks used this form of letters to represent both words and numbers: $\alpha=1$, $\beta=2$, $\gamma=3$, $\delta=4$, $\epsilon=5$, . . . $\xi=60$, $\chi=600$. But when it came to 6, another letter was introduced! Not the next - the sixth letter (ζ , zeta) - but a different letter, a peculiar form of S, called "*stigma*." (ς) Now the word stigma ($\sigma\tau\iota\gamma\mu\alpha$) means a *mark*, but especially a mark made by a brand as burnt upon slaves, cattle, or soldiers, by their owners or masters; or on devotees who thus branded themselves as belonging to their gods. This meaning of the characteristic number six seems significantly related to the *mark* of the beast. Indeed

the expression of this number $\chi\xi\varsigma$ consists of the initial and final letters of the word (Christos), Christ, viz. , χ and ς with the symbol of the *serpent* between them. $\chi-\xi-\varsigma$

In this verse we are asked to "count" the number of the beast. The word "count" means to calculate, compute or sum. Many names may be found, the numerical value of whose letters amount to 666. Bro. Russell suggested "Vicarius Filii Dei" which appeared on the papal crown. Others have suggested "Nero Caesar," and there have been many others all applying to the Roman system.

It is remarkable that the Romans did not use all the letters of their alphabet for numbers, as did the Hebrews and Greeks. They used only six letters, D, C, L, X, V and I. (M appears to have evolved from the original use of two adjacent Ds to represent their sum of 1000.) It is even more remarkable, and perhaps significant, that the sum of these amounts to 666, and that each pair sum to the three component parts of the 666 prophetic number.

1.	D =	500	}	600
2.	C =	100		
3.	L =	50	}	60
4.	X =	10		
5.	V =	5	}	6
6.	I =	1		
				666

666 is the characteristic feature of the Roman numeral system, and perhaps is a reason this number was chosen to mark the whole Roman politico-religious system in this prophecy.

We think the meaning of the words "wisdom" and "understanding" in Revelation 13:18 do not refer to a cleverness to understand the formula of the number, but to the spiritual perception and wisdom in identifying the Man of Sin system and keeping separate in spirit from it. These are identified in Revelation 20:4 as those who "had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands." Let us be free from the spirit of antitypical Babylon.

The Seven Churches of Revelation

The seven churches of Revelation, as described in chapters two and three of that book, have intrigued Bible expositors down through the age. Were the messages to these churches intended mainly for the congregations to which they were sent during the apostolic period? Were they intended to be instructive in a general way to the church worldwide in every period of its development? Or were they actually prophetic of Seven Historical Ages of the church, with each successive stage reflecting the conditions and characteristics ascribed to the original churches?

Most believers have concluded that truth is found in all these possibilities: that the messages were designed for the original congregations, as well as generally throughout the age, and chronologically through seven major periods of church history. Nevertheless, the latter view seems to receive particular emphasis from the widely held belief that the Book of Revelation is a forecast of unfolding church history, both good and bad, of the false church as well as the true, from the apostle's day all the way to the end of the age. This conception views the Book as a panorama of colorful pictures portraying the successive development of the church through struggles in a hostile world, near extinction by the rise of apostate elements, gradual recovery to an active role, and a final triumph after tumultuous end-time experiences.

From a careful study of the events of the long period of the history of the Christian church, it does indeed appear to be plausible to view its development as seven distinct stages that parallel the messages to the seven churches of Revelation. Many prophetic expositors of the past have drawn this conclusion, and this continues to be the main current of present Bible Student thinking. Some observers have felt it was not possible always to draw fine lines of separation between the periods and believed that the seven "angels" or messengers represented a class of leaders throughout the age, rather than individuals assigned those responsibilities. Yet others have felt strongly that close students of history and the Book of Revelation can identify both the periods and the particular individuals serving as messengers to a reasonable degree of accuracy.

Certainly for 200 years there has been virtual concurrence on the first four stages: **Ephesus**, that of the apostolic church, when truths were held in basic purity; **Smyrna**, the early persecutions of pagan Rome and beginnings of doctrinal corruption; **Pergamos**, the rise of papacy and compromise with the world; and **Thyatira**, the reign of the apostate church, the counterfeit to the true Kingdom of God, which brought on the dark ages of the civilized world and the near extinction of the saints. For the next two periods, **Sardis** and **Philadelphia**, some differences of view were evident. But in the past century, a consensus has emerged which appears reasonable and might be termed the traditional or common view of the Bible Students, though there are some notable exceptions. The majority identify **Philadelphia** with the Reformation movement and **Sardis** as the brief interval just prior to it. **Laodicea** is then almost always taken as the lukewarm end-time church, identified with the harvest message, "Come out of her my people."

The chart (p. 382) is a graphical portrayal of the composite view. Drawn to scale, it allows the lengths of the periods to be compared visually, along with the ministries of each of the messengers. Two points become startlingly clear from the chart: First, that several of the church stages cover long periods of time, with Pergamos the most outstanding in this regard. Thus Arius is credited as its messenger for over 800 years, as the light of truth grew dimmer and dimmer. Strange as it may seem, a search of history reveals no other champion of truth of his stature throughout this period until Waldo appears on the scene. And second, it is typical of the ministries of the messengers that these are relatively short as compared to the overall lengths of the various stages of the church which they are credited with guiding and that they appear at the beginning of these respective periods. Thus the fact that we are yet benefiting from the ministry of the seventh messenger long after his death should not seem inappropriate; such was simply the pattern throughout the Gospel Age.

Why do we believe the traditional view is correct and deserves our support? First, pertaining to the periods: **Ephesus**, from Pentecostal blessing to about 70 A.D. The latter date, marking the fall of Jerusalem, seems a significant transition from the early period of Jewish influence dominated by Paul's ministry to the phase of rapid expansion into the Gentile world. **Smyrna**, from 70 A.D. to 313 and the Edict of Milan, again seems well marked, with the ending point accepted almost universally, since it brought to a close the bitter afflictions that characterized the period. **Pergamos** runs from 313 to 1157, the time of the early beginning of the Waldensian movement. This synchronizes exactly with the 360-year "space" to repent given to Jezebel (Rev. 2:20, 21), extending from 1157 to 1517 (Thyatira through Sardis), the very year that Luther nailed his theses on the church doors at Wittenberg. Any attempt to shorten Pergamos, for example to 800 A.D., the year of Charlemagne's crowning by the pope and the start of the "papal millennium," runs into a double snag: there is no champion of truth to replace Arius prior to Waldo; and if Waldo is selected as the messenger to Thyatira, he would not appear on the scene (1157) for hundreds of years after the start of the stage of the church which he is credited with overseeing, a premise that seems most unreasonable.

Thyatira, from 1157 to 1367, then seems substantiated by the latter date's opening of the 150-year (five months) stinging of the locusts (Rev. 9:5, under the sounding of the fifth trumpet which parallels the fifth stage of the church), which so markedly characterized Wycliffe's tormenting attacks upon the papal system, extending to the very beginning of the Reformation movement (1517). **Sardis**, from 1367 to 1517, is thus clearly delineated by this 150-year period. **Laodicea**, the end-time church beginning with our Lord's presence and knocking at the door (Rev. 3:20), would extend from 1874 to the full end of the harvest period. **Philadelphia**, the church of the Reformation and subsequent Protestant expansion, would then be cradled between 1517 and 1874.

The Philadelphia period brings into focus a couple of interesting points which should be addressed. The "open door" of Rev. 3:8 seems to be a strong key unlocking the main activity that characterized this stage. Prior to this time the forces of darkness had prevailed to the point where the light bearers had been worn out and almost totally suppressed, so that true witnessing work was virtually at a standstill. Then can Luther's daring proclamations that set all Europe aflame and brought about a sweeping change in conditions that opened the floodgate of truth and began a process that has continued ever since. We are strongly persuaded that the descriptive picture of the "open door" is best seen as beginning in the Reformation movement.

How did the Church of Philadelphia live up to the meaning of its name, "brotherly love"? It was hardly to be expected that all believers could at once catch the spirit of their newfound Bible truths and suppress all bitterness toward the corrupt church that had kept them in bondage so long. Yet in coming to a fuller understanding of the great love of the Heavenly Father toward them, it was inevitable that their appreciation of one another as fellow believers in Christ would also grow. Such a growing realization of the fellowship and close ties of all believers and their privileged standing before God, as contrasted with the dictatorial and hierarchical structure of the established church, would surely have kindled the spirit of brotherly love for each other in their hearts.

Next, some comments pertaining to the messengers: **Paul's** ministry in the early church was so outstanding as to make him the almost universal choice as the first "angel." Highlights are his special commission by God, authoring most of the New Testament books, providing the doctrinal foundation for the Christian faith, extensive missionary efforts and care of all the early churches. The Apostle **John** seems logical as the overseer for the second church, having received the visions of Revelation, authoring four additional books of the New Testament, and offering by way of teaching and example great encouragement to the believers during the period of intense persecution by pagan Rome.

Arius is universally selected as the shining light for Pergamos on the basis of his leading role in defending the early church's view of Jesus as the created Son of God and resisting mounting efforts to equate him with the Father. **Waldo** seems a strong choice as the guide for Thyatira, considering his translation of the Bible into the common tongue and his effective ministry for the truth in a very dark period of the church's history. **Wycliffe** likewise stands out as the messenger to Sardis and seems fully deserving of the wide acclaim given to him for his relentless opposition to Papacy, outstanding work as an early reformer, and first translation of the complete Bible into English.

Luther, though one of many leaders of the Reformation movement, clearly was its moving force and rightly should be recognized as the overseer to the Philadelphia church. His accomplishments were truly extraordinary: powerful sermons and writings that shook all Europe, shattered the claims of Rome and initiated the founding of widespread protest movements; translation of the Bible into the vernacular and restoring it to its rightful place of authority among men; and steadfast opposition to the fundamental errors and abuses of the papal system in the face of personal threats and overwhelming odds.

