

REVELATION

S I M P L I F I E D

(Relatively Speaking!)

An
IMPORTANT
Preface.

PLEASE READ IT!

Many competent brethren in Christ have prayerfully labored to uncover the detailed intricacies of Revelation. Because Revelation is a book of complicated symbolisms and historical details, the labors of these brethren have produced thousands of pages of helpful but difficult study material. Without the efforts of these brethren, Revelation still would be a closed book. Their efforts will be reflected in this book; but this book is not for detailed proofs.

Many of us cannot yet handle the probing of the deep and subtle things of Revelation. What we need is a relatively simple approach to comprehending this great prophecy. Once we have conquered a **BASIC UNDERSTANDING**, the many little details will be of more interest and meaning to us. It is for this reason that this book is being supplied.

Because this book is specifically designed to make Revelation approachable, it will be more in the form of a paraphrase and narrative. Many liberties will be taken. No real effort will be made to substantiate the reasons behind interpretations nor to consider the various arguments and viewpoints that exist. If any wish to consider those things, this book is not appropriate for them. Nevertheless, we think the contents of this book will supply needed principles for good interpretation and should leave the reader with a secure feel for all of the wonderful prophecies of this last great book of God's Word. We do not promise that this book will be **EASY!** We simply believe it will be **MUCH EASIER** than most of what has been written on Revelation.

This book is written as a series of “sightseeing” tours through the Gospel Age, the Harvest period, and the Millennium. It is meant to be read more like a novel than like a programmed study course in Revelation. Much of the book will be an “interpretive reading.” Thus, names, dates, and other details will appear in the text that do not appear in our Bibles. Comparing the interpretive reading version to Revelation as it appears in our Bibles should prove beneficial and is recommended.

It is our prayer that great blessings will accompany all who go through these pages, and that a hunger for more answers will be awakened.

NOTE:

If this book is being read by any not familiar with what is usually called “The Bible Student Movement,” there will be a few references which may not make sense. This book is written for those who are familiar and in general agreement with the writings of Pastor Charles Taze Russell. It is his ministry which has enlightened sincere Christians throughout the Twentieth Century. Failure to note his use by God at this time in history makes it virtually impossible to understand many prophecies of our day.

GETTING STARTED

– LAYOUT –

Understanding how God put Revelation together is an important part of being able to interpret it correctly. There is a great simplicity in the layout of Revelation. There are three primary divisions:

Five Views of the Entire Gospel Age;
Five Views of the Harvest Period;
Five Views of the Millennium.

Additionally, there is an introduction to the book and a closing section (or, Epilogue).

Thus, the entire Book of Revelation can be diagrammed like this:

Introduction
Views of the Gospel Age
Views of the Harvest
Views of the Millennium
Closing Thoughts

As study progresses, it will also be seen that every time a series of seven occurs, that series will have its own introductory material. There are four such series in the book: Seven Churches; Seven Seals; Seven Trumpets; Seven Plagues. The Church, Seal, and Trumpet series all are in the section we have called “Five Views of the Gospel Age.” The Plague series is in the section called “Five Views of the Harvest.”

If we can see and digest this much of Revelation’s layout, we are somewhat protected from applying certain texts to the wrong times in history.

– CHARACTERS –

While a large number of symbolic characters occurs in Revelation, there are only a few main characters. They may, however, appear under different names or descriptions. The major characters are these:

GOD	We will, however, see that the word “God” does not always refer to the Father.
JESUS	Jesus will often be called “the Lamb.” It is to REVEAL the workings of Jesus throughout the Gospel and Millennial Ages that the Book of Revelation was written. Hence, it is called “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”
JOHN	His name means, “the Grace of Jehovah.” He represents the Church in the flesh. Consequently, we will be very interested in what is said to him and what he experiences.
7 ANGELS	Many “angels” will be found in the text. Some are not even beings; they are events or inanimate messengers. The 7 ANGELS, however, represent the seven men chosen of God to serve the Church with timely information during the Gospel Age.
ANTICHRIST	This apostate “Christianity” will be represented under many different names (male and female) as well as by many symbols (Babylon, beast, harlot, etc.). It is one of the two primary earthly evil forces in Revelation.
CIVIL POWER	This is the other of the two primary earthly evil forces in Revelation. Christians have frequently given too little heed to the place of civil powers as enemies of the saints. Revelation symbolizes civil power as the Devil, as a dragon, as heads and horns, etc.
(SATAN)	As peculiar as it might seem, the personal devil is not overtly a major character in Revelation. (Hence, we have put him in parentheses here.) His workings are behind the scenes. He is the spiritual force behind the visible characters of Antichrist and Civil Power. He is to be kept in mind; but the Revelator wants us more to focus on his visible activities.
THE PEOPLE	The people who have lived under the domination of civil and false-Christian authorities play a major part in the story of Revelation. They are divided into two categories: (1) those comfortable or in harmony with the existing order, and (2) those not rooted in the present order of things. The first group is usually symbolized as “those who dwell on the earth.” The second group is usually symbolized by the phrase, “peoples and tribes and tongues and nations.”

Having looked briefly at the layout and characters of Revelation, we are ready to begin our tour through its great drama.

This chart is a visual summary of the layout of Revelation as just explained. It also contains the chapter and verse numbers which constitute the sections.

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		
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	5 Views of the HARVEST PERIOD
15:1-8	INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES	2	
16:1-21	SEVEN PLAGUING EVENTS AGAINST BABYLON		
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	5 Views of the MILLENNIAL AGE
20:11-21:1	THE THRONE OF INDIVIDUAL JUDGMENT	2	
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	

**INTRODUCTION
TO THE WHOLE BOOK**

(Revelation 1:1-8)

A NOTE REGARDING EXPLANATIONS & FOOTNOTES

Some explanatory material will appear at the beginnings of sections (or “tours”) in Revelation.

Some explanations will be in boxes inserted at various places in the text.

Footnotes will be present in order to give minor clarifications, cross-references, and explanations of some symbols. Because this book was intended to be read from beginning to end, once a symbol has had its meaning placed in a footnote, no effort will be made past that point to repeat such explanations. Thus, symbols must be learned in the order they occur — and then applied consistently thereafter.

(Revelation 1:1-8)

Interpretive Reading:

- 1:1 This prophecy, showing how Jesus is to be discerned in this age, was given to Jesus, the Messiah, by God, in order to let Jesus reveal to his disciples what to expect after his first advent. Jesus delivered it (encoded through an appointed angel) to the Apostle John.
- 1:2 John faithfully recorded it for our benefit. He wrote down God's message, Jesus' doings, and all that he saw in the visions supplied by the angel.
- 1:3 Those who read and heed what is here written will be blessed because the message is timely for the Church throughout the age.

* * * * *

- 1:4 Dearest Brethren, I am the Apostle John writing to all of you in all seven periods of the Church during this Gospel Age — this age in which we find ourselves yet “in the mud”¹ of this poor old world.

I greet you with the sustaining grace and the overwhelming peace sent to us from our God Who is, was, and is to come — Director of present, past, and future — and sent to us through the administration of His spirit to be manifested appropriately in all seven stages of the Church, serving His holy authority.

- 1:5 And this same grace and peace comes from our Anointed Jesus, that one who lived as a faithful witness while among us, who then was the first-born from the dead, and who now is in control over the rulers of the earth (assuring that all which will happen, no matter how terrible it may seem, will work ultimately for good).

Let me offer a benediction: To him who loves us so, to him who released us from condemnation by the merit of the blood he spilled,

- 1:6 and to him who made a Kingdom for us in which we will be priests to his God and Father — to him be the due glory and the power to be known and loved by all forever and ever. Amen!

After his benediction, John quotes Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 in order to summarize how the Kingdom promised in verse 6 will arrive and how it will result in the repentance of all.

¹ [1:4] “Asia” means “muddy.”

1:7 **Behold!**² When this promised Kingdom arrives at Jesus' return, it will be with the obscurity and trouble symbolized by clouds; as it progresses, all will discern him and his kingdom — even (because they will be awakened) the very ones who crucified him! Then all people will come to mourn over the ill-treatment Jesus had experienced. This attitude of contrition will be the very beginning of good things to come! What more can we say than, “Even so, let it be!”

In a very few places in Revelation, Jesus interrupts to make an appropriate and important comment. He does it here, in verse 8, in order to show that his Kingdom authority (the FIRST and LAST WORD on all matters) is given to him by his Father Who owns that right.
Isaiah 44:6

1:8 This now is Jesus speaking to you to interject a most important precept: I am the Alpha and the Omega³ — the very first and the very final word in all judgment. Why can I say this? I can say it because my Father, THE Almighty, The Lord God Who is, was, and is to come SAYS SO! (On the import of the words of this verse, you may place your confidence and devote your lives!)

² [1:7] **Behold** is always an important word in Revelation. From this point on, it will always be in **bold type**. It asks us to search deeply into a verse to find special hidden meaning.

³ [1:8] **Alpha & Omega** are the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet. Therefore they are used to represent **the beginning and ending** of something.

It is interesting here to note that Jesus makes this point (about being the Alpha and Omega) four (4) times in Revelation.

Here in 1:8 and in 1:17 (both of which are at the beginning of the Gospel Age), only one phrase is used in each verse, thus representing the limitations on Jesus before the Kingdom comes.

The third occurrence, however, 21:6, has Jesus using two phrases, “Alpha and Omega” and “the beginning and the end” together. In 21:6 Jesus is standing at the time of his return, but not yet at the time for the peaceable Kingdom. Thus, he can EXPAND the expression, but not yet have it threefold as we find it in 22:13, which represents the total assumption of power:

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

We now have been introduced to the entire Book of Revelation. We have seen from Whom it came, for what it is, that it is encoded in symbolisms, that John is our guide, that the Church will be led of the Holy Spirit during seven distinct periods, and that Jesus is now and forevermore our “final word” in every matter. We have also been shown the objective of all that is to happen: THE KINGDOM!

**REVELATION,
PART I**

**FIVE VIEWS of the
GOSPEL AGE**

(Revelation 1:9 – 14:5)

The following chart is a little “road map” for Part I of Revelation. It shows us where we will be going as we “tour” this large (mostly historical) part of the Book of Revelation. Keep in mind that the Gospel Age INCLUDES its Harvest; therefore, parts of each of these five views will apply to our day.

Revelation Part 1, Summarized

Five Views of the Gospel Age and Their Purposes

No.	Contents of the Picture	Inclusive Verses	Purposes of the Picture
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 “angels” 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.

**THE FIRST TRIP
THROUGH
THE GOSPEL AGE**

**THE SEVEN CHURCHES
(Revelation 1:9 — 3:22)**

THE FIRST TRIP THROUGH THE GOSPEL AGE (Revelation 1:9 — 3:22)

THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Our first look at the history of the Gospel or Christian Age is a look at the seven “Churches.” Each represents not a place, but a time of certain conditions for Jesus’ disciples. Each has a name assigned to it. Translating the names gives us a clue as to the character of each historical period. The clues we receive from the names and conditions described allow us to pinpoint the period of history.

Each “Church” has an “Angel.” The Greek word “angel” means messenger. These Seven Angels to these seven Churches are men who in Church history have been the significant voices leading God’s people in the proper paths of understanding during each Church period.

As stated in the Preface, each series of seven has its own introduction. We now find the first of four of these introductions. In this case, it is to introduce us to the series on the Seven Churches.

Introduction to the Seven Churches (Revelation 1:9-20)

Interpretive Reading:

1:9 I, the Apostle John, am going to accompany you and represent you throughout this Gospel Age journey. Together we will experience and symbolize the tribulations of the saints, the Kingdom in which that tribulation will end, and the patience we must exhibit until we get to that Kingdom.

When I received this prophecy, I was on a prison island (symbolizing the isolation which we, his Church, experience in this life). We often are shunned because of our faith in God's Word and our confidence in Jesus' plans. Yet this isolation results in the blessing of receiving enlightenment!

1:10 The Holy Spirit gave me (representing us) the perspective of standing in the Kingdom in the seventh Millennium and looking back with understanding at the whole age. It was in this spirit that **I heard**⁴ a voice behind me — a voice speaking with such volume that it had the proclamation effect of a heralding trumpet. Clearly, it was a message of great import for us! It was the voice of Jesus.

1:11 The voice told me to write a book telling of all I saw and to send it on to the Churches living throughout the seven church-history periods of the Gospel Age. Each was given a name to describe it:

1. Ephesus — meaning “first” or “desirable”
2. Smyrna — meaning “bitter”
3. Pergamum — meaning “earthly elevation”
4. Thyatira — meaning “sweet perfume of sacrifice”
5. Sardis⁵ — meaning (possibly) “remnant”
6. Philadelphia — meaning “brotherly love”
7. Laodicea — meaning “judgment of the people”

1:12 I turned around (representing our conversions of devotion to him) to see who was speaking and what he meant. Then **I saw** and began to understand about seven Divinely appointed, golden candlesticks — the Churches as light sources.

⁴ [1:10] **Phrases** such as “**And I saw,**” “**And I heard,**” etc., will, from this point on, be in **BOLD TYPE**. They always represent a new look at a part of prophecy. They are a singularly unique part of John's prophecy — always showing us that we are beginning a certain perspective. It may be a new vision, another look at a vision just concluded, or a transport forward or backward in time to increase our comprehension and our appreciation. These markers should never be ignored.

⁵ [1:11] The meaning of **Sardis** is not easily discerned or confirmed. We are supplying a popular etymology which may not be accurate.

- 1:13 Standing in the midst of them was someone appearing human (— this to encourage his approachability for me). He was dressed much like Israel’s High Priest (thus showing me his function in my life). He was not only in a robe to his feet, but he also wore the symbol of voluntary servitude, a girdle; and it was across his heart!
- 1:14 His head (the seat of his thoughts) and his hair (the symbol of his spirituality) were the white of purity. It was like pure wool (reflecting his sheep-like humility); it was like snow in its superior whiteness (showing the crystallization of truth in his character). His eyes were like a flame of fire, demonstrating the wisdom of his righteous judgment which will lead us throughout the age.
- 1:15 Even his feet (appearing like burnished copper once it has been purified in the furnace) showed how he faithfully maintained his human perfection during his walk through the fires of trial as our example. And his voice! It was like “many waters.”⁶ It seemed to say that his message throughout the age would be taught through many people appointed by him.
- 1:16 His right hand of favor was grasping seven stars — bearers of light. From his mouth came our only “weapon” — the “two-edged sword” — the Bible and its spirit. His face, his favor, was nothing short of the blazing sun — the warm and bright Gospel message which burns in our hearts!
- 1:17 I had a reaction to all of this. All true saints have had this reaction. Once I saw him, realizing what I was seeing, I fell, worshipping; but I was as silent as a dead man. I had totally renounced my own will to serve him. He understood! He comforted me by putting his kind hand of favor on me, and his first wonderful words were, “Do not be afraid! I am all you need, the very first and the very last word on every subject.”
- 1:18 He continued comforting me: “I am the living One; I have attained life within myself. Behold, I will never die. And even more! I have the keys to release others from dying and from the oblivion of death!”
- 1:19 Then he commissioned me to publish and proclaim the wonderful things I had seen — the vision of the past, present, and the future of God’s Plan for this age and the next.
- 1:20 Then he told me a “mystery” — those things only for us who are among his initiated ones — the mystery of the two things that he knew would help our stability throughout the age:
1. “Each period of the Church’s history will have a messenger held, guided, and favored by me.”

⁶ [1:15] “Waters” (plural) is a symbol of **people**.

2. “There will be seven periods of Church history — each shining forth the light necessary for it, which I will provide.”

The Revelator has now introduced us to the concept of seven Church periods and to Jesus as their director and guide. We now proceed to visit each of these historical periods of the Church.

Histories of the Seven Churches **(Revelation 2:1 – 3:22)**

Here is a little chart giving a brief overview or summary of each of the seven Churches.

CHURCH	TEXT	DESCRIPTION
1. Ephesus (A.D. 33 - 70)	2:1-7	– 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.
2. Smyrna (A.D. 70 - 313)	2:8-11	– period of bitter physical persecution (death) and had to deal with the rise of apostasy (false Jews = tare Christians).
3. Pergamum (A.D. 313 - 1160)	2:12-17	– Satan (the great apostasy) now gains a throne – CHIEF RELIGIOUS RULER . He is enthroned in Rome; saints now tolerate lordship (Nicolaitans) and church-state.
4. Thyatira (A.D. 1160 - 1371)	2:18-29	– the saints hampered by the false prophet, Jezebel (Catholic church – now in relatively total control of European states). God slows her down by the plague (“kill with death”). Saints’ persecution by the state earns them the promise of verses 26, 27.
5. Sardis (A.D. 1371 - 1521)	3:1-6	– 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.
6. Philadelphia (A.D. 1521 - 1874)	3:7-13	– opens the gate to escape the apostasy. Rome (“Satan” and “false Jews”) must now acknowledge and abide the reform.
7. Laodicea (A.D. 1874 - ??)	3:14-22	– is spoiled by riches and indifference but has available all the newly found truths: Jesus has returned and is serving “supper.”

1. The Ephesus Church (From A.D. 33: Pentecost, to A.D. 70: The Destruction of Jerusalem) (Revelation 2:1-7)

Jesus is speaking throughout the histories of these Churches. Thus, “I,” all the way through Chapter 3, will be Jesus, not John. Jesus has been speaking since 1:17; he now continues:

Interpretive Reading:

2:1 John, Write to the Apostle Paul, the messenger for the Church called “First.”

Paul was dead by the time John wrote Revelation. Why, then, would John write to Paul? It wasn't for Paul's sake! Jesus had already supplied Paul with revelations greater than what would ever be given to other men. (II Corinthians 12:1-7; Ephesians 3:1-4) John wrote the message which was (no doubt) previously revealed to Paul and with which Paul fed the Ephesus period of the Church. John wrote it because we, the saints of all ages, need the complete picture of the Gospel Age Churches. Thus John, in this instance, wrote (as he was commissioned to do in 1:19) “the things which you have seen” (in the past at the time of his writing).

Remember that you and the other six specially appointed light-bearers to the Church are held in the favor of my guiding hand.

Remember that I am walking among you and inspecting each of the Churches to see how they put forth the light.

2:2 Therefore, explain to Ephesus that I am aware of their work for me; I am aware of their intensity and how the saints are persevering in the challenges of this first stage of Church history. I am pleased, Ephesus, that you do not put up with evil men (“the mystery of iniquity doth already work”); and you challenge those who have no right to be your teachers. When they are false, you call them liars, as they truly are.

2:3 You know and love my character, and it is for my reputation's sake that you exhibit such admirable perseverance without growing weary.

- 2:4 Yet I want to let you know how it displeases me that you have, as time passes, lost that initial pure ecstasy that attracted you — allowing bickering and contention to adulterate that first love.
- 2:5 So I ask of you to recall what you have lost; turn back to it and the deeds it stimulated. If you do not, I will be forced to end this “desirable” Church period.
- 2:6 Finally, there is one certain thing which you do manifest which pleases me greatly — a certain hatred that I have and you share: That is the hatred of the practices of those who lord it over others.⁷
- 2:7 There are a number of things which all the Churches can learn from the way the Holy Spirit deals with the other Churches. You know what you need to overcome; I have just explained it. If you, and the others which follow you, do overcome your weaknesses and surroundings, I will grant the special pleasure for you of imbibing THE LIFE which will be yours in God’s garden.

⁷ [2:6] Nicolaitans means “those who lord it over others.”

2. The Smyrna Church (From A.D. 70: The Fall of Jerusalem, to A.D. 313: The Edict of Constantine) (Revelation 2:8-11)

The Smyrna period of the Church is famous for the intensity of its persecutions. Christianity was growing only at the expense of blood; Rome, as a pagan empire, was on its way out. The struggles between the two religious opponents were epic. Unfortunately, the pressures resulted in the spirit of compromise in those who were becoming apostate.

Interpretive Reading:

2:8 John, write down what I want you to relay to the Church which is called “Bitter.” You are its messenger. Write:

Dear Smyrna, remember that there is no authority but me; and though recognition of me as your first and last word on all matters will bring even death, remember that I was dead; but I came to life again! Therefore, my message to you is this:

2:9 I understand your troubles! I understand how, from the world’s viewpoint, you are the poorest of wretches! But you are, indeed, rich in faith and in the assurance of resurrection.

I am also aware that we have come to that point in history where some among you, still claiming to be Christians,⁸ are coming to you with doctrines which are blasphemies! Pay them no heed; they belong to the apostate house which is the adversary’s⁹ — those who will compromise with the state for the sake of advantages.

2:10 You will suffer much; but as I told you before: FEAR NOT! (1:17) **Behold!** The civil powers will incarcerate some of you to test your resolve. Worse yet; during the ten years¹⁰ at the time of Emperor Diocletian, you will have the pinnacle of suffering. Be faithful in your covenant of sacrificial death, and then you can expect from me the laurel wreath of victory — THE CROWN of THE LIFE — immortality!

2:11 Again, let all the Churches learn from the Holy Spirit’s guidance for this Church: If you are faithful to overcome what has been poured in your cup, you will forever be exempt from death.

⁸ [2:9] “**Jews**” in Revelation are symbolic of **Christians**.

⁹ [2:9] “**Satan**” in Revelation symbolizes the **civil powers**.

¹⁰ [2:10] In prophecy, a **day** represents a **year**.

3. The Pergamum Church (From A.D. 313: The Edict of Constantine, to A.D. 1160: The Excommunication of the Waldenses) (Revelation 2:12-17)

The Pergamum Church covers nearly 850 years. It is so much longer than other church periods because things moved so slowly. This is one reason the period is characterized as the “Dark Ages.” As the period opens, Christianity is embraced as the official religion of the state. Hence, and hereafter, it is thus known as the Roman Church — the Roman Catholic (= Universal) Church because Rome considered itself the universe! Paganism has been suppressed, and “the synagogue of Satan” (2:9) has become dominant.

Arius (A.D. 325) attempts to preserve the true doctrine about Jesus’ identity, but the “blasphemies” (2:9) of the apostate church triumph over truth. As the period progresses, (1) The Pope is made “Chief Religious Ruler” (A.D. 530’s); (2) The Pope exalts himself over the state in A.D. 800 by crowning Charlemagne; (3) The “Holy Roman Empire” (A.D. 962) is founded (to last until 1806!); and (4) Rome divides into Eastern and Western empires (A.D. 1054), giving the Pope nearly total control over the affairs of Europe.

Is it any wonder that the name of this period is called “Earthly Elevation”? Is it any wonder that in this period the “Abomination” is “set up” (A.D. 539; Daniel 12:11), and the 1,260 years of Papal power to crush the saints begins? (Daniel 7:25)

Interpretive Reading:

2:12 Write this to Brother Arius, the messenger to the Church called “Earthly Elevation”: I am the one who has the Word and Spirit of God (the Bible) coming out of my mouth (not the creed of Nicea!).¹¹ Listen to me:

2:13 I am aware that you now must dwell in the midst of the harlotry of church and state; the civil power has become the enforcer of religious judgments. You must hold your faith in my character and what it means. I am so pleased that you held firm in the days of Arius to confirm the truth that the Father and I are not

¹¹ [2:12] The **Council of Nicea** (A.D. 325) began to create official creeds for the new state church. The introduction of the Nicene Creed was the beginning of the apostate church’s march toward making everyone conform without questioning.

the same being.¹² Arius was such a faithful witness even though the state made oblivion of his truths.

2:14 Nevertheless, I am troubled greatly with a few tendencies manifest among you. You consistently increase in your toleration of heresies. You allow, without open opposition, those who teach that there is a hierarchy¹³ in the Church. Like Balak¹⁴ (in Numbers 22-25 and 31:13-16), these seem to sanction a non-sanctioned marriage of church and state, thus stumbling my true saints¹⁵ into swallowing this deception.

2:15 Thus, even some of my true saints, not just the apostates among you, are favorable to the doctrine of lordship over the people.

2:16 The matter is critical. If you do not change, I will intervene shortly to show how the Bible contradicts this teaching.

Here it is very informative to note that the division in A.D. 1054 of the Eastern and Western churches had as one of its primary reasons that the Bible (sword) prohibited the supremacy of the Pope. Compare Numbers 22:23-26, 31, where an angel uses a SWORD to slow Balaam's progress. Balaam could not see it, but his donkey did. Perhaps the Eastern church functioned as the antitypical donkey!

2:17 Again, as I have stated to each Church, learn from the actions of the Holy Spirit in this instance. If you can overcome the tests, I will give you the secret, life-sustaining food¹⁶ of immortality. And, because you live in an age of betrayal, I will give you the white stone, symbolic of perpetual friendship. On it will be engraved the name you personally deserve for your character strength. It will be a personal love-name just between us! (It won't be a name like Balaam, Balak, or Nicholas which I have here used to symbolize apostasy!)

¹² [2:13] "**Antipas**" means "**against the Father.**" Some believe it represents Arius' opposition to what would become the Papacy; but, more likely, it represents his anti-Trinitarian stance.

¹³ [2:14] **Balaam** means "**Lord of the People.**" It is the Old Testament equivalent of Nicholas.

¹⁴ [2:14] **Balak** means "**empty**" and possibly symbolizes the **rising apostasy** — a spiritually "desolate" or "empty" system.

¹⁵ [2:14] **Israel = Christians.**

¹⁶ [2:17] Compare "swallowing" in 2:14.

4. The Thyatira Church (From A.D. 1160: The Excommunication of the Waldenses, to A.D. 1371: The Excommunication of Wycliffe) (Revelation 2:18-29)

Thyatira is the period of the Church most deeply in the Dark Ages. The Papacy grew steadily throughout Pergamum, but in Thyatira, its power is virtually unchallenged, and the saints of the period are greatly suppressed. Thus the Church is called “Sweet Perfume of Sacrifice.” Every effort by the saints is acknowledged by God as a sweet savor due to the struggles involved. Historically, the most notable event is the great “Black Death” in Europe. We will see this reflected in Jesus’ remarks for this Church.

The messenger to this Church is Peter Waldo who used his talents to translate parts of the Bible into French so that the common man could understand it. The distribution of the Bible was forbidden, but Waldo and his followers stealthily carried it wherever they could. They had a planned ministry to cover all of Europe!