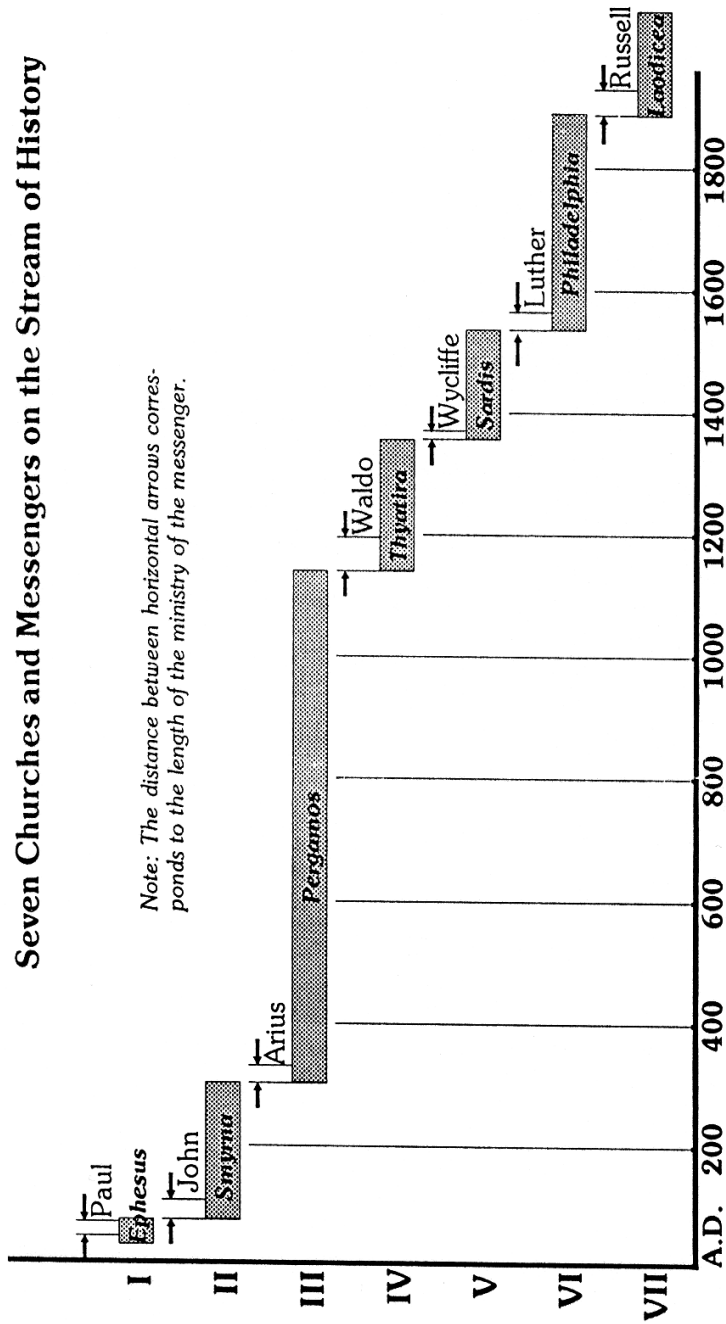
Finally, **C. T. Russell** is seen to emerge as the messenger to Laodicea and the harvest church. His unique contributions have given rise to unanimous recognition and acclaim by Bible Students for such a position: a Bible-centered ministry that stressed Christ's ransom sacrifice, revealed the Divine Plan of the Ages for blessing all mankind, discarded errors of the past, clarified the High Calling, opened an awareness of the end times and the parousia of Christ, and especially called attention to the imminent establishment of God's Kingdom on earth.

We are impressed by the foreknowledge of our great God as displayed in the progressive unfolding of the prophetic messages to the seven churches of Revelation. We see His majestic hand in the outworking of the affairs of the church, both true and nominal, while recognizing also that there has been no interference in the exercise of man's free moral agency. The drama that has unfolded has been an exciting one, though saddened with the accounts of suffering, persecution, and privation for the faithful few.

With the events of the harvest and end times fully upon us, we realize that the course of the saints is rapidly nearing its completion this side of the veil. Let those who remain of the overcoming class rejoice greatly that their faithfulness is soon to be rewarded in complete victory with Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, leaving all apostate elements exposed and destroyed forever. And may this realization stir the Lord's people to yet further zeal in His service, doing with their might what their hands find to do. Let us work while it is called day; for "the night cometh when no man can work." - John 9:4

- Charles F. Redeker

Seven Churches and Messengers on the Stream of History



This article is condensed from an extensive treatise on the subject contained in a book published by the author. The book lists chronologically the key events of church history over the past 2000 years and enables the reader to match these events with the seven stages of the church. It also summarizes the conclusions of Bible Student expositors of past and present in this regard. Single copies of the book are available free of charge by writing the author at 5554 Pal Mal Avenue, Temple City, CA 91780

AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

(Provided by Sr. Rebecca Gray)

THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

The identity of these “elders” is considered by some brethren to be a reference to the office of the church’s priesthood and by others a reference to the books of the Hebrew Scriptures. A quick glance at the priesthood in the typical temple of Solomon will reveal a priesthood office of 24 courses, (I Chron. 24.) which prefigures the work of the Church in the Kingdom.

A comprehensive analysis of the “24 elders” in the Book of Revelation seems to indicate that they represent the 24 divisions of the predestined office of the priesthood the Church members are to fill. Please note the following summary of the characteristics, actions, position, etc., of these “24 elders” —

Revelation 4:4:

“And round about the throne (thronos) were four and twenty seats (thronos) and upon the seats (thronos) I saw four and twenty elders sitting . . .” - How appropriate to find the predestined Church encircling the Heavenly Father’s throne on thrones — just like promised to the overcomers of the seventh stage of the church. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcome and am set down with my Father on his throne” (Rev. 3:21). “And I appoint you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:29, 30).

Please note these 24 “thronos” denote a royal, ruling authority in contrast to the “bema” throne Herod sat on as a Judgment-Seat (Acts 12:21). (See Vine’s)

“Clothed in white raiment” — Contextually in the Book of Revelation, the Church class is consistently prophesied to be clothed in white: “And they shall walk with me in *white*; for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be *clothed in white raiment* (3:4, 5); “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” (Rev. 3:18); “And *white robes* were given unto every one of them” (Rev. 6:11); “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” (Rev. 19:8).

The other references to wearing white refer to the Great Company and the seven angels who are closely associated with the Church.

“On their heads crowns of gold” — The “crown” of royal divine authority is promised to the Church in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 2:10; 3:11). (The beasts of Chapters 12 and 13 also have crowns and claim to have royal authority to rule.)

Rev. 4:10 “The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, . . . and cast their crowns before the throne. . .” The predestined Church of God in symphonic harmony with God’s four attributes will praise God forever. “All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee” (Psa. 145:10). “Praise waiteth for thee, O God in Zion” (Psalm 65:1). The Church by casting crowns before God will not be abdicating their authority but figuratively acknowledging or recognizing the source of their authority.

- Rev. 5:5 “One of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, . . .” The Apostle Paul representing one course of the priesthood steps forward to identify Jesus as the Worthy one who fulfills these two roles: “It is evident that *our Lord sprang out of Juda . . .*” (Heb. 7:14.) “Concerning his Son Jesus made of the *seed of David* according to the flesh. . .” (Rom. 1:1-3). Etc. Before the Apostle Paul, no one specifically identified Jesus as fulfilling these roles.
- Rev. 5:6 “In the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, . . .” How appropriate for Jesus to be standing in the midst of his Church giving strength (“horns”) and watching over (“eyes”) each successive stage of the Church! “In the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man . . .” (Rev. 1:13).
- Rev. 5:8 “Every one of them having harps” - “The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments constitute what the Lord himself designates ‘the harp of God.’ And the various testimonies of the law and the prophets are the several chords of that harp, which, when tuned by the Holy Spirit dwelling in *our hearts and swept by the fingers of the devoted servants and searchers after divine truth*, yields the most enchanting strains that ever fell on mortal ears. Praise the Lord for the exquisite melody of the blessed ‘son of Moses and the Lamb,’ which we learn through the testimony of his holy apostles and prophets, of whom the Lord Jesus is chief!” (F233.) The Church was predestined to make harmonious melody from the Old and New Testament Scriptures. The overcomers of the Church who get the victory over the beast do so by having the “harps of God” (Rev. 15:2).
- “And golden vials full of odors which are the prayers of saints” - The office of the Church is predestined to include the precious sweet-smelling fragrance of the prayers of individual saints.
- Rev. 5:9 “And they sung a new song, saying . . . and hast redeemed to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, . . .” The 24 courses of the predestined Church is melodically attesting to the fact that the incumbents will be redeemed from every kindred of the earth.
- Rev. 5:11, 14 “The voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders, . . .and the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.” In this grand and sublime Throne Scene of Revelation 4 & 5 - how strange it would seem if the Church class were not somehow specifically represented in the eternal purpose of God when everyone else is pictured!
- Rev. 7:13-17 “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes?. . .” Etc. A rhetorical question is asked in order to explain the existence of this class for which there was no call and which is a by-product of the Church. “One of the elders” refers to Paul again who identified and explained in some detail the Great Company class (I Cor. 3:15; 5:5; Heb. 2:15).
- Rev. 11:16 “And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats (thrones), fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,” — The church is predestined to recognize and acclaim the reign of Christ and to praise God for it.

Rev. 14:1-3 “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. . . the voice of many waters, . . . voice of harpers . . . 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 forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.” — Here are the faithful 144,000 who know the Truth and play on the harp of the Scriptures who will merge to fill the predestined office of the 24 elders.