Interpretive Reading:

2:18 Write to Peter Waldo, my messenger to the saints dwelling at the time the Church is called “Sweet Perfume of Sacrifice.” Tell him that I am he who is the Son of God (not the Pope who places himself in my stead, calling himself VICARIUS FILII DEI).¹⁷ I have the far-seeing wisdom of searching judgment (not he!). Remind Brother Waldo that I have walked perfectly through the trials brought on by the contradiction of sinners, as he also must do. Tell Brother Waldo for his message:

2:19 I am aware that you in Thyatira are characterized by the LOVE that sacrifices to feed the Gospel to any who listen; by the FAITH that keeps you active despite the apostasy’s persecutions; by the SERVICE not seen since Ephesus in spreading the Gospel; and by the PERSEVERANCE that keeps you going even when you have to run to hide in the mountains. Particularly in these last two areas have you shined greatly!

2:20 With such a commendation from me, what could be lacking? It is this: You have a character weakness left over from the Pergamum period. (2:14) You are secretive rather than open in your challenges against that church that calls

¹⁷ [2:18] Latin for “one in the place of the Son of God.”

herself “Virgin!”¹⁸ She has the unmitigated gall to call herself a prophet! And like Balaam and Balak (2:14), she continues to lead Christians astray with her church-state fornication; she continues to serve unclean food.

2:21 I watched her place herself over the state since her crowning of Charlemagne in A.D. 800 until Thyatira began in A.D. 1160 — a 360-year “time.”¹⁹ But she has given no indication of change.

2:22 **Behold!** I will demonstrate my displeasure personally!
I will execute a three-fold attack against her:

1. I will give her an illness — a sickening mistake which will cost her politically for centuries.

The Papacy moved to Avignon in France. It resulted in a divided Papacy, causing it problems into the Sardis period. Papal historians call it the “Babylonian Captivity.”

2. The civil powers (with whom she has become adulterous) I will cast into a great tribulation (unless, of course, they should repent)!

The “100 Years War” probably is the fulfillment of this. It greatly weakened Papacy’s supporters.

3. I will go so far as to cause actual mass death to her parishioners.

“Kill” in Revelation is usually symbolic. Here it is literal. Hence, the text says, “kill with death.” The great European Bubonic Plague killed from one-half to two-thirds of the population. “Strangely” it usually by-passed the Waldenses because they avoided the population centers.

2:23 When I have accomplished these things, it will be a sure witness to all of the churches (the apostate and true — and particularly the true IN the apostate) that I am watching and acting to apportion lessons as needed. I want you to separate the poison (flesh) from the blood (spiritual life) as kidneys do. I want to know the purity of your intent and zeal as represented by your hearts.

¹⁸ [2:20] **Jezebel** means **virgin!**

¹⁹ [2:21] A “**time**” in prophecy is a **period of 360 years.**

2:24 But to you Waldenses, the faithful of this time who do not subscribe to this spiritual harlotry, you who have not been duped by what Jezebel calls “the deep things” (the “mysteries of the church”) accepted only by those who conform to the adulterous church-state — to you I will place no further burdens than that which you endure in this putrid society.

It is good to note that in this period Papacy formed the new Office of the Inquisition. Clearly Jesus saw the saints’ burden was heavy enough!

2:25 The only admonition I will give is to HOLD FAST to that love, faith, service, and perseverance until I step in²⁰ to change things.

2:26 Here is another reminder: You who overcome circumstances by maintaining faithfulness in my ways until your course is over, to you I will reverse these perverse circumstances. Instead of your suffering under the state, I will give you authority over those who persecuted you!

2:27 You will rule over them with unbending corrective measures. Even as a potter breaks old pottery, you will break their corrupt power! I have received this authority from my Father, and I will share it with you.

2:28 You have lived in the darkest part of night; but I am the Morning Star — you will help introduce the new morning with Me!

2:29 Remember: These lessons are for all stages of the Church. Let them profit from these actions of the Holy Spirit. These actions speak mightily!

²⁰ [2:25] In 2:5 and here, it is important to note that “**come**” often is not a reference to the second advent, but rather **an expression** meaning “**to intervene.**”

5. The Sardis Church (From A.D. 1371: The Excommunication of Wycliffe, to A.D. 1521: The Excommunication of Luther) (Revelation 3:1-13)

It is an interesting fact that as winter begins, the days begin to get longer. This peculiarity is reflected in the Sardis period of the Church. Its messenger, John Wycliffe, is commonly called “The Morning Star of the Reformation.” Yet, as we shall see, the description of conditions in Sardis is miserable. Sardis is, in a sense, the “winter” of the Church’s experience; but it is, likewise, the time when light begins to increase markedly. It is a short period of time (150 years) because things are, indeed, beginning to move swiftly.

During this time the Renaissance begins in Italy; the printing press is invented; Constantinople (the Eastern Roman Empire) falls to the Turks — but, as a balance, Islam is chased out of Europe. There is a great restlessness of rulers against Papacy (but without a mechanism to do anything about it). The Vatican is built, and Papacy seeks large sums to complete a new St. Peter’s Basilica. Columbus discovers America in this period.

Wycliffe becomes famous and accepted in England because the king wants to escape the grasp of Papacy and because the people are refreshed by the truths. But Catholicism remains strong and ultimately squashes the movement and relentlessly persecutes those who have followed Wycliffe. It is not yet God’s time for the real Reformation. It is the heyday of the Inquisition.

Interpretive Reading:

3:1 To John Wycliffe, my messenger to the Church called “That Which Remains,”²¹ write this: He who has told you that the Church has to go through seven stages, each with its own messenger, wants to tell you this:

²¹ [3:1] The etymology of **Sardis** is uncertain. A number of interpretations, however, favor this meaning.

To understand the above introduction of Jesus himself to Sardis, it is important to know that those longing for the end of persecutions were, at the time, thinking that Jesus' return might be imminent. They were reasoning that Daniel's 1335 "days" (years) added to the date of Jesus' crucifixion (A.D. 33) would have him returning in A.D. 1368 — just as Wycliffe's message was beginning to flourish. Jesus cautions them that Sardis is only Church number five. It was not time yet.

I am keeping track of your deeds. You have made much profession of being spiritually alive as Sardis opened, but you didn't live up to the reputation. True spiritual life in Sardis is nearly unknown.

When persecutions were added to this Church, nearly all of the formerly enthusiastic Wycliffe supporters disappeared! They had been "alive" in name only. Hence, the text reads, "You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."

3:2 Regain your vitality! Find the few that have not given up, and strengthen each other's faith. Don't let spiritual lives be extinguished! Note carefully: When I look at Sardis, I find only unripe wheat in the judgment of my Father. This might well be known as the Church which is mostly "Great Multitude."²²

3:3 Therefore, there is only one appropriate admonition: If you want to complete your consecrations successfully, return to what you have heard from Brother Wycliffe; he (like all of my Church messengers) has been the source of what you need. Re-learn it, and live by it!

If you do not revive, I will unexpectedly bring severely adverse retribution for your unfaithfulness.

This was accomplished historically as the "Great Schism" (A.D. 1378-1418) ended, bringing dramatically increased persecutions. The words of Luke 12:47 apply here!

3:4 Nevertheless, there are a few in Sardis who have retained their white robes of justification well — not wearing the figuratively spotted robes of the Great

²² [3:2] Compare 7:9.

Multitude class. Their exemplary worthiness in this difficult age guarantees their eternal walk at my side.

3:5 This kind of overcoming will result for all overcomers in that necessary purity of faithful character. Such I will never erase from the Book of Life.

I will proclaim your characters and reputations in the very presence of my Father and in front of all the holy angels!

Understanding the nature of persecutions at that time strengthens our appreciation of the stress placed on the subject of robes in verses 4 and 5. “Heretics” were dressed hideously and mocked before being burned at the stake. Jesus answers: I will clothe you beautifully and give you eternal life; and I will honor you before God and the angels — the very opposite of their treatment by the “vicarious son of God.”

3:6 Let all the Churches who can hear this point hear it well! The lessons of the Holy Spirit here in Sardis are for all.

6. The Philadelphia Church (From A.D. 1521: The Excommunication of Martin Luther, to A.D. 1874: The Secret Second Advent) (Revelation 3:7-13)

The Philadelphia period of the Church has been the period characterized by the spirit of the Protestant Reformation. Saints openly and successfully challenged the rule of Papacy. The doctrine of clergy over laity was eroded and, in some cases, eliminated. This began with Luther's concept that each member of the Church was a part of the priesthood.

Philadelphia means "Brotherly Love." Its application to the saints of this period is appropriate. True Christians, following Luther's teaching that they each stood alone before God, each being justified by his individual faith, began to need to have a respect for, concern for, and love of, their fellow Christians' walks.

While the history of the period is complex and fast moving, the Biblical focus is on the conclusion of the events we call The French Revolution. As this tumultuous "earthquake" ends, Daniel's foretold "Time of the End" begins (1799). Biblical understanding grows throughout Philadelphia, but it bursts into a near-hysteria as the age ends in the Second Advent Movement (Miller, etc.). Intense study as well as humility-producing disappointments all prepare the Church for its final stage. "Blessed and holy is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days!" (Daniel 12:12)

Interpretive Reading:

3:7 To Martin Luther, my messenger to the Church called "Brotherly Love," write this: The one speaking to you is he who (in contrast to Papacy) is both Holy and True. I am the antitypical David who will reign; I have the key promised to him (Isaiah 22:22), and I am here to open a wonderful new history for the Church; no one will be able to close the new opportunities. I will close the old prohibitions against the Bible; and no one will re-establish them.

3:8 I know the changes Philadelphia will experience and even cause! And I approve. Behold, I have opened the door of freedom from Papacy. It will never again be closed. I have done this because you have regained some spiritual strength. You have grasped the power of my Bible, and you have openly defended my character — openly defying Jezebel!

- 3:9 **Behold!** Those who claimed to be Christians, but were tares — they who amalgamated with the state — **behold**, I will make them now acknowledge that they are not the “only church” — that I love and protect you who have broken away in open courage!
- 3:10 Also, I am going to protect you from the time when all society will be in upheaval — the time when I will test all who have roots in this old order. I will keep you from that time because you are patiently enduring this time when there is constant upheaval in doctrinal reform. Such change is always difficult, and I value your faithful patience in it.
- 3:11 To you in Philadelphia, I can, for the first time, say that my second advent is quickly nearing. If there be seeming delays and disappointments, keep your faith! Don't let anyone's weaknesses or errors cost you your wreath of victory!
- 3:12 Overcome the difficulties of these times, and I will give you the stability pictured by a pillar in God's temple. The insecurities of change will never again be a concern! There you will forget your life's experiences of that “Try this; no, leave. Try this instead” kind of spirituality! You will have engraved upon you that character-fullness represented by God's character; and you will be known by the character of God's new stable government — Jerusalem, the city of peace, which God Himself has prepared for this earth. And you will be my bride; you will share my name — my name made new by the history of what I have done for you and for all.
- 3:13 Again, it is important that all catch the message of what the Spirit has done for Philadelphia. Its import is for all stages of the Church.

7. The Laodicea Church (From the Secret Second Advent, A.D. 1874, to The Peaceable Kingdom) (Revelation 3:14-22)

We live in Laodicea. We and a few generations before us have seen the historical evidences of the Lord's hand in earth's affairs: World Wars, space travel, Israel's re-establishment, phenomenal communication, religious extremism and religious deterioration. Mostly, of course, we have seen the restoration of all the truths Christianity had lost as well as the constant fulfillment of prophecy. We have been blessed with understanding — the mystery finished. (Revelation 10:7)

Yet, we are still here, awaiting the Kingdom. We are subject to the criticisms Jesus heaps against our day in his message to Laodicea. The name means "Judgment of the People." It is broad in its meaning. The Judgment Day of a thousand years has begun, and the old order has failed its judgment and is being evicted ever since 1914. But also, the judgment of the final members of Christ is in progress. Once that has been completed, the peaceable Kingdom will begin. This is the thrust of Jesus' message to Laodicea.

Interpretive Reading:

3:14 John, give to Charles Taze Russell, my messenger to the saints when the Church is called "Judgment of the People," this message:

I am called "The TRULY," (and how appropriate this is for this day when you will receive THE TRUTH!). I am called "The Faithful and True Witness" (and, by now, you will realize my faithfulness to you throughout the age and the true reliability of my Word against the multitudinous errors and falsities now present). I am "The Beginning of the Creation of God" — and this will be one of the witnesses to you of your appropriate separateness from others who think I am not created or that I am God! Here is what I say to you in Laodicea:

3:15 I see that you tend not to be obviously cold against all the prevailing sin and error; you are not hot in your pursuit of and witness for righteousness and truth. I want you to have these extremes.

3:16 If, however, you maintain a lukewarmness instead, I will reject you as my spokesmen.

The implication of a great proportion of this Church becoming "Great Company" is strong.
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3:17 You have fallen into the attitudes of the world which surrounds you, saying:
‘I am rich; I have become possessor of all the truth.
There is no important information I do not have.’

How unfortunate that you think possession of the truth is an end in itself! You don't know how wretched that makes you spiritually! You don't know how miserable that makes you as new creatures! You don't know that possession without application makes you have spiritual poverty. You don't know how blind you are concerning my desires for you! And, perhaps worst of all, you don't know how vulnerable, how exposed, this makes you to all of Satan's deceptions.

3:18 My advice to those among you who want to be overcomers of these things is this:

- Work on a character of pure gold.
- Pay me your vows and I will refine your character so that you are spiritually wealthy.
- Don't rely on self.
- Don't think you are better because you have what IS better.
- Rely on the robe of my righteousness. Then you will have no vulnerabilities. Your relationship with me will have no shocking exposures which might shame you.
- From me, obtain that spirit of humility engendered by my Word which will give you the far-sighted wisdom to prevail.

3:19 Understand something: If you struggle to do what I have just advised, I will have extreme affection for you; and when I have such an affection for someone, I both ADMONISH and TEACH. This is what you want and need. Therefore, be zealous in your attempts to change, and I will be there to give you the victory.

3:20 **Behold!** This I have never been able to say to an earlier Church: I am here, standing at the door. I am in closer physical proximity than I have been to any of the Churches. If you hear what I have spoken through Brother Russell, my current voice, I will literally be again in your midst, feasting on the great truths of this special day. You will be able to assimilate these great present truths as I perform them around you.

3:21 If you will overcome, I will immediately grant your sitting with me in my throne of judgment which was set in 1874, even as my Father gave me the privilege of sitting in the position of judgment authority.

3:22 Let me reiterate for the final time: If you have the capability of spiritual perception, listen with care to the lessons which the spirit has conveyed through and to all the Churches.

**THE SECOND TRIP
THROUGH
THE GOSPEL AGE
(Revelation 4:1 — 8:1)**

THE SEVEN SEALS

THE SECOND TRIP THROUGH THE GOSPEL AGE (Revelation 4:1 — 8:1)

THE SEVEN SEALS

When something is viewed from more than one perspective, there is a reason for doing so. We have just viewed the Gospel Age from the perspective of the Seven Churches. This showed us most particularly what the prominent weaknesses and threats would be for each stage of Church history and particularly what should be OVERCOME. These messages were delivered at the opening of each period by its “angel” as directed by Jesus.

Now we are going to view the Gospel Age from another perspective — usually simply called the Seven Seals. What is the point? What are we supposed to get from this trip through the age?

The section of Revelation which we call “The Seven Seals” is primarily about how history will have its effect on the religious world. Thus, as this section opens, Jesus says, “I will show you what must take place.” (4:1) Now we must make a distinction. The Seven Churches also showed us history; but it showed us primarily how the true Church would have to overcome the influences of the false church. The seals, on the other hand, show us the GENERAL AND PROGRESSIVE TRENDS OF HISTORY and the effects this will have on the whole religious world (true and false).

It is important to look at God’s symbols with their obvious or reasonable meanings. Seals keep something secret until it is profitable to reveal it. When introduced to the Seven Seals, we are introduced to a “book” (a history book!) that is to be opened only one step at a time (5:1) until all is finally accomplished. The very fact that the opening is in seven parts shows us that the Church is not to understand future Churches, but only their own experiences as well as those already past.

Viewing our personal experiences is a great aid to understanding the opening of the Seven Seals. In our personal experiences, we first live them; then, after they are over, we come to understand them — to have their meaning or purpose revealed to us to become a part of our character development. The Seven Seals are like that, except that they are not personal experiences, but rather the experiences of the whole Church for its particular history period. This is important to understand. It means that each seal is opened not at the beginning of the Church period, but rather, at its end. Understanding follows experience. In each case it is saying: After we have lived through the period, Jesus unseals its meaning for us. (We will see this clearly reflected in several of the seals which refer to events at the close of the period, not at its

beginning.) Actually, the entire “permission of evil” philosophy works this way. First we experience, then we comprehend and profit.

As stated in the Preface, each series of seven has its own introduction.
We now find the second of four of these introductions.
In this case, it is to introduce us to the series of the Seven Seals.

Introduction to the Seven Seals (Revelation 4:1 — 5:14)

This is a long introduction! It takes two chapters of Revelation to accomplish. As already mentioned, the Seven Seals are about the march of history through the Gospel Age. Chapters 4 and 5 accomplish a number of things to introduce this new age. They explain God's part in the matter. They show all the resources at His command which will have a special part in carrying out the control and effects of history in this new dispensation — an age which is to be totally different from the Jewish Age which it replaces.

We are not losing God in the Gospel Age; but we are experiencing the direct takeover by Jesus as the primary character in charge of the age. This is a dramatic turn of events, and these two chapters are there specifically to document this dramatic transfer of primary authority. It is all said in symbol by showing us that God had history in His hand (5:1), but that He specifically and willingly handed it to Jesus (5:7) who was “worthy” to have the honor. (5:9)

Those are the purposes of this long introduction. Once the introduction is complete, Jesus will immediately begin to act upon his assignment. (6:1)

Interpretive Reading: (John is speaking now.)

- 4:1 Once I had seen the history of the messages to the Seven Churches, **I looked**, and **behold**, a new opportunity to view religious history opened before me in another kind of vision. The same voice I had heard at the beginning (1:10), that great proclaimer of life-important truths, was again instructing me. He invited me to see history throughout the Gospel Age from the heavenly perspective.
- 4:2 Subsequently I found myself viewing things from the mind of the New Creature. **Behold!** I saw the foundation of it all: God's throne²³ of authority of judgment! And on it was God. All was just the way things stood in the spirit realm as the Gospel Age was ready to open and the Jewish Age to close.
- 4:3 He who controlled judgment was like a diamond in purity, hardness, and brilliance — because God is flawless, absolute in justice, and radiant, almost blinding, in truth. But, comfortingly so, He also showed Himself like a cameo-stone, into which often the face of a man is carved. He, like it, has that warm, soft quality of love. Altogether, I witnessed this balanced character that awes us.

Surrounding His throne — as if it showed the entire purpose of His judgment prerogatives — was a rainbow; but unlike all other rainbows, this one was

²³ [4:2] **Throne** is a symbol of **judgment authority**.

entirely green.²⁴ He was showing that the purpose of His authority was to give everlasting life as He covenanted²⁵ with Abraham.

4:4 I perceived that God, throughout the Jewish Age, had provided twenty-four satellite thrones — the means of proclaiming His judgment to men by way of the voices of the prophets²⁶ sent by Him. I saw these old-time prophets, presiding in judgment, dressed in white to show their authorized purity; and they were granted golden wreaths²⁷ on their heads to show their Divinely-inspired thoughts which, if heeded, bring victory.

4:5 Emanating from God's throne were three tools of judgment: There were flashes of lightning used to see what reactions occur when bright, penetrating truths cross our paths. There were voices — the studied, logical messages — used to test our reactions to in-depth presentations of truth. There were also peals of thunder. They were the tool to see how we react to controversies which might rage after presentations of truth.

Now, before the throne (a position representing servants of God's authority) there were seven burning lamps (as in the Holy of the Tabernacle). These are the refining messages to be presented dispensationally and through the seven stages of the Church by God's Holy Spirit.

4:6 Also before His throne, there was a laver (as in the Court of the Tabernacle). Its water (representing truth) was like crystal in purity. It produces the smoothness of peace, like glass. It represented the objective of truths — a cleansing for all who would approach God.

Totally engulfing the throne were four²⁸ Living Ones — representations of God's living attributes — the living characteristics which make His judgment authority awe-inspiringly complete. All of His attributes are wisdom applied. Thus, each Living One was full of the eyes of far-seeing wisdom — wisdom which makes the former works of God the groundwork for the future works of God.

The last part of this verse is particularly appropriate here. Since these chapters show the transition from Jewish to Gospel Age, the previous age is shown to be the BASIS for the in-coming age.

Thus, also, as 4:4 showed, the Prophets of the previous age become foundations for the truths of the new age.

²⁴ [4:3] **Green** represents **everlasting life**.

²⁵ [4:3] A **rainbow** is a symbol of a **covenant**.

²⁶ [4:4] The **twenty-four elders** represent the **Old Testament writings**.

²⁷ [4:4] **Wreaths** symbolize **victory**.

²⁸ [4:6] **Four** is a symbol of **universality**.

4:7 These four Living Ones had appearances similar to the attributes they represented. (I will refer to them by number for future reference.)

Number One was POWER, as represented in the Lion.

Number Two was JUSTICE. It was represented by its appearance as the Calf, which satisfied justice in the sin offering.

Number Three was LOVE. The Face of a Man represented this attribute because it is by His workings with mankind that God is showing His plan of love.

Number Four was WISDOM, represented by the far-seeing Eagle in flight.

4:8 Though these living ones had the primary appearance of the animals I have mentioned, they also had other characteristics with thrilling meanings.

Each of them had six wings.

Wings well symbolize God's Word because we are carried aloft by them. (See Revelation 12:14.) We also are protected by them. (Psalm 91:4) Wings are always in pairs, representing the Hebrew and Greek halves of the Bible. Since John sees this vision at the opening of the age, the pairs of wings serve as a prophecy that more Scripture (the New Testament) is yet to come.

Note that four living ones, each with six wings, makes 24 wings — a possible reference to the 24 elders (prophecies) which, as the age opens, are the only written part of God's Word. The symbolism shows that God's attributes are reflected in, and are the foundations of, His Word.

A comparison to Isaiah 6:2 adds lessons.

- a) The two wings covering the face CONCEAL God's FAVOR (face) from the world.
- b) The two wings covering the feet CONCEAL God's OPERATIONS (walkings) among men.
- c) The two wings which fly show that God's attributes SEARCH OUT those whose hearts are His. (II Chronicles 16:9)

The wings were full of the eyes of wisdom within and without.

The Scriptures (wings) are full of wisdom. We find the mighty truths WITHIN the pages; but we also find the results and application OUTSIDE of the Bible in our daily experiences in the world.

God's attributes keep proclaiming His holiness at all times, in all ages, without cessation. (Psalm 121:4) They speak the totality — the incomprehensible completeness²⁹ — which sums up the glories of His character; and this is not a passing or temporary thing. This has been God in the past; it is He now; it will be He throughout all ages to come. This is His ONENESS!

4:9 And when the day comes for which we all wait, God's attributes will be manifest to all, giving Him finally the honor and praise due to Him to occupy the position of Ultimate Judge of all forever. ("They shall all know Him, from the least unto the greatest!" Jeremiah 31:34)

4:10 Then, the prophecies, at that time having all been fulfilled, will also serve as a witness to the worship due Him. These "elders" will cast their symbolic wreaths³⁰ before the throne — a visual acknowledgement that their prophetic authority had always come from God and had served Him well. They will have finished their commission and will say,

4:11 "Our Lord and God, You are worthy to receive finally all glory, honor, and power. You have created all things. It is only because of Thy will that they exist and were created."

5:1 **And I saw** something that caught my attention. In God's hand of favor there was a book of future events. There was writing on the back so I could see a little of His plan for the future. It had been written before by the prophets. But there was writing inside, not able to be read because it was sealed in such a way that it could only be revealed in seven stages.

5:2 **And I saw** something else. There was a mighty angel — the troubles which would ultimately destroy the nation of Israel as the new age opens.

There are only three "mighty" or "strong" angels in Revelation. One is here; one is in 10:1; one is in 18:21. Each represents a great time of upheaval which totally changes things in the world (secular and religious). In order, they are:

- (1) the first-advent trouble on Israel under Rome,
- (2) the French Revolution, and
- (3) Armageddon.

This trouble was a message to all who loved God and His Word. It was saying in effect, "If the old order of the Law under the priesthood and prophets is

²⁹ [4:8] A triple statement represents the totality of a matter: "Holy, holy, holy."

³⁰ [4:10] See 4:4, Footnote #27

failing, what is there that can take its place? Who shall explain the Holy Word and tell us what yet is to come?”

5:3 For a while, as our Jewish fortunes under Rome disintegrated, there was no answer. The religious leaders could not explain what was happening; the social order teetered on the brink of despair, but had no answers. Even the words of the dead prophets could not give us the answers we needed.

5:4 Before I really knew Jesus, before Pentecost, I, too, was among those who wept for lack of consolation and understanding.

5:5 But after knowing Jesus, after the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, THEN I understood that the prophecies had, indeed, confirmed the place and duties of Messiah. **Behold!** The ideas were foretold by Isaiah, one of the twenty-four Elders. I then knew that Jesus was the STRONG ONE³¹ (the Lion) of JUDAH (Isaiah 11:1-5); I knew he was THE ROOT OF DAVID. (Isaiah 11) He was heir of God’s promises!

I wept no more! There finally was one who, in overcoming, had the right and power to unloose the seals and explain the contents of this great book.

5:6 Thus, **I** finally **saw** what I had missed in the very center of that scene of the throne, Living Ones, and Elders. There was a Lamb — just like the Passover lamb which had saved the firstborn and Israel! But unlike that Passover lamb, this one, even though he had been slain, was standing again! He had regained life! It was Jesus!

To represent the totality of power that God was going to grant him, he had seven³² horns.³³ To show that he has the wisdom to oversee the selection and development of all seven periods of the Church, he has seven eyes — the wisdom coming from the Holy Spirit throughout the new age.

5:7 Then I was privileged to see that great transfer of power which moved history from the Jewish Age into the Gospel Age. The Lamb stepped forward and received the book directly from God’s hand of favor.³⁴ It was a moment never to be forgotten:

5:8 Once Jesus had taken the book which contained the whole history of the age to come, immediately the attributes of God (not God, Himself!) and the prophecies acknowledged with humility and gratitude the new position and authority of the Lamb. The Lamb will be the one to manifest God’s prophecies and attributes. (Thus he once said, “If ye have seen me, ye have seen my Father!”)