ON SEVEN

SHABBAT SHALOM/ Shlomo Riskin

"Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the produce thereof. But the seventh year shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath unto the Lord." (Lev. 25:3, 4.)

ALTHOUGH I don't ordinarily write the Shabbat Shalom column on gematria (the mystical teaching derived from the relationship between Hebrew letters and their numerical equivalent), you don't have to be a great devotee of mysticism to realize that the Torah ascribes great significance to the number seven.

Sheva, the Hebrew word for seven, is comprised of three letters, *shin*, *bet*, *ayin*, and these same letters, in the same order, also spell the Hebrew word *sovaiu*, which means completion, satisfaction, satiation. In other words, inherent in the number seven lies the concept of completion and satisfaction.

This would mean that even before we were commanded to keep the seventh day holy, the number seven in and of itself contains the concept of wholeness. I may not know why, or what, or when, or how, but nevertheless seven is the goal for which one must strive.

The Torah begins to reveal the mystery of seven with the seventh day of the week. "And the Lord blessed the seventh day and made it holy . . ." (Gen. 2:3.) On the most fundamental level, the Sabbath is a day of rest, a day of individual freedom from the ordinary demands of a work schedule, of an employer's rule.

The Sabbath is also testimony to the Divine creation of the world, to the notion that we are creatures of one Lord-Creator, and dare not serve any mortal creature. Vis-a-vis humanity, every being is equal and free.

This fundamental freedom extends to Gentile servants who, on the seventh day, are entitled to rest, "like you" (Deut. 5:14), to beasts and animals, which cannot be used on the Sabbath, and even to plant life, which cannot be plucked on the Sabbath. And the Sabbath has become a day of Torah study and family-togetherness, a day for mind and spirit, a "foretaste of the world to come."

In a sense, this relationship between six days of imperfection and a seventh day of perfection encapsulates the message that even though the world may be imperfect now, it is our dream and task that the world will be perfected in the future. When we speak of the Sabbath as the Jewish contribution to civilization, it doesn't merely mean that we gave the world the notion of one day of rest in seven, so that every human being can retain a measure of humanity. The deeper message of the Sabbath is that the cycle of "tomorrow and tomorrow" must lead to a world of peace and harmony. Only then will the larger cycle be complete!

This message that seven holds our goal of individual freedom and universal harmony repeats, and resonates, throughout our Jewish tradition. The final festival of the biblical year, the climax of the biblical days of celebration, is Shavuot, the Holiday of Weeks, referring to the seven weeks between Pessah and Shavuot. Indeed, the days and weeks of this period are counted by biblical mandate, which only enhances their significance.

Pessah is generally thought of as our Festival of Freedom, but that is really "jumping the gun." Remember that the first Pessah seder was conducted *in Egypt* on the night of the 15th of Nissan. Pessah is freedom promised but not yet gained. Hence the matza we eat on Pessah is not only the food that accompanied us to the desert, but also the "poor bread which our ancestors ate in Egypt."

It is only seven weeks later, when we celebrate the Festival of the First Fruits, that this holiday period comes to fruition, as it were. Seven weeks bring us from the promise of redemption to its realization, from idolatrous Egypt to the divine gift of Torah.

Remember too, that Pessah comes out on month number one, Nissan, whereas Rosh Hashana appears on month number seven, Tishrei.

ON SEVEN

(continued)

If the Sabbath reflects a march of days on our cycle to completion, and Shavuot reflects a march of weeks, Rosh Hashana reflects a march of seven months.

Pessah expresses a dream of national freedom; Rosh Hashana, the anniversary of the creation of the world and birth of humanity, the day on which the piercing sound of the shofar calls “every creature to understand that You [God] are its Creator,” expresses our goal of universal redemption.

As with days, weeks, months, so with years. We count until we get to the seventh year, the sabbatical year called the *Shmita*, subject of the quote above. But our symbolism doesn’t stop here. After we count seven *cycles* of sabbatical years, getting to 49 years, we arrive at the *Yovel*, commonly called Jubilee. (Lev. 28:8-34.)

During this climax of seven times seven years, the land of Israel returns to its original owners, the descendants of the families amongst whom the land was originally divided when Joshua conquered it. If the sabbatical reflects individual freedom, Yovel reflects national redemption, the return of the land of Israel to its destined inhabitants, the families of Israel.

Hence the number seven, from Sabbath to Jubilee, from days to cycles of years, expresses our faith that we must continually strive to perfect a still imperfect world, that we must move from individual, to national, to universal freedom and redemption. The Jubilee year reflects our belief that change is not only possible, but is divinely mandated, and that our task is to bring about the ultimate change - from exile to redemption.

Shabbat Shalom

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institutions, is Chief Rabbi of Efrat*

“PRESENT EVIL WORLD” II Peter 3:7



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APPENDIX D & E

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<u>58</u>	68	<u>489</u>
60	<u>264</u>	341
<u>60</u>	76	<u>493</u>
60	<u>283</u>	341
<u>61</u>	360	<u>500</u>
60	<u>300's</u>	77
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 263, 264
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A Primer and Guide for the Study of Revelation

While this is available as a separate item, It seemed appropriate to include it as the final item of this publication. Its texts, etc, are not included in the indices of this book.

For Bible Students

***A Primer and Guide for the Study
of***

REVELATION

CHAPTER 1

GETTING STARTED

The study of the book of Revelation is often approached with fear or hesitation by brethren. Many simply choose not to approach it at all. But this attitude is neither correct nor spiritually healthy. We live at a time in the end of the age when enough information has been made available that Revelation can be understood (at the very least in its basics) by nearly all of the Harvest-time saints. Because it is a very spiritual book, and because its contents can be nothing less than very helpful to the Laodicean church, it should be one important object of study for all who have digested the Harvest message as presented in Studies in the Scriptures. Revelation is the only purely prophetic book in the New Testament writings. Surely this tells us something of its importance to the saints.

The New Albany Ecclesia has prepared a booklet on Revelation for public witnessing. It has also prepared an exhaustive notebook on Revelation — a commentary of over 400 pages which examines Revelation in great detail, verse by verse. But neither of these offerings is designed specifically to help other ecclesias and individuals in their own approach to the study of Revelation. This booklet is specifically designed to do that. Thus, this booklet is more about method than about specific interpretation; but method results in interpretation. Therefore, basic concepts of interpretation will be found in this booklet.

Suggested Order of Study

It is usual to begin the study of a book in the Bible by beginning with verse 1 and progressing from that point. Revelation is, perhaps, best approached differently. We know from his writings that Pastor Russell thought the day would come when Revelation would be clarified. He summed this up in the phrase "Someone else will have to write the Seventh Volume." Bro. Russell was, with a few major exceptions, not ready to commit himself to a detailed interpretation of this great book. Nevertheless, he did lay the foundation for its interpretation — frequently giving us major hints about symbolisms and concepts.

Perhaps the Pastor's most dramatic contribution to the study of Revelation was his enlightened and detailed exposition of Chapter 12. (R 55; R 306; Vol. 3, pp 64-69) Bro. Russell's careful attention to the detail of this chapter opens to us symbolisms, contextual considerations, chronological considerations, historical applications, and the importance of topical comparisons. What he did with Chapter 12, we should do with the entire book. Therefore, a careful study of Chapter 12 is wisely the beginning point for a successful study of Revelation.

Then where? As will soon be detailed, Revelation neatly divides itself into three major sections:

1. Chapters dealing with the Entire Gospel Age
2. Chapters dealing with the Harvest Period only
3. Chapters dealing with the Millennium

It cannot be overstressed how important it is to realize this CONSTRUCTION of Revelation. One major reason we understand the Bible is that Bro. Russell has reduced it to ONE PAGE which we call The Chart of the Ages. If we can view the CONSTRUCTION or ARCHITECTURE of Revelation before we begin the study of its detail, we have the same advantage that The Chart of the Ages provided for us in Bible study. The next chapter of this booklet will deal more with this architectural construction of Revelation.

After studying Chapter 12, Rev. 1:1-8 (the Introduction to the Book of Revelation) is the next logical step. Then, because it is good to get "a taste" of each of Revelation's three major sections, it is probably good to study one unit from each of these sections as the first part of considering the book. Since Chapter 12 is a part of Section 1, the next study (from Section 3) should be Chapter 20:1-10 (because Bro. Russell wrote extensively concerning it). Having thus considered parts of Sections 1 and 3, it would then be advisable to study one of the views of the Harvest Period from Section 2. Some of these are more difficult than others. Probably the first view of the Harvest Period (14:6-20) would be the easiest to consider initially. Less is available in Bro. Russell's writings on this unit, but that will be an increasing problem as study progresses.