³¹ [5:5] Compare 4:7.

³² [5:6] Specifically, he would have power over all seven stages of the development of the Church.

³³ [5:6] **Horns** are a symbol of **power**.

³⁴ [5:7] The **right hand** symbolizes **favor**.

The twenty-four elders used all of their resources in this spontaneous outbreak of praise. Each had a harp³⁵ to accompany the joyful singing. Each had golden bowls³⁶ full of perfume³⁷ — testimonials to the ways their lives praised God, which praise was the content and goal of their prayers.

5:9 Together they sang to the Lamb something never before revealed:

“Worthy art thou to take this book and to reveal its contents because your death made a purchase for God. Your ransoming blood has bought a Church for Him from among the restless masses of humanity!³⁸

5:10 And these whom thou hast purchased, thou has designed to be a kingdom of priests to God; and when the sacrificing age has ended, they will reign with thee over the earth!”

Here it is good to note that the purchase was “FOR” God, not “FROM” God. This is not talking about ransoming Adam and his race. In this “new song” is revealed the doctrine of the Church’s part in the sin offering. The prophecies are praising the beginning of the Gospel Age in which the Church offers itself with Jesus — and then they praise the blessed resulting restorative Millennial Age!

5:11 **And I looked, and I heard** the sounds of another scene of praise — the scene that will take place when The Christ will reign over the earth:

Everyone was rejoicing. There were the Living Ones, the Elders, and over a hundred million angels around the throne —

5:12 all saying loudly, so that the point could not be missed:

“Worthy is the slain Lamb now to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing!”

³⁵ [5:8] A **harp** symbolizes the **HARMONY of testimony**.

³⁶ [5:8] **Golden bowls** represent **Divinely appointed and directed EVENTS in the prophets’ lives**.

³⁷ [5:8] The **perfume** (incense) represents the **sweet aroma of praise to God**.

³⁸ [5:9] “**Every tribe and tongue and people and nation**” is a Revelation symbol for the **sea-class of humanity** — those not rooted in support of man’s deficient order of things.

Note that at the first advent (5:9) Jesus was proclaimed worthy to receive the book of history and to unveil its contents.
At the second advent, he receives EVERYTHING!

5:13 Then, in response, everything and everyone joined in the praise — not only the hosts of heaven, but all society, and all who had never had roots in anything, and even the inanimate things of nature! I heard them all saying:

“To God, the Judge, and to the Lamb
be blessing, and honor, and glory, and
manifest power forever and ever!”

5:14 God’s attributes, having finally been revealed and vindicated, kept saying a confirming “Amen!” And all the prophecies, having arrived at the moment which marks the objective of their being, praised God, their fulfillment being their ultimate act of worship.

Thus, the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation have introduced us to the Gospel Age, its resources, its primary righteous players, its purpose, and its result. Its details are still hidden in the book with seven seals. The next two chapters will reveal the contents. Thus, we begin our second sightseeing tour through the Gospel Age — a look at what is behind “The Seven Seals.”

This is a brief summary of the meanings of each of the Seals.

SEAL	TEXT	DESCRIPTION
1. Ephesus (A.D. 33 – 70)	6:1, 2	Doctrine was pure (white horse) and it was convincing to those who heard (conquering).
2. Smyrna (A.D. 70 – 313)	6:3, 4	Doctrine (red horse) began to be stained with sinful apostate teachings, and there was an internal struggle (slaying one another), as well as persecution from the outside world.
3. Pergamum (A.D. 313 – 1160)	6:5, 6	Doctrine is now not capable of reflecting light (black horse) – the beginning of the “Dark Ages.” Spiritual food is at a premium – weighed out. But the work of the spirit (oil) and of sacrifice (wine) still goes on.
4. Thyatira (A.D. 1160 – 1371)	6:7, 8	Doctrine is now drained of all life-blood (sickly green horse). The plague (hell) makes all else secondary for a while. The beasts (governments) are the Jezebel-ordained instruments of persecution.
5. Sardis (A.D. 1371 – 1521)	6:9-11	The back of the Church is nearly broken: “How long?” – How much more can it take? The Church is promised that it <u>can</u> be faithful even under the depressing conditions, and that help WILL come.
6. Philadelphia (A.D. 1521 – 1874)	6:12 – 7:17	This period is climaxed by the great earthquake which breaks the back of religious and royal domination. The spread of the earthquake is controlled (“Hurt not”) so that the Church can be completed in the next period.
7. Laodicea (A.D. 1874 – ?)	8:1	The half-hour is probably a part of the hour in 17:12. The Great Multitude will be silent as it realizes the Church is gone, and while it gets its bearings. Then it will make much noise in its destructive witness against Babylon, resulting in its own deliverance.

We are ready to sightsee once again through the Gospel Age. Each stop along the way will give us a SUMMARY of the history of the period we already visited. The dates for the Seven Seals are the same as those for the Seven Churches.

THE FIRST SEAL **Covering the Period from A.D. 33** **to A.D. 70 (Ephesus)** **(Revelation 6:1, 2)**

Interpretive Reading:

6:1 **And I saw** the entire history of Ephesus summarized when the Lamb broke open the First Seal.

The First of God's Attributes, Power,³⁹ addressed me. It invited me to "come" to view what grew out of the controversies⁴⁰ which erupted as Judaism gave way to Christianity. It seemed to represent the Power of Truth!

6:2 **So I looked, and behold, I saw** pure doctrine (a white horse), and Jesus, who was controlling it had a bow to shoot sharp and accurate answers against the enemies of these newly revealed truths. He was wearing the victory wreath which God gave to him, showing how pure truth took him to victory! He went out, beginning at Jerusalem, to conquer the hearts and affections of the faith class who were to become his disciples — and the Church grew!

³⁹ [6:1] See 4:7.

⁴⁰ [6:1] **Thunder** symbolizes **controversy**. Compare 4:5.

THE SECOND SEAL

Covering the Period from A.D. 70 to A.D. 313 (Smyrna)

(Revelation 6:3, 4)

Interpretive Reading:

6:3 When the Lamb broke open the Second Seal, revealing the history of Smyrna, I **heard** again an invitation to come to review the history. This invitation came from the Second Attribute, Justice,⁴¹ which seemed to mourn that this great attribute would now no longer dominate in the Church — that the very doctrine of ransom justice would fall into disrepute.

This period of the Church began with controversies promoted by the Gnostics — a heresy which destroyed the ransom. John, the angel of Smyrna, wrote vehemently against this challenge to Divine Justice. Within the congregations, justice gave way to power grabbing.

6:4 I noticed that a horse⁴² was again prominent in this history — but it was red; it was sinful in that it was being dominated by rising heresies. Its rider was a malefactor — apostate Christianity — and he was causing peaceful conditions to disappear.

As false Christians increased, there were contentions and power struggles in the congregations. Also, Pagans were threatened by emerging Christian “power grabbers” and did all they could to cause trouble for Christianity.

Christians began to “slay one another”⁴³ in the sense that they established and used “excommunication” freely and widely. The great “sword” of Scripture was finally complete. But they used the Word against each other!

⁴¹ [6:3] See 4:7.

⁴² [6:4] A **horse** represents **doctrine**.

⁴³ [6:4] To **kill** is a symbol of **destroying one’s spirituality or spiritual influence**.

THE THIRD SEAL

Covering the Period from A.D. 313 to A.D. 1160 (Pergamum) (Revelation 6:5, 6)

Interpretive Reading:

6:5 And when the Lamb opened the Third Seal so that we could review the history of Pergamum, **I heard** once again an Attribute inviting my inspection. This attribute was Love⁴⁴ which could not help but be distressed when seeing this period which would only tolerate adherence to the apostate system, not love for God or the individual!

So **I looked**, and **behold**, the horse⁴⁵ was now black — it could only absorb truth for selfish ends; and it was incapable of reflecting light so that others could profit from it! It was the black, Dark Ages! The one who rode or controlled it was the apostate forces growing ultimately into the Papacy. And he thought, like all dictators do, that he had the right to control information — to measure out truths at will!

6:6 But **I heard** God, Himself, speaking from the midst of His own Attributes. He placed limits on what the apostasy could withhold! He specified that a quart of wheat — the very minimum of deep spiritual truths needed to live on — **MUST BE AVAILABLE** for those who would work all day⁴⁶ to obtain it. He also specified that three quarts of barley — a day's full three meals worth of common truths — **MUST BE AVAILABLE** to those willing to work all day to find them. And, most particularly, God specified that no restrictions could be so great as to stop the work of the Holy Spirit⁴⁷ or to keep the faithful from effectively being part of the blood⁴⁸ of the sin offering.

⁴⁴ [6:5] See 4:7.

⁴⁵ [6:5] A **horse** represents **doctrine**.

⁴⁶ [6:6] A **denarius (penny)** represents a **day's labor**.

⁴⁷ [6:6] **Oil** represents the **Holy Spirit**.

⁴⁸ [6:6] **Wine** was Jesus' symbol for the **blood of the covenant at the Last Supper**.

THE FOURTH SEAL

Covering the Period from A.D. 1160 to A.D. 1371 (Thyatira) (Revelation 6:7, 8)

Interpretive Reading:

- 6:7 When the Lamb opened the Fourth Seal, revealing the history of Thyatira, I once again was invited to view the panorama. This time it was Wisdom⁴⁹ which knew that wisdom would be a great casualty in this darkest era of Church history.
- 6:8 And I **looked** as I had previously done, and **behold**, this age had doctrine represented by a green horse!

Green is a good color in plants and cold-blooded animals; but a warm-blooded creature which is green has had all of its blood drained! There is no life left!

There was nothing being offered doctrinally which could sustain spiritual life!

The rider was Papacy, and his characteristics⁵⁰ represented spiritual death. Thus, anyone following him was going into spiritual oblivion!⁵¹ The rider was the realization of all of the attributes of Daniel's terrible fourth⁵² beast: — he used (of all things!) God's Word⁵³ to help destroy! He purposely withheld all nourishing truths so that spiritual famine was inevitable! And he literally killed⁵⁴ those who challenged his authority — using the political powers⁵⁵ as his executioners!

⁴⁹ [6:7] See 4:7.

⁵⁰ [6:8] **Name** is a symbol of **character**.

⁵¹ [6:8] **Hades** or **Hell** represents the **oblivion of the death state**.

⁵² [6:8] See Daniel 7:17, 19-21, 23-25.

⁵³ [6:8] The **Bible** is represented by, among other things, **the sword**.

⁵⁴ [6:8] To “**kill...with death**” in Revelation refers to **literal murder**.

⁵⁵ [6:8] As the “**fourth**” part of Daniel's “**earth**” represented **Rome and Papal Rome**, **beasts** in the prophecy represented **the governments**.

THE FIFTH SEAL

Covering the Period from A.D. 1371 to A.D. 1521 (Sardis) (Revelation 6:9-11)

Interpretive Reading:

- 6:9 When the Lamb would reveal the story of Sardis' history, he opened the Fifth Seal. **I saw** the accumulated weight of centuries of the “contradiction of sinners” in the lives of the saints who had made their callings and elections sure.⁵⁶ These dear souls⁵⁷ figuratively cried out from the grave. They had been ostracized and even excommunicated because of their faith in the Bible and because of their faithful lives in God's service.
- 6:10 Their question and plea coming loudly out of this time when it seemed truth could never quite triumph was this:

“O Lord, we question not Your true promises, nor Your holiness of character; but time presses hard on Thy Church, and we would inquire of Thee, ‘How long will it yet be before You no longer hold Your restraint? How long will it be before You pass judgment on this apostate church which has no spirituality, but has only roots deep in the corrupt affairs of earth?’ ”

This collective prayer — this burden of saints for centuries — is a wonderful insight into the spiritual state of mind once Sardis was ending. It was “loud”: The teachings of Wycliffe had become better known, heard, loved, and wider-spread than any reformer since the Smyrna Church. Yet, Papacy had the power to squelch it all! We can see the frustration! Just before Sardis, the searchers had hoped that Jesus might return in A.D. 1368 (1,335 years since the crucifixion) based on the prophecy of Daniel 12. NOTHING seemed to be going right! The Church knew that God had promised to vanquish the counterfeit church — but when? — oh, when?!

⁵⁶ [6:9] **Living saints** are “on the altar.” Being “**under the altar**” represents the **completion of a life of sacrifice.**

⁵⁷ [6:9] “**Souls**” in Revelation represent those **faithful** who are **waiting in death.**

6:11 The Lord answered this plea by His prophecies and by the events which would shake the world as Sardis ended. The saints were assured that time would not erode the promises! Their white robes were secure despite the wait and the losses. They were reminded that more time⁵⁸ was needed because they were only Church number five — seven were prophesied, and God’s prophecies are sure. The brethren yet to come in Philadelphia and Laodicea, who must also suffer ostracisms and rejections, have to have their time for completion. Meanwhile, the saints can “rest” — have no concerns regarding the progress of God’s purposes.

⁵⁸ [6:11] A “**time**” in prophecy is **360 years**.

God’s judgment of Babylon was to be pronounced in A.D. 1878. Therefore, this opening of the seal near the end of Sardis is in A.D. 1518 (360 years earlier) — the very year that Martin Luther nailed his anti-Papal objections to the church door (October, A.D. 1517), and three years before Philadelphia opened a new door of relief. Could God have answered more convincingly?!