With the study of Chapters 12, 20, and 14, there will have been an exposure to each of Revelation's three main sections. Following is a list of what has proved a beneficial sequence for studying the remainder of the book:

1. The Introductions to Seven Churches, Seals & Trumpets
 - a) To the Churches (1:9-20)
 - b) To the Seals (4:1 — 5:14)
 - c) To the Trumpets (8:2-6)
2. The Seven Churches, Seals & Trumpets
 - a) The 6th — 3:7-13;6:12-17;(Ch.7);9:13-21;Ch.10;11:1-14
 - b) The 7th — 3:14-21;8:1;11:15-19
 - c) The 1st — 2:1-7;6:1,2;8:7
 - d) The 2nd — 2:8-11;6:3,4;8:8,9
 - e) The 3rd — 2:12-17;6:5,6;8:10,11
 - f) The 4th — 2:18-29;6:7,8;8:12,13
 - g) The 5th — 3:1-6;6:9-11;9:1-12
3. The Throne of Individual Judgment 20:11 — 21:1
4. The New Order Summarized 21:2—8
5. Two Beasts, an Image, & the Overcomers 13:1 — 14:5
6. The Harvest from the Perspective of the Saints 19:11—21
7. The Plagues 15:1 —16:21
8. Economic Developments against Babylon 18:1 — 19:10
9. Political-Social Developments Against Babylon 17:1—18
10. The New Government Symbolized 21:9—27
11. Food, Water, & Light for Everlasting Life 22:1—5
12. Epilogue 22:6—21

Suggested Method of Study

It has frequently been the approach of brethren to consult whatever Bro. Russell has written on a chapter and then to consult the commentaries by various brethren on the same section. While this may have some benefit, it is a less-than-desirable approach. We should all remember and appreciate what we have learned from the 7th Messenger about beneficial study. Study should be CONTEXTUAL — explaining why something is WHERE it is and how it relates to the surrounding text. Study should also be DISPENSATIONAL — showing why a certain context applies to a certain TIME. An example of the importance of this is shown in Rev. 6:14-17. Please read those verses. How many times have we heard them applied to the day in which we live? But notice the CONTEXT (verse 12). These verses apply to the 6th period of the Church, NOT the 7th. They had their fulfillment in the years around the "time of the end" — the years of the French Revolution. CONTEXTUAL and DISPENSATIONAL study is SO important when we want the correct answers!

Additionally, study must be TOPICAL — explaining symbols in a manner consistent with their uses elsewhere.

The CONTEXTUAL and DISPENSATIONAL approaches are made more easy when we see the FRAMEWORK of the book. This is why The Chart of the Ages has simplified Bible study. The architecture (or construction) of Revelation has already been discussed in a very general way. Its specifics will be shown in the next chapter.

The TOPICAL approach to study will reveal great truths to the diligent student. Words or phrases which are used more than once in Revelation should be studied for consistent meaning. This will mean that a study of Rev. 1:1-8 may take us to three other places in Revelation to see (for instance) how "seven spirits" are used. Rev. 5:6 might then send us to IChron. 16:9 and Zech. 4:10 for further clues. If we have a good definition of the "seven spirits," it will apply in all four places in Revelation. This kind of approach SHOULD BE USED FREQUENTLY to avoid erroneous conclusions. It is better to do "too much" of this kind of comparison than too little.

It is important to keep a record of each topical study for future reference. Occasionally it will be necessary to adjust a definition slightly when subsequent contexts are understood more clearly.

Other factors will enter into study. The first six churches, seals, and trumpets will require some knowledge of HISTORY. If this knowledge is not known by any in the study group, it will become necessary to seek help. This is when commentaries by other brethren can become useful. Whenever our studies come to an impasse, we can often find clues in the writings of these brethren. IF, however, we have studied as before outlined, we will be better able to judge which of the commentaries is the most likely correct. Thus there is no need to become bogged down in comparing Bro. X's notes to those of Bros. Y, Z, A, and B unless we are unable to go farther on our own.

Translations

With a book of such intricate symbolism, the accuracy of the text is most important. The New American Standard is probably the best commonly available translation for consistency of translation and accuracy of text. However, it is definitely not perfect. Read its marginal alternatives. Compare it to the other scholarly translations (like the Marshall Diaglott, the Concordant Literal Translation, etc.). Remember that VERY FINE translators of the 19th century (like Rotherham and Wilson's Diaglott) DID NOT HAVE ACCESS to modern discoveries of ancient manuscripts. They may, therefore, include spurious or inaccurate words, or may even leave out words which should be a part of the text.

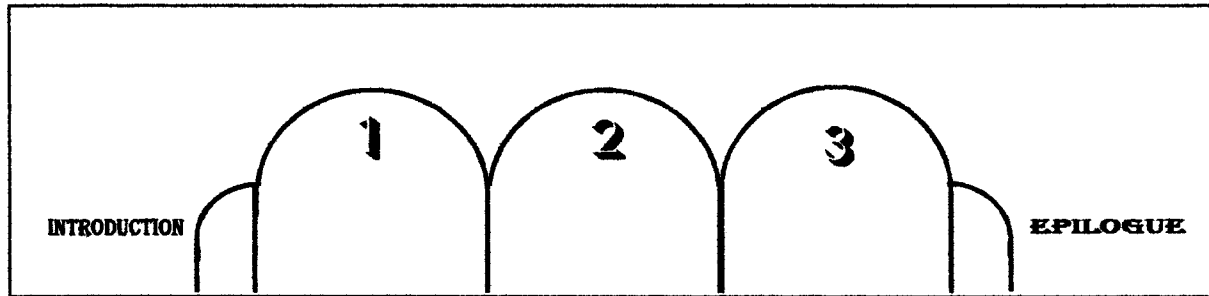
While it seems difficult, if not impossible, to check every word, it is a good idea to check final conclusions on any section by carefully reading a scholarly translation to see if it might change the conclusions arrived at in the study. If it does, adjustments to our understanding should be made.



CHAPTER 2

THE ARCHITECTURE (OR CONSTRUCTION) OF REVELATION

Now the joys begin! To see the structure of Revelation is to see more than most theologians throughout history have been privileged to see. The next few pages of this booklet can be the key to a very large measure of understanding of Revelation. Even though Revelation is a very complicated prophecy, its basic simplicity is at once encouraging and enlightening.



The little diagram above demonstrates Revelation's simple symmetry. At the beginning (1:1-8) is a small section that serves as an introduction to the entire prophecy. At the end (22:6-21) is another small section that serves as an epilogue to the entire prophecy. Between are three sections — we will call them Sections 1 through 3 — which serve to detail in advance all of the history since the ending of the Jewish Age.

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Section 1 | (1:9 - 14:5) gives five views of the entire Gospel Age (including the Harvest) |
| Section 2 | (14:6 - 19:21) gives five views focusing exclusively on the Harvest Period. |
| Section 3 | (20:1 - 22:5) gives five views of the Millennium — (all having AT LEAST SOME CONNECTION to the Gospel Age Harvest). |

Even if we were to go no further, it is clear that understanding this much is an invaluable aid in a study of Revelation. Interpretations begin to fall into place when the periods of time in which they function are realized. A closer look is warranted:

A Closer Look At Section 1

Section 1, five views of the Gospel Age (including the Harvest), is divided as follows:

Introduction to the Seven Churches (1:9—20)

The Seven Churches (2:1 — 3:22)

Introduction to the Seven Seals (4:1 —5:14)

The Seven Seals (6:1 — 8:1)

Introduction to the Seven Trumpets

(8:2—6) The Seven Trumpets (8:7 — 11:14)

The Woman, Dragon, and False Michael (12:1 — 13:1)

Two Beasts, an Image, and the Overcomers

(13:1 — 14:5)

This would be a good time to mark your Bibles so that each of the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets is clearly visible to your eye as you look through Revelation. The following chart is provided so that you can make these markings.

Number	Church	Seal	Trumpet
1.	Ephesus 2:1	White Horse 6:1	8:7
2.	Smyrna 2:8	Red Horse 6:3	8:8
3.	Pergamos 2:12	Black Horse 6:5	8:10
4.	Thyatira 2:18	Pale Horse 6:7	8:12
5.	Sardis 3:1	Souls Under Altar 6:9	9:1
6.	Philadelphia 3:7	Earthquake 6:12	9:13
7.	Laodicea 3:14	Silence 8:1	11:15

Because the architecture is important, so also is SEEING it. Marking your book clearly helps to find things and to see relationships.

It is a good idea to READ each of the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets MANY TIMES. The purpose for this is NOT study or understanding, but merely familiarity. The more familiar we become with the words of this prophecy, the more sensitive we will be to subtleties when we try to interpret the words. We recommend reading the first church, first seal, and first trumpet together. Then do likewise with all the others in the sequence.

An Interesting Observation

Notice that the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets (each of which takes us through the Gospel Age in seven successive steps,) HAVE INTRODUCTIONS. This is true also of the SEVEN LAST PLAGUES of Chapter 16. (Chapter 15 serves as their introduction.) No other part of Revelation has this kind of introduction (save the introduction to the whole book in 1:1-8). ONLY the four series of seven parts each have this peculiarity (Churches, Seals, Trumpets, Plagues). Why is this?

It is likely that the Lord wanted to UNIFY each series so that we understand that the parts of these series do not stand alone. In each case, one part affects the next, and it is the TOTALITY of each series which gives us the story of the Gospel Age or the Gospel Age Harvest. The introductions give us vital lessons applicable to all parts of the series.

Also, when we study the three introductions to the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets, we find the evidences we need to show us that one series DOES NOT FOLLOW another series historically. Rather, the first church, first seal, and first trumpet are all simultaneous (and so on through the series). This might well escape our attention without a study of the introductions.

It is important for each individual to be convinced in his own mind regarding the histories and lessons of these Churches, Seals, and Trumpets. However, as an aid and stimulus to thought, the following chart is given as a logical summary of these three series of seven parts each.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE CHURCHS, SEALS, & TRUMPETS

Dates	Events	Angel	Church	Seal	Trumpet	Observations
33	Church Established					
67	Paul's Death / Nero's Persecution	Paul ?-67	I Ephesus			
70	Fall of Jerusalem					
100	Last Apostle Dies	John 2?-100?	II Smyrna			
303	Diocletian's persecution		Rev.2:10			
313	Edict of Milan					
325	Nicean Council	Arius 252-336	III Pergamos			
539	1260 Days Begin					Dan.7:25; 12:7
711-32	Islamic Advancement in Europe					
754	Papal States (until 1870)					
800	Charlemagne Crowned		Rev. 2:21			
962	Holy Roman Empire (-1806)					
1054	E. & W. Churches divide					
1160	Waldenses proclaimed heretics					
		Waldo ?-1179	IV Thyatira			
1334-1354	Black Death		Rev. 2:23			
1371	Bull against Wycliffe					
1378-1418	Great Schism	Wycliffe 1324-1384	V Sardis		Rev. 9:5,10	
1453	Fall of E. Rome/ Vatican built					
1492	End of Islam in Europe					
1518	95 Theses			Rev. 6:11		
1521	Diet of Worms					
1648	Peace of Westphalia	Luther 1483-1546	VI Philadelphia			
1789	French Revolution			Rev. 6:12	Rev. 11:13	
1799	End of 1260 days				Rev. 10:6	Dan. 7:25, 12:7
1874	Parousia		Rev. 3:20		Rev. 11:15	Dan. 12:12
1878	First Resurrection Rev. 14:8, 13	Russell 1852-1916	VII Laodicea			I Thess 4:16
				Rev. 8:1		
?						

How Do Churches, Seals, and Trumpets Differ?

Since these three views of the Gospel Age seem similar in that each view is divided into seven parts, it is only natural to ask WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE of each series? Why go through the seven periods of the age three times?

1. The messages to the "angels" of the seven churches are for the purpose of explaining prevailing weaknesses and conditions during each stage of the church. Thus the brethren of each period can be instructed as to what is to be overcome and what is necessary in order to accomplish the overcoming.
2. The descriptions found as each seal is opened is for the purpose of showing how the historical events of the period will have affected the church.
3. The objective of the trumpet sequence is just the opposite of the seals. The trumpet descriptions show how the seasonal religious truths are to affect surrounding society.

The Other Two Pictures

The two final views of the Gospel Age found in Chapters 12 and 13 are unlike the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets in that they do not divide the age into seven periods.

Chapter 12 (which really ends after the first statement of 13:1) is given specifically to show us how the cooperation between apostate Christianity (the "manchild") and the civil power (the dragon and serpent) will jointly be used to persecute the saints.

Chapter 13 (which really continues through 14:5) is given specifically to show how apostate Christianity would divide into Orthodox and Protestant factions — ALL of whom would be in opposition to the truths promulgated by the Overcomers.

An Aside About Chapter Divisions

There is nothing sacred about chapter or verse divisions. Usually the translators who supplied them did an acceptable job considering how very little they understood. However, sometimes the existing chapter or verse divisions greatly obscure the construction of the book. (The parenthetical remarks above about Chapters 12 and 13 are examples.) Following is a chart that, we believe, much more accurately divides the Revelation prophecy.

New Numbering:

Old Numbering:

Part I: THE GOSPEL AGE		
Chapter 1	Introduction to the Book	(1:1—8)
Chapter 2	Introduction to the 7 Churches	(1:9—20)
Chapter 3	The 7 Churches	(2 & 3)
Chapter 4	Introduction to the 7 Seals	(4 & 5)
Chapter 5	The 7 Seals	(6:1 — 8:1)
Chapter 6	Introduction to the 7 Trumpets	(8:2— 6)
Chapter 7	The 7 Trumpets	(8:7 — 11:19)
Chapter 8	The Woman, Manchild, and Dragon	(12:1 — 13:1 thru "And he stood on the sand of the sea.")

PART I: THE GOSPEL AGE (cont'd)		
Chapter 9	Two Beasts, an Image, and the Overcomers	(13:1 from "And I saw a beast..." thru 14:5)
PART II: THE HARVEST		
Chapter 10	The Lord & Six Angels	(14:6-20)
Chapter 11	Introduction to the 7 Plagues	
Chapter 12	The 7 Plagues	
Chapter 13	The Judgment of the Great Harlot	
Chapter 14	The Fall & Destruction of Babylon	
	Rejoicing & the Marriage of the Lamb	(19:1-10)
Chapter 15	The Destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet	(19:11-21)
PART III: THE MILLENNIUM AND BEYOND		
Chapter 16	The Binding & Destruction of the Dragon, and the Millennial Judgment	(20:1 — 21:1)
Chapter 17	The New Jerusalem	(21:2 — 22:5)
Chapter 18	Concluding Thoughts	(22:6 — 21)

A Closer Look At Section 2

Like Section 1, Section 2 also divides into five views of the period under examination — in this case the Harvest. How fortunate we are that the Lord has blessed us with a section focusing on our own end-of-the-age day. This second section of Revelation (14:6 - 19:21) is entirely about the late 19th, the 20th, and the 21st centuries.

Why are there five views? Besides the fact that our Master Architect chose to make Revelation a very balanced work of prophetic art, He has given us five overviews of the Harvest period SO THAT OUR OBSERVATIONS OF PROPHECY (being fulfilled all around us) can have enough perspectives to keep us from exaggerating or misinterpreting any one of them. We so much need a BALANCE of viewpoint as we live through this tumultuous century!

All five views of the Harvest have in common that

- they begin about the time of the Lord's return in the 1870's, and
- they trace events through this century to the total destruction of Babylon.

The five Harvest views are summarized on the following chart:

PICTURE NUMBER:	CONTENTS OF PICTURE:	INCLUSIVE VERSES:	PICTURE BEGINS EARLY IN HARVEST AS:	PICTURE SHOWS DESTRUCTION SYMBOLIZED AS:
1.	<u>THE HARVEST WORK'S</u> relationship to the decline and fall of Babylon.	14:6-20	(14:6) The eternal Gospel preached since 1874 (14:8) The casting off of Babylon in 1878	14:20 Treading the grapes
2.	<u>HISTORICAL EVENTS</u> which weaken the apostasy throughout the harvest.	15:1 -- 16:21	(15:5) New Covenant understood since 1874 (15:8) Sleeping Saints raised in 1878	16:19 Divided Babylon drinks of the fierce wrath
3.	<u>THE POLITICAL EVENTS</u> which destroy Babylon.	17:1-18	(17:1) The "angel" explains the judgment of the apostasy (1874) and points out its date (1878)	17:16 The horns & beast eat her and burn her flesh
4.	<u>THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS</u> which contribute to her decline and fall. (Picture includes the subsequent rejoicing.)	18:1 -- 19:10	(18:1) Jesus' return in 1874 (18:2, 4) Announcement of judgment in 1878	18:21 Millstone cast into the sea with violence
5.	<u>THE SPIRITUAL VIEW</u> of the harvest period.	19:11-21	(19:11) Understanding of Divine Plan revealed in 1874 (19:14) Sleeping Saints glorified in 1878	19:20 Beast & False Prophet thrown alive into lake of fire

A Closer Look At Section 3

The third five-part section of Revelation concentrates on the Millennial Age and its characteristics. The five parts can be summarized as follows:

1. The Millennium and the "Dragon" (20:1-10)
2. The Throne of Individual Judgment (20:11 — 21:1)
3. The New Order Summarized (21:2-8)
4. The New Order's Government: The Bride, The New Jerusalem (21:9-27)
5. Food, Water, and Light for Everlasting Life (22:1-5)

An Aside Regarding Follow-Through

Look at Revelation 19:20. Now look at 20:10. Now look at 16:13. It is clear in Chapter 16 that three entities (Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet) conspire at the end of the age. Chapter 19 accounts for the destruction of two of them — the religious two. But the Dragon is ignored in Chapter 19 because he is dealt with in Chapter 20.

Whenever we study a symbol, it is wise to trace it entirely through the book of Revelation. In the case here mentioned, the religious opponents of the Kingdom are destroyed in Section 2, but the civil opponent (the Dragon) is handled in Section 3 where it is bound only to be destroyed a thousand years later — eventually joining in the "lake of fire" the other two with which it conspired in Chapter 16. Plainly, much would be lost in interpretation without following these symbols to their conclusion.

Another Aside With A Special Interpretative Secret

Throughout the book of Revelation there is an expression (sometimes slightly modified) which the Apostle John uses to help us see how Revelation divides itself:

"And I saw..."
"And I heard..."
"And I looked..."
etc.

These are the "magic markers" built into Revelation for our understanding. (CAUTION: a few of these — especially in the King James — are SPURIOUS!)

These "magic marker" expressions always mean that a NEW PERSPECTIVE is occurring. Sometimes it means we will jump forward or backward in time. Sometimes it means we are still looking at the same thing, but from a different angle.

(We suggested earlier, as one example, that the vision of Chapter 14 really begins with verse 6. Note that verse 6 has this magic marker, "And I saw..." While these words don't always warrant a new chapter, they DO always warrant a new viewpoint.)



The chart on the next page attempts to put all of the architecture of Revelation on one page. Keeping this wonderful structure in mind as you study will gain for you rich rewards.

The Construction-Layout of the Book of Revelation

TEXTS:

1:1-8	INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHECY	INTRODUCTION	
1:9-20	INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES	1	5 Views of the ENTIRE GOSPEL AGE
2:1—3:22	THE SEVEN CHURCHES		
4:1—5:14	INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN SEALS	2	
5:1—8:1	THE SEVEN SEALS		
8:2-6	INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN TRUMPETS	3	
8:7—11:14	THE SEVEN TRUMPETS		5 Views of the HARVEST PERIOD
12:1—13:1	THE WOMAN, DRAGON, AND FALSE MICHAEL	4	
13:1—14:5	TWO BEASTS, AN IMAGE, AND THE OVERCOMERS	5	
14:6-20	HARVESTING AND THE CASTING OFF OF BABYLON FROM FAVOR	1	
15:1-8	INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES	2	
16:1-21	SEVEN PLAGUING EVENTS AGAINST BABYLON		5 Views of the MILLENNIAL AGE
17:1-18	POLITICAL-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS AGAINST BABYLON	3	
18:1—19:10	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS AGAINST BABYLON	4	
19:11-21	THE HARVEST FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SAINTS	5	
20:1-10	THE MILLENNIUM AND THE "DRAGON"	1	
20:11—21:1	THE THRONE OF INDIVIDUAL JUDGMENT	2	5 Views of the MILLENNIAL AGE
21:2-8	THE NEW ORDER SUMMARIZED	3	
21:9-21	THE NEW ORDER'S GOVERNMENT: THE BRIDE, THE NEW JERUSALEM	4	
21:22-22:5	FOOD, WATER, AND LIGHT FOR EVERLASTING LIFE	5	
22:6-21	CLOSING REMARKS FROM AN ANGEL, JESUS, AND JOHN	EPILOGUE	

CHAPTER 3

SOME LITTLE THINGS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This chapter will deal with a miscellany of items which can be helpful or important in an attempt to interpret Revelation.