THE SIXTH SEAL

Covering the Period from A.D. 1521 to A.D. 1874 (Philadelphia) (Revelation 6:12 — 7:17)

This appears to be a very long seal description. In actuality, the main Seal description takes only six verses (6:12-17). The entire seventh chapter of Revelation is an **EXTENSION OF THOUGHT** that comments on events of the Sixth Seal — showing that these events **CANNOT BE CONTINUED** because the end would come too soon. There must also be a seventh Church period.

As has been mentioned, the Seals seem to focus on the results (the end) of the period. This also is the case here. The opened seal will focus late in Philadelphia on the French Revolution and its effects. Chapter 7 will interrupt the narrative to say, “**STOP! The effects of the Revolution must be HELD IN CHECK because 144,000 have not yet been chosen!**” This construction of Revelation is beautiful once seen; but it can be confusing when not seen! Chapter 7 can appear to be out of place! Nevertheless, Chapter 7, when understood, is an appropriate part of the discussion of the Sixth Seal. The narrative should make this plain.

Interpretive Reading:

6:12 And I **looked** once again to see what would be revealed as the Lamb broke open the Sixth Seal — the view of the results of Philadelphia history. The history was dominated by a great revolution⁵⁹ in France (A.D. 1789-99) which grew out of Reformation freedoms. Many euphemistically called the time “The Age of Enlightenment,” but it effectively served as a challenge to the faith of those who believed the Gospel.⁶⁰ The emerging challenges to faith threw many faithful into mourning⁶¹ as they struggled to defend the Bible. The Jewish Scriptures,⁶² likewise, were dismissed as being nothing but bloody sacrifices and slaughters of which God seemed to approve.

6:13 The teachings of the Apostles — those God-appointed bearers of light — were reduced to a code of earthly morals and ethics for social and political applications.

And, as all of this was going on, a set of very important changes began:

⁵⁹ [6:12] **Earthquake** is a symbol for a **revolution** or **great social overturning**.

⁶⁰ [6:12] The “**sun**” is a symbol for the **New Testament revealing of the Gospel**.

⁶¹ [6:12] **Sackcloth** is a symbol of **mourning**.

⁶² [6:12] The Jewish Law & prophets were only reflections of the brighter Gospel sunlight. Hence the **Old Testament writings** are symbolized by the **moon**.

The nation of Israel⁶³ had its first but untimely stirrings as Napoleon wished to re-establish Israel during his Middle-Eastern escapades. But the Napoleonic Wars⁶⁴ frustrated the attempt.

6:14 France eventually legislated the co-existence of Protestantism and Catholicism so that two religious entities were forced to recognize each other.⁶⁵ All sizes of governments⁶⁶ in Europe were shaken in their confidence down to their very foundations when they witnessed how France had fallen into revolution.

6:15 Men of every station — rulers, philosophers, men in control, the wealthy, the free as well as the enslaved — wanted to protect themselves from the bloody instabilities they saw in France. They strengthened their confidence by joining or forming societies, and requesting strong laws.

6:16 They virtually asked their governments and law-makers to cover them with protection. Their pleas showed their subconscious beliefs that “The End of the World” might actually be something that could happen. Their words were:

“Protect us! Hide our interests so that we will not suffer if the Day of Wrath is appearing from God and the Lamb!

6:17 France looks as though that ***Dies Irae*** (“Day of Wrath” from the Catholic funeral mass) is here! Who can abide it?”

Historically, during the Revolution period, “End of the World” prophesying and theorizing became popularly accepted. It gained support later as the Adventist Movement grew. Many believed that the end was near. While 6:15-17 shows the worldwide frame of mind, it was clearly NOT the great time of trouble! It was, however, a one-tenth sampling (11:13) of what was yet to come. Thus, the fears of the trouble’s spreading lead directly to the explanatory interruption of Chapter 7:

7:1 After seeing this great earthquake and its results, **I saw** another kind of reaction to it:

There were four⁶⁷ angels controlling the four foundation strengths of the old order — society, finance, politics, and religion. They were keeping back the

⁶³ [6:13] The **Fig Tree** is a symbol of the **Jewish Nation**.

⁶⁴ [6:13] **Wind** is a symbol of **war**.

⁶⁵ [6:14] The **scroll** seems to represent **the history of religion**. It now, in France, had to have its two parts living in close and “agreeable” proximity by law!

⁶⁶ [6:14] A **mountain** symbolizes a **kingdom or large political unit**.

An **island** symbolizes a **republic or small political unit**.

⁶⁷ [7:1] **Four** represents **universality**.

turmoil which would result if these foundations should be shaken all over the world as they had been in France. These angels clearly did not want the revolution spreading all over established society⁶⁸ or the restless masses⁶⁹ — or even in the lives of leaders.⁷⁰

7:2 And I saw where these angels received their concerns and their orders: **I saw** Jesus, the living symbol of the incoming Kingdom; he had a seal which God had given him in order to mark every overcoming member of the Church. Jesus cried out encouraging orders to the angels who had the power to let go the forces which would put an end to the old establishment as well as the world of the discontents.

7:3 He said,
“Now is not the time to let all the establishment, masses, and leaders feel what was begun in France. This all must await the time when all of the Church has had its character-sealing.”⁷¹

7:4 **And I heard** the whole explanation given as to what Jesus meant by his words — all that must occur before these terrible winds could eventually be released. Let me share it with you:

The Church, Christ’s mystical body, must be composed eventually of one hundred and forty-four thousand individuals who have been sealed in the character-likeness of Jesus and his Father. These God counts as His “spiritual Israel” — each antitypical tribe representing characteristics of the saints.

The listing of the tribes in Revelation differs from the listings in Genesis and Numbers, which referred to “natural Israel.” Revelation symbolizes “Spiritual Israel.” This list is missing the tribe of Dan because Dan represents second death. It also is missing the tribe of Ephraim because Ephraim represents the “Great Multitude” (7:9-17) — that great spiritual class who do not qualify to be part of Christ’s body.

7:5 12,000 will come from the symbolic tribe of Judah.
12,000 will come from the symbolic tribe of Reuben.
12,000 will come from the symbolic tribe of Gad.

7:6 From Asher, there will be 12,000.
From Naphtali, 12,000;
From Manasseh, 12,000.

⁶⁸ [7:1] **Earth** symbolizes the **establishment**.

⁶⁹ [7:1] The **sea** represents **humanity without emotional attachment to the old order**.

⁷⁰ [7:1] **Trees** represent **leaders** (or even small nations at times).

⁷¹ [7:3] The **forehead** represents the **character-likeness of God and Christ**.

- 7:7 Simeon will supply 12,000,
As will Levi and Issachar.
- 7:8 Zebulon, Joseph, and Benjamin also will each supply 12,000 sealed ones.
- 7:9 Now, Ephraim, whose name means “multi-fruitful,” was not in the sealed group. But, as **I looked, behold!** There was a great multitude (multi-fruitful) which did not have its number specified, as did the Church. They had come from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue.⁷² Their destination was joyous heavenly service⁷³ to God and the Lamb. They, even like the Church, enjoyed the white robes of justification; and they held the palm branches which represented deliverance from their difficult journey (much like the Jewish Feast of Booths).
- 7:10 And they were crying out with a message that all could hear:

“All salvation is a great blessing
attributable only to our God,
Whose judgment right it is,
and to the Lamb!”

- 7:11 This proclamation by this completed Great Multitude brought on the same response as I had witnessed (5:11) when the heavenly hosts praised the joy and honor due at the outset of the Kingdom. The Angels, the Prophecies, and the Attributes all bowed in worshipful harmony saying,

- 7:12 “Thus let it be!
Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving,
honor, power, and might be to our God
forever and ever. Amen!”

Thus, with the completion of the spiritual classes, the Kingdom will be ready to function. But since this Great Multitude is such a hidden class of individuals — rarely acknowledged among Christians — John is given an opportunity to discuss the particulars of this class with one of the “elders” to show that even the Old Testament prophecies had predicted the existence of this Great Multitude — this “Ephraim” class.

- 7:13 Once I had witnessed the reason why the winds which had begun in France had to be held back — because there was yet an entire period of the Church to come, as well as a Great Multitude to be completed — then I was approached by one of the “elders.” He seemed unaware of this Great Multitude class. So, he asked

⁷² [7:9] “**Every nation, tribe, people, and tongue**” is a four-part phrase symbolizing the **restless masses of humanity**. It is **from this group** (not “those who dwell on the earth”) that **all in the spiritual class come**.

⁷³ [7:9] “**Before the Throne**” symbolizes a **position of service**.

me,⁷⁴ “These who are clothed in white robes, who are they, and where do they come from?”

7:14 I was so pleased to be able to tell him that if he looked carefully into his own writings he could know from them all about this Great Multitude! It was hidden there in his (Moses’) books! He caught the point immediately! So, he explained it to me referring to his own prophecies. He said,

“These come out victors from hard experiences. Thus they are the antitypical Levites who have to cleanse themselves with the blood of the antitypical bullock.” (Numbers 8:5-8)

7:15 “This is why they are not pictured as priests, but rather as servants in God’s house continually. (Numbers 4:33)⁷⁵
And God will forever protect them. Thus,

7:16 “They will never experience the want of food or drink. (Numbers 18:21-24) “I also see that they will no longer carry any guilt⁷⁶ for their laxness with the details of their Gospel⁷⁷ assignments. (Numbers 18:32)

7:17 And all of this will be because the Lamb in the midst of the throne will shepherd them to the eternal source of life-supplying truths, and all their distresses from the past will be wiped away from their concerns.”

Thus the account of the Sixth Seal gives us a future view into the completed spiritual classes — Church and Great Multitude. All of this is because the Lord wanted us to know the REASON for not allowing the winds from the French Revolution to spread and increase. There had to be a Seventh Period of the Church to finish the 144,000 and the Great Multitude. The great surprise is that when we are now ready to view the Seventh Seal, nearly nothing will be said! Why? This is true in part because Revelation 7 had just told us the primary history of the Seventh Seal period — it is to COMPLETE THE SPIRITUAL CLASSES. We should be sobered by this simple lesson to know the burden laid upon us. We must WORK while it is called “day.” We must HARVEST what remains. This is the unspoken but profoundly LOUD message which exists unseen between Revelation 7 and the words of 8:1. It is saying, “The Door is Yet Open. I, the Lord, am waiting FOR ONLY ONE THING before I let the winds loose in order to bring in the Peaceable Kingdom. I am waiting for the completion of my Church!”

⁷⁴ [7:13] Eventually, the Church has the honor of explaining to the prophets what their prophecies meant!
See I Peter 1:10-12.

⁷⁵ [7:15] This picture is further enhanced by Numbers 7:8, 9. Ithamar (= Land of Palms; see Revelation 7:9) directs the sons of Merari (= Bitterness; see Revelation 7:17) in the SERVICE of the TABERNACLE.

⁷⁶ [7:16] The **heat from the Gospel** seems to represent **the pressures felt by this class**.

⁷⁷ [7:16] The **sun** represents the **Gospel**.

THE SEVENTH SEAL

Covering the Period from A.D. 1874 to the Peaceable Kingdom (Laodicea)

(Revelation 8:1)

Before considering the meaning of the few words in 8:1, we must make a connection which is so obvious that it is invisible! Ever since 7:9 we have been considering the Great Multitude class. We should keep this in mind as we read 8:1. Since the seals have effectively shown that they focus on the ends of the period, we are encouraged to assume this also about the Seventh Seal. But what does this mean in practical terms? Since Laodicea COMPLETES the 144,000, and since Scripture suggests the Great Multitude is completed SUBSEQUENT to the 144,000, it is reasonable to assume that this focus on “half an hour” at the end of Laodicea is a focus on THE GREAT MULTITUDE.

Most of the years of Laodicea will be consumed in the harvest work — as Chapter 7 has indicated. It needs no additional explanation. But as the Harvest is concluded, two major events must occur before the Peaceable Kingdom arrives:

- (1) Babylon must be destroyed, and
- (2) The Great Multitude must be glorified. The two are inseparably connected.

Interpretive Reading:

8:1 When the Lamb broke open the Seventh and final Seal to reveal the concluding history of Laodicea, the only legitimate remaining spiritual authority,⁷⁸ the Great Multitude, was speechless⁷⁹ during about a half of a particularly unique, but short, period of time.

⁷⁸ [8:1] **Heaven** is a symbol of **things in the religious world** — true and/or false Christianity. Here it seems to represent **what is left of the spirit-begotten class: The Great Multitude.**

⁷⁹ [8:1] See Habakkuk 3:17-19; Jeremiah 8:20; Revelation 14:17-19.

It is best, when possible, to interpret a Scripture by comparing it to companion texts. Hence, if we want to know about “half an hour,” we would profit from a text mentioning the WHOLE hour during which the HALF hour happens.

When we later consider 17:12, we will learn that Babylon’s final fall is during “one hour.” The word “hour” throughout the New Testament is used prophetically to describe a period of unique characteristics. (This is Apostolic usage and is nearly impossible to contradict.) In Revelation, the word “one” attached to it appears to have the purpose of accentuating the peculiarity of the period. Just as we might say, “I had one fine time,” (meaning that it was a memorable occasion because of its special features) — thus Revelation says, “one hour” to mean a unique time of particularly stunning and memorable qualities. The “one hour” of Revelation 17:12 is just such a time. It will be stunning!