John & Us

The Apostle John represents the Church in the flesh throughout the Gospel Age and its Harvest. Keeping this in mind will open many doors of understanding. Look at 10:8-10 as an example. In this prophecy John represents the brethren at the time of the Miller Movement when Daniel (the "little book") was beginning to be understood. Jumping to conclusions about the prophetic chronology of Daniel, the brethren suffered chronological indigestion. Note 10:11, though. John (meaning us in the Harvest) would again have to prophesy about the same material — but the second time with the CORRECT answers!

Trumpets and Plagues

It is revealing to notice that the seven Trumpets are aimed at the same recipients as the seven Plagues. The first of each series is aimed at the earth (8:7; 16:2). The second is aimed at the sea (8:8; 16:3) — and so on through the entire series.

This observation reveals much. Since the trumpet messages represent how the world responded during the age to the truths expounded by the messengers who blew the trumpets, the implication is strong that, because the world did not get the messages, the plagues would be needed at the end of the age to be poured out on the same entities — to FORCE the world to get the messages. The plagues apparently symbolize the dramatic events of the 20th Century that have forced the slow crumbling of the Christian world. These plagues have been knocking out the props from under Babylon. Her total collapse will be inescapable.

Reading this comparison of Trumpets and Plagues, we can discern several likelihoods:

The "angels" who blew the trumpets were the seven men who were the seven "angels" to the seven Churches. Since the angels who deliver the plagues are GLORIFIED (see 15:5,6), it is a reasonable assumption that they are the same individuals who previously blew the trumpets. Thus Wycliffe (who blew the 5th Trumpet) has had the honor of being in charge of pouring out the 5th Plague. This is a wonderful justice. God allows the work of these saints to accomplish what could not be accomplished while they were yet human.

This conclusion is substantiated by 17:1. If we can identify the "angel" of 17:1, we should be able to identify the other six "angels which had the seven vials." The "Angel" of 17:1 talks with the John class and explains MANY DETAILS to him all the way from 17:1 to Chapter 22. This angel is a MAN. (19:10; 21:17; 22:9) The conclusion of careful study is inescapable. This angel is Bro. Russell. Since ONE of the plague-pouring angels is the 7th Messenger to the church, the remaining six are, by best logic, the other messengers to the Church, but now glorified.

The Sixth Church Anticipates the Seventh

The world, at least since the French Revolution, has been a busy place. So much has been going on politically, socially, scientifically, that it might have been difficult to discern clearly the change from the sixth to the seventh period of Church history. Indeed, we have the Lord's word for it that the destruction of Babylon IN ONE MAJOR SENSE began in the French Revolution (11:13). The remaining part of her destruction was postponed until the Laodicean period with which we normally associate it. This concept is a major key in the interpretation of parts of Revelation. For instance, the prophecy of Chapter 7 CLEARLY represents things which

have their fulfillment in the 7th period of the church. Yet, Chapter 7's prophecy is a continuation of events of the 6th Seal (6:12) inserted before the description of the 7th Seal (8:1). (8:1, by the way, should be the LAST VERSE of Chapter 7.)

The point is this: MANY seeds were planted in the Philadelphia period which sprout more significantly during Laodicea. Chapter 7's first four verses are, in essence, saying:

"The trouble which began in France (6:12-17) and which destroyed one-tenth of the Babylonish "city" (11:13) MUST STOP before it spreads and destroys the rest of Babylon TOO EARLY. HOLD BACK this final trouble because I must have a 7th stage of the Church in order to finish my bride of 144,000 saints."

The Revelator THEN uses the occasion to give information about the bride and the Great Company PARENTHETICALLY — showing what WILL BE THE RESULT of holding these winds back. Then (8:1) he describes the seventh seal.

This 7th chapter COULD BE very confusing and seem not to fit the architecture of Revelation as already described. But understanding how many times the 6th Church anticipates the 7th takes all of the mystery and confusion away. Here are several examples of places where this anticipation occurs:

1. 3:10 mentions the "Hour of Temptation." This passage is part of the Philadelphia description, but it is ABOUT Laodicea — as are the following:
2. 3:10 is about Jesus' return.
3. 10:6, 7 says that Daniel's 1260 days are FULFILLED, BUT there is still time for a seventh trumpet.
4. 10:10,11 shows the disappointments of Adventism but FORETELLS the prophesying of Laodicea.
5. 11:13 leaves us asking when the other 9/10ths is to fall, thus looking toward Laodicea.
6. 6:14-17 quotes from Joel 2:10 and Isaiah 34 which are PRIMARILY about Laodicea. The lesson is: These final things BEGAN during the 6th church even though their culmination comes in the 7th.

Daniel 12 does much the same thing. After explaining the 1260 and the 1290 days, it anticipates (without explanation) the 1335 days which begin the new period of church history.

This way of anticipating the next period seems only to be used for the transition from the 6th to the 7th Churches, Seals, and Trumpets. The other periods do not seem to have this unique peculiarity.

Names

Proper names in Revelation are full of meaning. They should be translated whenever possible. 2:6 and 2:15 are only one example of the necessity of this approach. Because Revelation is a book of symbols, looking in history for someone named Nicholas and his followers is NOT the way to interpret these verses. When we learn that this name means "one who lords it over others," we can understand what the Ephesus Church hated and what the Pergamos Church failed to resist. We see why the great apostate church rose rapidly to power as the brethren allowed the usurpation of authority by the bishops. It is also interesting to learn that Nicholas is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Balaam (2:14). The rich blessings which come from translating proper names should never be forfeited by oversight.

Angels

As your study unfolds, it is important to realize that "angels" can be human beings, events, actual angels, or Jesus himself. The word means messenger. Any being, any event that serves to make a point is rightly an "angel." A few examples:

1. 1:1 and 22:16 are actual but unnamed angels.
2. 2:1 and 2:8, etc., are men in Chapters 2 and 3, but the same individuals are glorified saints in 15:6, Chapter 16, and 17:1.
3. Angels in 12:7 are worldly men. Those with Michael (the Antichrist) are nominal Christians; those with the dragon are pagans. They are all messengers (angels) of error.
4. The angel who instructs John personally in 17:1,7; 19:9,10; 21:9; 22:8 and various other places is Bro. Russell — sometimes before, sometimes after his glorification.
5. The MIGHTY ANGELS (there are only three such delineations in Revelation — 5:2, 10:1, and 18:21) each represent times of revolutionary trouble. The first represents the time of trouble at the end of the Jewish Age; the second represents the time of the French Revolution — the "Time of the End;" and the third represents Armageddon — the final or winepress trouble at the end of the Harvest.
6. In 8:3 and 20:1, the angel is Jesus.
7. In Chapter 14, angels represent many differing things:
 - a) The angel of verse 6 represents the harvesting message.
 - b) The angel of verse 8 represents the judgment message.
 - c) The angel of verse 9 represents the plaguing angel; or he might be called the warning message; or perhaps, in Old Testament terms, he might be called the destroying angel.
 - d) The angel of verse 15 is the chronology message.
 - e) The angel of verse 17 is the Great Company class yet in the flesh once the church is complete.
 - f) The angel of verse 18 is the church glorified.

Clearly, "angel" must be interpreted by context.

Symbols

Revelation 1:1 clearly states (KJV) that the text was "SIGNIFIED." Quite literally and accurately this means that it was put into signs or symbols. Relatively little in Revelation means what it says. It is all portrayed in a picture language.

ONE CAVEAT: It has sometimes been the mistake of brethren to think that Revelation's own interpretations of its symbols are LITERAL. They are not. Revelation interprets or EQUATES its symbols with OTHER SYMBOLS. Thus, for examples:

1. When 11:8 interprets the "great city" (Babylon) as "Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified," it does not give a literal explanation. Babylon is NOT literally Sodom nor Egypt. Nor was Jesus literally crucified in any one of these places.
2. When 17:15 "interprets" the waters of 17:1 as being "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," it is interpreting "waters" by equating them to another symbol. "Peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" is a Revelation symbol for the sea-class of humanity. Thus, again, the interpretation is not literal. Since the woman sits on "many waters" (17:1), and also on a "beast" (17:3), as well as on the "peoples...and tongues," ALL of these symbols equal THE RESTLESS CLASSES OF HUMANITY.

3. When 12:9 and 20:2 both refer to the four-named entity called "the great dragon,...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan," many have erred in thinking the Revelator was giving a LITERAL interpretation of the symbol of the "dragon," thus assuming that the Dragon is a symbol for the LITERAL DEVIL. This is not correct. The Revelator does here as he does above and as elsewhere — he interprets ONE SYMBOL WITH ANOTHER. The Dragon, Serpent, Devil, and Satan are ALL symbols of the civil power.

Numbers can also have symbolic meaning. Seven, for instance, is a spiritually complete number. But it seems that in nearly every usage, numbers ARE QUITE LITERAL — even if they have the added symbolic significance. Hence, the seven Churches represent the ONE, SPIRITUALLY COMPLETE CHURCH. But there are, in fact, SEVEN actual stages in the development of that Church. Thus the number is both literal and symbolic. It is the words to which the numbers are attached that are usually the symbols. Thus, "FORTY TWO MONTHS" (11:3) is actually 42 — but NOT actually months. It is 42 months of years — 1260 years (42 x 30 days per month = 1260). One obvious EXCEPTION to this rule exists. When Chapter 20 says a thousand years, it literally means a thousand years. There is a good reason for this exception which you should search for as you study. ANY EXCEPTION to a rule should always have a good Scriptural explanation. Otherwise we can bend interpretations by our own wills — something we never want to do.