The “half an hour” of the Seventh Seal, then, seems to apply to that time when the Great Multitude (Company) will realize that the Church is gone. The Great Company will be silent in the surprise of this realization and in “re-grouping” itself — deciding what it should do next. Once it has decided, the implication is very strong that the next half hour will not be silent. The Great Company will make itself heard — resulting in its glorification.

(Compare Revelation 14:15-20; 19:17, 18.)

**THE THIRD TRIP
THROUGH
THE GOSPEL AGE**

(Revelation 8:2 — 11:19)

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

What we have asked before, we must now ask again:
What is the reason for this third sightseeing tour through the Gospel Age?

The Seven Churches showed us what we must overcome.

The Seven Seals showed us the effects of accumulated history on the religious world at the close of each period.

The Seven Trumpets are, in a sense, the reverse of the Seals. The trumpets are the messages blown by the seven “angels” of the Seven Churches. Here, however, we will see the effects of those truth messages on the surrounding world. History affected the Church; THAT was the story of the Seals. But, the Church affected history; THAT is the story of the Seven Trumpets.

As stated before, each series of seven in Revelation has its own introduction. The Introduction to the Trumpets is the third in that series of introductions. It is short — only five verses; but it is packed with meaning!

Introduction to the Seven Trumpets **(Revelation 8:2 - 6)**

Even though this introduction contains only five verses, some detailed explanation is needed in order to obtain maximum understanding.

IMPORTANT: Notice the layout of this introduction:
Vs. 2: The angels receive their trumpets.
Vs. 6: They prepare to blow them.

Verse 6 picks up where verse 2 left off. Why? It is because the little three-verse narrative in between is going to tell us what Jesus will be accomplishing behind the scenes — during the time when the more notable thing will be the progressive sounding of trumpets.

Some DEFINITIONS are in order.

- The Trumpets are the messages given by the messengers (“angels”) to the Seven Churches.
- The Purpose of the Trumpets is to call and to enlighten the true saints. The secondary effect of the Trumpets is to be a witness and an annoying judgment against the surrounding religious world.

Strangely, it is this secondary effect which dominates the whole narrative of the Seven Trumpets. But, this is the very reason that the intervening verses of 8:3-5 are here — to show us what the most important (though hidden) activities of the time really are. Therefore, a close look at the content of 8:3-5 is very appropriate:

Verses 3-5 are about an “angel” (Jesus) who is using the coals of the altar (the experiences necessary for acceptable sacrifice) to accomplish two things:

1. In verses 3 and 4, he uses them to provide acceptability (sweet perfume) for the spiritual lives of the saints so that the sin offering can be completed.
2. In verse 5, at the end of the age, Jesus uses the coals to burn the court (nominal Christianity) so that the destruction of the apostate church will mark the end of all sacrifice. We call this the seventh plague. (Compare 8:5 to 16:18.)

Thus, in the five verses of this Introduction to the Trumpets, the Lord is telling us that, no matter what is going on visibly in the religious world, his secret development of the Church will progress, and the destruction of the apostasy will follow.

Interpretive Reading:

8:2 **And I saw** the Seven Angels I had previously seen in the vision of the Seven Churches. They were standing before God in this new vision, and they each received one of seven dispensational messages — so powerful as announcements that they were symbolized by trumpets.

8:3 But my eye caught something else happening — much like a vision on the side before the Trumpet vision continued. Jesus came, appearing to function much like a High Priest as I had earlier seen him. He stood at the copper altar in the court of the tabernacle, and he was holding a Divinely-appointed censer — a container that allowed him to move the coals to different locations for different

uses. (These coals effectively represented the experiences of sacrifice — the heat which consumes the offerings.)

Jesus had much incense in his hands. It was the sweet aroma representing how fragrantly acceptable his sacrifice had been. Now, during the age (during the whole period of the sounding of the trumpets), Jesus was going to sanctify the spiritual lives of all the saints with it. He was going to give his brethren acceptability! He was going to offer the incense on the Golden Altar in the Holy on our behalf as we approach the “Throne of Grace”!

8:4 Thus, all through the age (while the trumpets would be sounding), this secret work of completing the sin offering was going on with God via Jesus’ ministrations.

8:5 But once the sin offering was complete, Jesus suddenly changed his work! He took the censer, indignantly filled it again with fire from the copper altar in the court, and furiously hurled it at professing but apostate Christian society! What followed was what I later saw during the seventh plague in 16:18 (which I will tell you about later). There suddenly were raucous and destructive controversies, fruitless explanations and excuses, blinding revelations of truths and errors — all resulting in a complete overturn of society. Thus the age will end.

8:6 With this side vision complete, my attention was drawn back to the seven messengers to the Church and their proclamation-like messages. They were ready to show me the vision of trumpeting.

The following is a little chart which shows in a superficial way the contents of the Seven Trumpets.

PERIOD	TEXT	TRUMPETER	SUMMARY
1. Ephesus: (A.D. 33 - 70)	8:7	Apostle Paul	Hard truths (hail) destroyed Jewish society.
2. Smyrna (A.D. 70 - 313)	8:8, 9	Apostle John	Rome began to be “taken out of the way” (II Thessalonians 2:6, 7) – the great mount being divided by its internal struggles and ultimately by Constantine.
3. Pergamum (A.D. 313 - 1160)	8:10, 11	Arius	The fall of Arius and his great truth from favor allows the poisoning of doctrine.
4. Thyatira (A.D. 1160 - 1371)	8:12, 13	Waldo	The lack of truths darkens the understanding of Gospel (sun), Prophets (moon), and Apostles (stars). The future, however, (3 woes) portends great changes for this problem.
NOTE:	8:13		The final three Trumpets ARE THREE “WOES.” They effectively shake those who “dwell on the earth.”
5. Sardis (A.D. 1371 - 1521)	9:1-12	Wycliffe	Another “star” is cast out of religious favor. He is John Wycliffe who is hated with a vengeance. What he starts STINGS the error for 150 years until Luther can make a successful rebellion.
6. Philadelphia (A.D. 1521 - 1874)	9:13 - 11:14	Luther	A very complex trumpet! It includes doctrinal reform (horses), the opening of the understanding of Daniel (the “little book”), the Time of the End (42 months), the French Revolution (earthquake), etc.
7. Laodicea (A.D. 1874-?)	11:15 - 19	Russell	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.

THE FIRST TRUMPET

Covering the Period from A.D. 33 - A.D. 70

(Ephesus)

(Revelation 8:7)

Interpretive Reading:

8:7 The Apostle Paul sounded his trumpet — a loud message of truths constituting the bulk of New Testament writings. His words were hard truths⁸⁰— distressing the intransigent Jewish establishment as these truths were hurled against it. These words spread rapidly as righteous destructive judgments⁸¹ which drained the life⁸² from Judaism. The Jewish part⁸³ of society was destroyed. The Jewish leaders,⁸⁴ having no answers, lost the respect they had had. The whole Jewish population, even though it had enjoyed justification⁸⁵ under the Law, found itself destroyed and scattered across the Roman Empire.

⁸⁰ [8:7] **Hail** symbolizes **destructive truth**.

⁸¹ [8:7] **Fire** symbolizes the **destruction or purification from righteous judgment**.

⁸² [8:7] **Blood** has numerous applications as a symbol. **Death (taking life)** is one of them.

⁸³ [8:7] **Society (earth)** of the time was made up of Pagan Rome, Judaism, and the new Christianity.

Thus one of the three was destroyed. These parts were clearly symbolized by the three languages on the cross: Latin, Hebrew, and Greek.

⁸⁴ [8:7] **Trees** represent **stalwarts of society** — teachers and authorities.

⁸⁵ [8:7] **Green = life**. In this case, **Law justification**.

THE SECOND TRUMPET

Covering the Period from A.D. 70 - A.D. 313

(Smyrna)

(Revelation 8:8, 9)

Interpretive Reading:

- 8:8 The Apostle John then sounded his trumpet as the Church spread well beyond Jerusalem, and the New Testament writings were completed. They had their effect! That great empire, Rome,⁸⁶ was ignited with the power of the new Christian movement, true and apostate. Roman Paganism didn't stand a chance; it disappeared as it was hurled, burning, into the masses⁸⁷ of people embracing Christianity. That part⁸⁸ of the population which had considered itself pagan, died to its beliefs, becoming (even if only nominally) Christian.
- 8:9 Unfortunately one segment⁸⁹ of the saints also lost their spiritual lives, succumbing to the apostasy of the period. And that part of commerce⁹⁰ which had traded with pagan religious markets disappeared into oblivion.

⁸⁶ [8:8] **Mountain** symbolizes **kingdom or empire**.

⁸⁷ [8:8] **Sea = the restless masses** — in this case the Pagan Roman population which converted. Thus, (13:1) the “Holy” Roman Empire is said to emerge from this sea.

⁸⁸ [8:8] The three notable parts of the population during this period were (1) pagans, (2) True Christians, (3) and the emerging Apostasy. (1 John 2:18-19)

⁸⁹ [8:9] “**Creatures which had...life**” symbolized the **spirit-begotten class — true Christians**. No one else “had life.” Thus, the Revelator here divides the spirit-begotten into three classes: The Overcomers, The Great Multitude, and The Second-Death Class.

⁹⁰ [8:9] **Ships** represent **commerce**. As Pagan Rome disappeared, its commercial support went to the new apostate powers and to civil Roman enterprises. Thus, two of three commercial syndicates remained.

THE THIRD TRUMPET
Covering the period from A.D. 313 - A.D. 1160
(Pergamum)
(Revelation 8: 10, 11)

Interpretive Reading:

8:10 Then Arius trumpeted his clear message. He was a great teacher of doctrine with bright, shining arguments. But the emerging apostate religious rulers could not tolerate his presence in the “heavens,” and he fell from favor immediately (with the Emperor’s help).

There were in this period three sources⁹¹ and conduits of the waters of truth. Arius’ truths fell upon hearing ears in only one of them — the spirit-begotten saints.

8:11 The apostate church and the Emperor were so blind to Arius’ truths that they called Arius “Bitter Poison.” And all the truths which Arius’ followers promoted were, likewise, labeled “Bitter Poison.” And, because of the promulgation of this lie, many who were spirit-begotten⁹² lost their spiritual lives because they feared to drink of truths which, they were told, were bitter.

⁹¹ [8:10] The true Church, the Apostasy, and the re-emerging Judaism (now in Diaspora) were the three claiming to represent Jehovah.

⁹² [8:11] “Men” symbolize **Christians** — hence, **spirit-begotten ones**.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET
Covering the period from A.D. 1160 - A.D. 1371
(Thyatira)
(Revelation 8:12)

Interpretive Reading:

8:12 After many centuries, Peter Waldo sounded the Fourth Trumpet message. It focused on the validity of Scripture — the “sun” of the New Testament Gospel, the “moon” of the Prophets, and the “stars,” the authority of the twelve Apostles.⁹³ The apostate church could not abide this challenge to its authority, so it called Waldensian interpretations “Darkness,”⁹⁴ and smote with unending anathemas any references to them. Waldo’s followers knew from Scripture that their era was part of the era of darkness and that the Millennial Day was yet future. The apostasy’s lie that THEY were the kingdom was seriously threatened by this, and they could not allow the Waldensian “day” and “night” teachings to be heard!

⁹³ [8:12] By this time “Apostolic Succession” was fully accepted — including the belief that the “new” apostles could override the inspiration of the original twelve.

⁹⁴ [8:12] The Roman Church had (in A.D. 1054) divided into Eastern and Western branches. These two-thirds of “Scriptural interpretation” were orthodox — but not the messages from Waldo’s followers — the “**third**” that they called “**darkness.**”

A WARNING INTERJECTED (Revelation 8:13)

We may have noticed that the trumpets have had less and less success as they have progressed from Paul through Waldo. The Revelator interrupts the flow of the narrative for one verse here to let us focus on the fact that trumpets five through seven, on the contrary, will increase substantially in their influence. This is good news. John Wycliffe, in history, is known as the “Morning Star of the Reformation.” It is true that his Fifth Trumpet period is a sad history; but it is also true that he effectively re-awakened the hunger for truth. He caused pain for Papacy. He is very much deserving of the reputation for giving “WOE” to the powers that be. His successors, Luther and Russell, will carry on the same tradition!

Interpretive Reading:

8:13 I, John, was suddenly startled out of my consideration of the vision of the Trumpets. **I looked and I heard** a little extra encouraging sight. The wisdom of Scripture⁹⁵ had been released in the midst of the religious world. It prophesied, “Woe, woe, woe to those with roots in earthly things because Trumpets number Five, Six, and Seven will deliver messages from Wycliffe, Luther, and Russell. Earthshaking results will ensue!”