The topical approach to the meaning of symbols is the wisest and least fallible. Chapter 4 of this booklet is a basic glossary of Revelation symbols supplied here as a stimulus to further study.

The Major Players

The book of Revelation has many actors on stage, all of whom must be identified. This will be the task of careful study. Following, however, are some brief descriptions of a few of these players to aid in beginning your study.

MICHAEL (12:7) Remember that this is a book of symbols. Michael is NOT Michael the Archangel (= Jesus). Michael is his counterfeit, the MAN OF SIN, the Papacy. (Compare II Thess. 2:3,4.) Even the word "God" may not always refer to THE GOD. In 16:11 it is quite possible that "the God of heaven" refers to the Papacy just as "Michael" does in 12:7.

DRAGON This character always refers to purely CIVIL power. Sometimes his name changes to "devil" or to "serpent." (Compare 12:15 and 16.) Sometimes his name changes to "Satan" (20:7). But all of these changes are accounted for in 12:9 and 20:2 which show us the four names by which the civil power is symbolized.

WOMEN Scripturally a woman, if she is a virgin, represents spirit-begotten saints — the Church of Christ (including the Great Company). If she is a harlot, she represents the apostate church — counterfeits. If she is a good woman with children, she represents a covenant. Whenever a part of the apostate church is masculine, the reference is to the head of that church (Papacy) --the counterfeit of the Church's true head, Christ.

BEASTS Revelation has several of these. They will be enumerated shortly. First it is important to define beasts as a whole: they are A LARGE GROUP OF MEN (thus governments or institutions) WITH UNHOLY CHARACTERISTICS.

Next it is important to consider:

PARTS OF BEASTS. Revelation not only has beasts, but it specifies PARTS of those beasts. HEADS, because heads THINK, represent large, overall philosophies — the way the beast thinks. Thus historically, when a large government or institution changes the way it functions, Revelation symbolizes this as a change of heads. HORNS, because they are the enforcing implements on the heads of animals, represent POWERS. Since heads are large "umbrella" governments or institutions, the lesser governments which support them, which carry out their wills, (out of desire or out of expediency) are represented by horns.

Beasts also, of course, have BODIES. This symbolism is often overlooked. Bro. Russell recognized that those under subjection to the heads constitute the body of the beast. Thus, it is the PEOPLE in general who have been under the control of these governments who constitute the body of the beast. 17:1 and 3 acknowledge this. These verses show that the woman sits on a beast which is ALSO "many waters" (peoples). The 15th verse explains the matter also. The key, then, is to realize when a prophecy is concerned with a head, a horn, or the body of the beast, and when it is about the entire animal. In 17:16 we read that "the ten horns which thou sawest AND the beast, these shall hate the harlot." It is NOT the entire beast referred to here, but ONLY the body of the beast. Thus, as we learn from other places (like 18:21), it is the PEOPLE (the "sea" — the body of the beast) which eventually have a great part in Babylon's destruction.

Specific Beasts

We have already looked at the dragon of Chapter 12. It is not called a beast, but it is one in every important way. The Revelator wants us to recognize this by showing us that this dragon, just like the beasts of Chapters 13 and 17, has heads and horns. As the matter of fact, all three of these characters have the same number of heads and horns. This is so that we realize that all three are related — even though they are NOT EXACTLY THE SAME.

THE CHAPTER 12 CREATURE

The Dragon of Chapter 12 is the Roman Empire out of which grew the eventual "Holy Roman Empire" — a mixture of church and state. Chapter 12 keeps the Roman Church (under "Michael" — its Papal head) SEPARATE so that we can see the RELATIONSHIP of Churchianity to the state.

THE PRIMARY CREATURE OF CHAPTER 13

The 10-horned beast of Chapter 13, on the other hand, INCORPORATES church and state into one big beast — the combination of "Michael" and the "Dragon" from Chapter 12. This is because Chapter 13 wants us to see how the "Holy Roman Empire" would function historically as rival apostate churches appear.

THE CHAPTER 17 CREATURE

The 10-horned beast of Chapter 17 provides a picture to show us how things will come apart — "the JUDGMENT of the harlot who sits...upon a scarlet colored beast" (17:1,3). Therefore, this chapter is still dealing with the "Holy Roman Empire" (and its predecessors and derivatives) but is specifically to show us what was to happen to EACH PART of the arrangement — heads, horns, body, rider. The woman who rides this beast is REALLY A PART of this beast back in Chapter 13. But she is now, instead, shown as a rider so that we can see how the arrangement WILL TURN ON ITSELF and DEVOUR its own religious part! (17:16)

Thus seen, these three major characters are not quite so confusing. They are all the same, but are viewed three different ways to make three different points.

A TWO-HORNED BEAST is mentioned in Chapter 13. This creature is clearly a CHALLENGE to its older 10-HORNED counterpart. History suggests strongly that the English-Irish church-state arrangement fulfills this symbol.

AN "IMAGE OF THE BEAST" also is found in Chapter 13. The suggestion is that England's successful challenge to Rome stimulated the rise of Protestant denominationalism. A very careful study of this chapter along with 19:20, 20:10, 16:2 and 13, indicates that this image eventually is absorbed with the two-horned beast into an entity known as THE FALSE PROPHET.

Other Players

The FOUR LIVING ONES, the FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS, the SEVEN SPIRITS, the SEVEN ANGELS, the GREAT MULTITUDES (Yes — there are more than one!) — these are all symbolisms which demand careful topical study. Such prayerful and careful study will be richly rewarded with understanding. May the Lord's rich blessing attend you in these blessed searches.



CHAPTER 4

GLOSSARY OF SYMBOLS

This final chapter is an attempt to give a brief, workable definition to many of Revelation's symbolic terms. Often the definitions will have to be adjusted slightly for specific contexts; but this is the joy of study. Some terms are used both literally and symbolically. (Note: some of these words come from the KJV or NAS; their corresponding translations will have the same meanings.)

AIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The powers of spiritual control; demons
ALMIGHTY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yahweh
ALPHA & OMEGA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The glorified Jesus as the first and last word on all questions — first to his church, then to the world
ALTAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The condition of full dedication to God UNDER THE ALTAR indicates a completed sacrifice OUT FROM THE ALTAR indicates action after glorification
AMEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used as a noun to represent Jesus; otherwise means "thus it is."
ANGELS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anything (animate or inanimate) which delivers a message
ANTIPAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Against the Father; i.e., anti-Papacy; Arius
ARK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The New Covenant arrangement
ARMAGEDDON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of ripeness for destruction
ASIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of being bogged down. (Word means "muddy".)
BABYLON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily the Roman Church; extends to "daughter" and sister denominations; the <u>condition</u> of confusion.
BARLEY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Christian truths common to all Christianity
BEAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large group of men (institution or government) with unholy characteristics. Symbol includes the people under their domination.
BEASTS (FOUR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better translated "living ones." These represent God's basic attributes: wisdom, justice, love, and power.
BED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A place of affliction, though sometimes "comfortable affliction."
BEHEADED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having given up personal will in favor of God's will
BELLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects of having taken in and assimilated information
BIRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inhabitants of Babylon as a great tree. These probably constitute tares — counterfeits — even as a dove represents the TRUE work of the Holy Spirit. UNCLEAN BIRDS refer to those in Babylon (perhaps including demons) who are malefactors — there for profit or for pushing personal ideologies and agendas.
BITTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult or painful
BLACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devoid of light (truth)
BLOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life or its value; can mean death, as in blood spilled; can mean deadly or distasteful as an extension of spilled blood.
BOOK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A plan with its information, (hence, the Bible) or a record. LITTLE BOOK refers to the book of Daniel.
BOOK OF LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The record of those found worthy of life (in either Gospel or Messianic Ages).
BOTTOMLESS PIT (OR ABYSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of powerlessness or dormancy.
BREASTPLATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defensive armor; faith
BRIDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Church of Christ — the 144,000.
BRIDEGROOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus
BRIDLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A controlling element
BRIMSTONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deadly poison (added to symbol of fire to show no way of escape)
BURNED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disillusioned or destroyed in profession; destroyed literally (totally consumed in destruction)

CALF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice (because the calf was the principal animal sacrificed to satisfy justice)
CAMP OF THE SAINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Messianic earthly government consisting of the faithful pre- Christ ancients
CANDLESTICKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEVEN: representing the seven stages of the church as light- bearers.
CHAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection of truths used to render error powerless
CHARIOTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized efforts
CITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A government (religious or secular)
CLOTHING/CLOTHED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status; ones standing before God; a representation of one's commission or authority
CLOUDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obscurity or trouble due to Divine Presence
COME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This does not always refer to advent; it often symbolizes the taking of a specific action such as taking last saint beyond veil, delivering a punishment, etc.
COURT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The condition of the unconsecrated who claim a relationship to God (rightly or nominally)
CROWN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority (when from Greek "diadema"); Victory (when from Greek "stephanos")
CUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences
DARKNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erroneous and superstitious teachings
DAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A non-specific period of time with certain characteristics; when chronological, equals one year
DAY AND NIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In perpetuity
DEATH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of previous belief or condition Having sacrificed earthly life-rights Loss of spiritual life Condition of being alive but not having received eternal life TO KILL WITH DEATH is probably literal
DENS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secret societies; hiding places; conditions of subterfuge
DEVIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil power
DEVOUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absorb, appropriate
DOGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gentiles; ultimately anyone refusing to acknowledge Israel's place in God's plan
DOOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity; proximity
DRAGON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil power or Pagan Rome
DRAGON, SERPENT, DEVIL, SATAN (AS A 4-PART NAME)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil power (under control of personal devil)
DUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mourning
DWELL ON THE EARTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having strong ties to earthly or worldly interests (i.e., the establishment and its avid supporters)
EAGLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wisdom The Bible (written wisdom)
EARTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society; the established way of doing things
EARTHQUAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revolution
EAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absorb, appropriate; come into harmony with
EGYPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of Western, Christian world
ELDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old Testament prophecies
EPHESUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First or Desirable
EUPHRATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who support Babylon
EYES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foresight; wisdom
FACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Favor or displeasure depending on contextual evidence

FALSE PROPHET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A combination of Protestant and Church of England influences
FAMINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of truth
FIG/FIG TREE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel
FIRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Righteous judgment and its destructive power
FIRSTFRUITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Products of the Gospel Age (i.e., the Church and Great Company)
FLOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great amount of truths
FOREHEAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sum total of character
FORNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Christian dabbling in affairs of this earth, thus unfaithful to Jesus, the espoused Bridegroom
FOUNTAINS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church (true or false) as a source of religious truths
FOUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The component parts — universality
FOWLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discontents (see BIRDS)
FROGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclean and boastful with a pretension of wisdom
FURNACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heated experiences for proving or judging
GARMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justification; symbols of status (see CLOTHES)
GIRDLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbol of service or servitude
GLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purity, transparency, calmness
GOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position of highest authority (including its counterfeit)
GOG & MAGOG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolizes a rebellious civil power at the end of both Gospel and Millennial Ages; condition of challenge to God's established authority
GOLD(EN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of Divine things (or their counterfeit)
GOSPEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The totality of God's Word including its judgment message
GRAPES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evil fruitage
GRASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanity in general or a specific segment of it. When GREEN is specified, right-heartedness or justification is implied.
GREAT MULTITUDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians who will receive a heavenly reward but not be a part of the 144,000 in the body of Christ • Any other unified large group on earth or in heaven
GREEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alive in spirit (in the sense of having inclinations toward righteousness or of being justified —as under the Jewish Law)
HAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard truths
HAIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venerableness due to age or spiritual wisdom
HAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works, cooperation, responsibility
HARP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonious set of teachings
HARVEST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End period of the Gospel Age and beginning of Millennium; results of prior activities
HEAD(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic of ideas and philosophies; various forms of governmental administration or philosophy; Empires
HEAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse effects from enlightenment
HEAVEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The religious world or its leadership
HELL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The condition of oblivion when men die, but from which there will be a release
HORNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powers; lesser governments than heads which are empire-sized
HORSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctrine — as in the power of an idea to move men from one place (condition) to another
HORSEMEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Followers or promoters of doctrines
HUNGER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of spiritual food and the desire for it
IMAGE OF THE BEAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protestant cooperation
INCENSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayers; sacrifices; the merit behind both
IRON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength
ISLAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small nation or republic
ISRAEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people of God (i.e., the true Church and those who typify it)
JERUSALEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Millennial Divine government by the true Church glorified

JEWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians
JEZEBEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Roman Church in collusion with the powers of the state
JOHN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Church in the flesh throughout the age
KEYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to control access
KILLED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discredited Having lost prior belief or status
KINGS OF THE EARTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men of great political influence (including beyond Christendom) Probably the church who will shine as the sun
KINGS OF THE EAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibly Islam
LAKE OF FIRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The second death — perpetual extinction
LAMB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus
LAODICEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judgment of or by the people
LEAVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professions
LEFT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position of disfavor
LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justification; spiritual vitality
LIGHTNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bright, but confusing, flashes of truth
LINEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The righteousness of saints (or its counterfeit)
LION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power; Jesus
LITTLE BOOK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The book of Daniel
LIVING SOUL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spirit-begotten Christians
LOCUSTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devouring force as a plague to false Christianity
LORD'S DAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Millennial Age
LUKEWARM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neither loving righteousness nor hating iniquity sufficiently
MAN (FACE OF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Love
MANCHILD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Man of Sin; Papacy
MANNA (HIDDEN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immortality
MARK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indication of agreement or sympathy or cooperation
MARRIAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The uniting of Christ and His Church in the spirit realm
MEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians, nominal or true
MERCHANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalists
MICHAEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "One Who as God" = Papacy
MILLSTONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A place which prepares spiritual food
MONTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 years
MOON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old Testament Writing (as a reflection of the Gospel Sun); Jewish Law
MORNING STAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus
MOUNTAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large Kingdom
MOUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Message
MURDERERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character assassins
NAKED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Either without justification or ill-clothed (compromised justification)
NAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character; reputation
NATIONS, KINDREDS, PEOPLE & TONGUES (4- NAME ENTITY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The "sea" class; people without strong roots or commitments to the present order of things
NEW JERUSALEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See JERUSALEM
NICOLAITANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who lord it over others; power usurpers
ODORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayers
OIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy Spirit
OLIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy Spirit
OLIVE TREES (TWO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old and New Testament writings (as functions of the Holy Spirit)
PALMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symbols of Great Company and salvation

PARADISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garden; God's planting — the fruitage of both phases of the Abrahamic promise
PATMOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A symbol of separation
PEARLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character developed through trials
PENNY (DENARIUS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A day's wages
PERGAMOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earthly elevation
PHILADELPHIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brotherly love
PILLAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stalwart
PIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See BOTTOMLESS
PLACES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places represent conditions
PLAGUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Truths forced on Christianity to weaken it (see VIALS)
POLISHED BRASS (BURNISHED BRONZE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human perfection
PRIEST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mediator between God and men
PRISON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Death or restraint
PROPHET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A teacher
PROPHETS (TWO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old and New Testament writings (as Teachers)
PURPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royalty (real or assumed)
RAIMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See CLOTHES or GARMENTS
RAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blessings of truth
RAINBOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covenant
RED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sin
REED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard of measurement for judgment
RIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position of favor
RIVER(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who support something; source of refreshment
ROCKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable institutions
ROD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong rule; a standard of measurement
SACKCLOTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mourning or humiliation
SAILORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workmen
SAND OF THE SEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those ultimately of the earthly seed of Abraham (the earthly Kingdom)
SARDIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That which remains
SAT/SIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controlled
SATAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil government (under the influence of the personal devil); can also refer to Papacy in its cooperation with civil power
SCORPIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tormentings
SEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restless humanity without strong ties to the social or religious order of things
SEA OF GLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reference to the laver of the temple representing pure water of God's truth for cleansing purposes
SEAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events which reveal once they occur; also a guarantee
SEAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throne — center of power
SECOND DEATH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extinction from which there is no redemption
SEVEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A spiritually complete number
SHIPMASTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businessman
SHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commerce
SICKLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Truths to do a separating work
SMOKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remembrance; obscurity; evidence
SMYRNA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bitter
SODOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of Babylon showing both moral lack and disregard for the individual
SONG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise coming from harmonious truths
SORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A perpetual threatening problem
SOUL(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saints who have died and await awakening (see LIVING SOUL)

SPIRITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachings. SEVEN SPIRITS = the functions of the Holy Spirit throughout the seven stages of church history
STARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers (true or false)
STINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painful irritations due to unwanted truths
STRONG ANGEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of three times of severe revolutionary trouble
SUN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gospel (Improperly received can burn)
SUP (DINE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat the final meal of the day
SWORD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible; any cutting message
SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Apostate Church; The religious power beginning to seek the favor of Rome.
TABERNACLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwelling place, i.e. presence. Also God's plan pictured by a building
TAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last part; a lying prophet (Isa. 9:15)
TALENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sum total of the Gospel
TEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappointments
TEMPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's plan including the Church itself
TEMPLE OF THE TABERNACLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most holy, therefore, glorified condition or the truths represented by the New Covenant (Ark).
TEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A symbol of completion in reference to earthly or civil things
THIEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quietly secretive and unexpected
THIRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This term is probably literal. It shows that one out of three existing entities is affected.
THIRST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craving for truth which leads to life
THRONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of rulership including judgment
THUNDER(INGS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of lightning; i.e., resulting activities or philosophies or controversies
THYATIRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet perfume of sacrifice
TIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A period of certain characteristics; chronologically 360 years
TORMENTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vexed to the point of great discomfort. This word is used not for the RECIPIENT, but in relationship to the giver. Thus, something tormented, if it is extinct, feels nothing; but all who refer to it, refer to it in disgust.
TREE OF LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promise of continued existence on any plane
TREE(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important individuals or small nations or institutions who are stalwarts
TRIBES OF ISRAEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divisions of the glorified church
TRUMPET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important and timely message heard beyond those for whom it is intended
VIALS (BOWLS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms (historic events) to deliver plaguing truths
VINE OF THE EARTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babylon as the counterfeit of Jesus' true vine. This is the fruitage of Satan's planting
VIRGINS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • True church or great multitude; undefiled by illicit cooperation with the world and its ways
WAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A struggle or persecution
WATER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truth
WATERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peoples/truths
WHEAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep spiritual truths
WHITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pure or justified
WHORE (HARLOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A church which has compromised itself with politics and worldly involvement
WILDERNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of separation (in mind and attitude) from accepted standards of doctrine and practice
WIND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War
WINDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powers of demonic interference
WINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gospel (pure or polluted); doctrine; experiences coming out of teachings

WINEPRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final trouble of the Harvest which squeezes life out of false Christianity
WITNESSES (TWO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old and New Testament writings (as TESTIFIERS in advance of God's purposes)
WOMAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church (true or false); covenant
WORMWOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arius, as poisonous and bitter to the apostasy
WRITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To publish (dispense; spread; record; think about)

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