⁹⁵ [8:13] The **eagle** symbolizes **wisdom**. Its **two wings** often represent **Scripture**.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET

Covering the period from A.D. 1371 - A.D. 1521 (Sardis) (Revelation 9:1-12)

Interpretive Reading:

- 9:1 John Wycliffe, the Fifth Angel, trumpeted! And I saw once more the same kind of reaction against truth. But this time, its results were to be a little different! Wycliffe, though initially accepted, was another bright teacher who fell from religious-world favor. But the Lord supplied him with the ability to open to view things which had long been powerless⁹⁶ because they had been suppressed.
- 9:2 Wycliffe translated Scripture into the vernacular and openly preached what had been hidden from generations. The result was a confusion⁹⁷ resulting from subjecting commonly held ideas to the refining furnace of burning truths. Consequently, the Gospel and matters of the spirit⁹⁸ became even more confusing for apostate Christians.
- 9:3 But, arising out of all the confusion of the time came hordes of followers of Wycliffe's enlightenments. They were like locusts in society — insects which devour leaves,⁹⁹ thus taking the look of life away. But these locusts were unique. They had the power of scorpions — to sting without killing the established church-state system.
- 9:4 The Lord made it plain to these "locusts" that they must not destroy the simple faith of the people¹⁰⁰ or of any spirit-begotten ones who were higher on the faith scale.¹⁰¹ They were, however, permitted to hurt any "Christians"^{102, 103} who did not have the mark which showed God's acceptance.
- 9:5 For a period of 150 years¹⁰⁴ they were not allowed to destroy the existing religious order, but they were permitted to be a thorn in its side — a genuine torment to "orthodox" teaching! They inflicted excruciating pain, but offered no relief of "dying" to the old ways. (It was not yet time for the Reformation.)

⁹⁶ [9:1] A **bottomless pit** symbolizes a **condition of powerlessness**.

⁹⁷ [9:2] **Smoke** symbolizes **confusion**.

⁹⁸ [9:2] **Air** symbolizes the **spirit world**.

⁹⁹ [9:3] **Leaves** symbolize **professions**.

¹⁰⁰ [9:4] **Grass** symbolizes **mankind**. **Green grass** symbolizes those with **life justification**.

¹⁰¹ [9:4] "Nor any green thing" is missing in the Sinaitic Text.

¹⁰² [9:4] **Trees** represent **stalwarts of faith**.

¹⁰³ [9:4] **Men = Christians**

¹⁰⁴ [9:5] A **prophetic day** equals a **literal year**. **Five months of thirty days each** is **150 day-years**.

9:6 During that century and a half, sincere Christians wanted to cease to be¹⁰⁵ Roman Catholic, but could find no way to bring this about. They longed to give up their previous erroneous faith professions, but the way to do so escaped them.

Verses 1-6 have given us the results of Wycliffe's sounding.
Verses 7-12 now will re-examine the locusts in some detail, thus allowing us to see better and understand the functioning of the Sardis saints.

9:7 My perspective of these "locusts" — the Sardis saints — was like this: They were like battle-horses — nothing timid about their doctrinal positions. Their thoughts¹⁰⁶ had the same Divine authority¹⁰⁷ as the Prophets because the Bible was their standard. Their demeanor, contrary to the Apostasy, was love.¹⁰⁸

9:8 And while they had the spiritual strength¹⁰⁹ you would expect from the true virgin class, they also had the bite that is backed by the Lion (of Judah).

9:9 Their righteousness was their defensive armor¹¹⁰ — and it was as strong as iron. These saints were borne about by the very sounds of Scripture — the ring of truth! They were organized¹¹¹ — unified — by their consistent vision. They were a true doctrinal force to reckon with!

Before considering 9:10, it is necessary to summarize a little Sardis history. Many lost faith along the way. (Compare 3:4.) Wycliffe's Lollards failed early, but peripheral movements sprang up in Europe — as far away as Bohemia. "Tails" symbolize the last part of something. Thus, verse 10 will tell us that a few held on to the end — still stinging!

9:10 Because these brethren held on tenaciously until the very end of the 150-year era, they were able to continue the stings of truth against error despite the terrible persecutions of the time.

¹⁰⁵ [9:6] **Death** or **Die** symbolizes **ceasing to be whatever you were** — presumably because you become something else.

¹⁰⁶ [9:7] A **head** represents a **way of thinking**.

¹⁰⁷ [9:7] Compare 4:4.

¹⁰⁸ [9:7] Compare 4:7. Wycliffe's followers were known for their loving spirits.

¹⁰⁹ [9:8] **Hair** symbolizes **spiritual strength**.

¹¹⁰ [9:9] Compare Ephesians 6:14.

¹¹¹ [9:9] **Chariots** represent **organizations**.

- 9:11 The Lord had appointed John Wycliffe as the “King”¹¹² of the Sardis locusts. It is he who single-handedly drew the hidden messages out of the abyss of obscurity and powerlessness. The Lord even re-named him to show the enormous destructive effect he would have on the error of the day; and the Lord gave him the name in both Hebrew and Greek because he opened both Old and New Testament Scripture to the language and the understanding of the common man. God named him THE DESTROYER!
- 9:12 This age was the first to really cause “woe” from God against the apostasy; but, behold, two more woes are yet to come.

¹¹² [9:11] Compare Matthew 24:47.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET

Covering the period from A.D. 1521 - A.D. 1874 (Philadelphia) (Revelation 9:13 – 11:14)

Clearly, the Sixth Trumpet, like the Sixth Seal, occupies a number of verses far more numerous than the former five Seals and Trumpets. Philadelphia is a long and complex period.

Before examining the testimony in detail, it is helpful to note the layout of this Trumpet's message. It is in three distinct parts. The first part (9:13-21) is a general report of the Reformation work begun by Martin Luther. The second part (10:1-11) is a commentary on Daniel 12 — God's interpretation of how it is fulfilled during the period of the Sixth Trumpet. The third part (11:1-14) describes how the opening of the understanding of Daniel provides a CHRONOLOGY for the Church. Parts one, two, and three all refer to the French Revolution as being that visible historic event which will help to pinpoint THE TIME OF THE END (1799), the true centerpiece of this Philadelphia period.

Interpretive Reading:

- 9:13 Martin Luther, the Sixth Angel, let loose his revolutionary message. I, John, who represent all of us saints in the flesh, **I heard** the message. It was about the power¹¹³ of individual sacrifice and individual communion with God — the very things symbolized by the Golden Altar.¹¹⁴
- 9:14 By giving this message through Luther, the Lord was letting him know that its influence would subsequently release messages which had been bound due to the bondage of the people¹¹⁵ in Babylon. These messages which would be released would be truths concerning the four parts of society: social, political, financial, and religious. All had been held captive to the apostasy's errors, influence, and power.
- 9:15 These four "angels" or messages had been prepared for a specific timed event (The Time of the End) known in prophecy as:
- THAT HOUR (11:13)
 - THE 1,260th DAY (11:3; 12:14, 15)
 - THE 42nd MONTH (11:2)
 - THE THIRD and a HALF YEAR (Rev. 11:6; Dan. 12:7; Rev. 10:6)

¹¹³ [9:13] **Horns** represent **power**.

¹¹⁴ [9:13] Luther's PRIMARY teaching was about the validity and acceptability of the individual Christian's relationship to God: the doctrine we call "Justification by Faith."

¹¹⁵ [9:14] The **Euphrates** represents **the people and their support**.

And, though they were specifically “prepared” for that time, it was not yet that time; but they were released because the Lord wanted them to help to slay the beliefs of a third of the Christian world before the prepared-for time came.

The Christian world had three distinct parts:
Civil, Roman Catholic, and the new Protestantism.
Luther’s work would slay the faith of enough Catholics to make Protestants of them.
This needed to be done before the prophetic work of the French Revolution and Time of the End could be accomplished.

As we look at 9:16, the armies appear out of nowhere!
That is the point. Protestantism suddenly was there!
They were the “third part” who had had their Catholic identities slain.
The number (200,000,000) is a very reasonable estimate of the total number of Protestants from Luther’s day up to and including those alive as Laodicea opens.
(See The Divine Plan of the Ages, page 16.)

9:16 And as a result of this Reformation, I saw armies of men riding their new doctrines.¹¹⁶ The number was astounding — about 200,000,000! **I heard** this number reported later in history.

9:17 And, as I examined this vision, I saw the details of these horses (representing doctrines) and those who directed their progress (the Protestant converts). The riders had defensive armor — breastplates — the doctrine of their justification by faith. The breastplates came in three colors: red, blue, and yellow — the three primary colors, representing the complete palate of Biblical truths.

The colors came from fire, hyacinth gemstones, and sulfur, showing:

- the purification-burning power of truth;
- the power of truths to create faithfulness, and harden character;
- the power of Divine truth to poison error.

The horses were awesome! Their heads (ideas) were aggressively powerful like lions. Their mouths (messages) brought forth fiery judgment against errors. They also brought forth smoke to confuse their enemies, and sulphur to poison the false waters of Papacy.

9:18 The fire, smoke, and sulphur — the OFFENSIVE onslaught from these doctrines — plagued sincere Catholics who consequently lost their faith in Catholicism and became Protestants, too.

¹¹⁶ [9:16] **Horses** represent **doctrines**.

9:19 It is clear that the power of the Reformation was not in the rider, but in the horses — most particularly in their mouths! When pure doctrine is promulgated freely and energetically, it is irresistible.

As with the Sardis locusts (9:10), the ability to sustain the Protestant Reformation for centuries is represented by the “tails” of the horses. Protestantism propagated itself by multitudinous denominational fractioning all the way to the close of Philadelphia. The “tails” of Philadelphia horses, however, are quite unique: they have HEADS! Thus each additional step of reformation spoke new ideas. Truth increased throughout the period.

The tails of these horses even had heads! The promulgation of ideas could not be stopped! Throughout Philadelphia — all the way to its close — the ideas came. And the ideas were deadly, like poisonous serpents — to old (and new) errors.

9:20 The Roman Catholics whose faith was not slain by these plaguings on their errors continued in their two primary blasphemies.

- First, they continued in the worship of false gods.
- 9:21 • Secondly, they continued in their despising of non-Catholics, still believing in the “magic” of their priesthood, their fornication with the state, and their usurpation of powers and privileges.

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10:1 Once I had seen the effects of the trumpeting of the Sixth Angel, I saw another vision related to this time. (The Lord wanted to show me how the prophecy of Daniel 12 was to see its fulfillment during Philadelphia.)¹¹⁷

I saw the second of three strong angels — the angel of the Time of the End and the French Revolution.¹¹⁸ He had a Divinely-sent commission.¹¹⁹ He was justified (clothed)¹²⁰ to create trouble (cloud).¹²¹ He had a promise¹²² on his mind¹²³ to keep. (The promise = of Daniel 12:4.) The Gospel light was in his

¹¹⁷ [10:1] There can be no dispute that Revelation 10 is God’s explanation of Daniel 12. Reading both chapters carefully, their relationship is unmistakable. The difference is that Daniel 12 is prophetically looking forward to the Time of the End. Revelation 10 is, on the contrary, standing at the time when the prophecies of Daniel 12 are to be fulfilled. The Daniel 12 angel says, “It will be for a time, times, and a half a time.” Revelation 10:6 says (in modern language), “Time’s up!”

¹¹⁸ [10:1] See note on 5:2.

¹¹⁹ [10:1] “**Out of heaven**” here implies **God-sent mission**.

¹²⁰ [10:1] **Clothing** represents **justification or authority**.

¹²¹ [10:1] **Clouds** symbolize **trouble**.

¹²² [10:1] **Rainbow** symbolizes **covenants or promises**.

¹²³ [10:1] **Head** symbolizes **thoughts or mind**.

face¹²⁴ — a thing of favor for the faithful, and disfavor for others. He had feet¹²⁵ like pillars of fire (as when Israel was led by a pillar of fire), suggesting he would lead the saints into new territory.

10:2 In his hand was the Book of Daniel. It was now opened, as was promised, because the events surrounding the Time of the End were the key for its revealment.

He symbolically placed his foot of favor on the sea and his foot of disfavor on the land, to show that the era had begun which would erode the control of the establishment so that favor would turn toward the masses.

10:3 His was a loud voice! (History rarely hears a message like the French Revolution!) His crying out was at the direction of Judah's Lion! And once the message of the Revolution spread and took hold, it was the catalyst for controversies¹²⁶ in every aspect of life.

10:4 I, like all who are the Lord's, had great interest in all of the controversies and their relationship to God's plan, and, I was, naturally, quite ready to express my opinions openly. But I was stopped! **I heard** in my mind the echo of the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles — we are aliens and strangers in this world, Ambassadors for the Kingdom. The Scriptures told me, "Don't get involved!"

10:5 And the angel, in order to draw my attention to his connection to Daniel 12, took a stance similar to that recorded in Daniel. He lifted his right hand toward heaven

10:6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever — Who created heaven and the things in it, the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it — and (while he said in Daniel that it would YET be three and a half times¹²⁷), he NOW said, "The time is up!"

10:7 "But" (the angel cautioned), "just because it is NOW the Time of the End, IT IS NOT THE END. There is yet an entire period remaining when the Seventh Angel will sound. And when he does, as he surely will, THEN the answers will come clearly. (That is why I said in Daniel 12, 'Blessed is he who WAITS and comes to the 1335 days'!)¹²⁸ THIS is what was preached to God's servants and prophets."

10:8 And the same voice of Scripture which had told me not to publish regarding the thunders, **I heard** again. This time it told me what to do instead. It said, "The Book of Daniel which you saw opened due to the favoring influences of the strong angel who is affecting sea and land — Go! Take it!"

¹²⁴ [10:1] **Face** symbolizes **favor or disfavor** — depending on direction.

¹²⁵ [10:1] **Feet** represent **control over something**.

¹²⁶ [10:3] **Seven** symbolizes **totality**. There may, however, actually be seven major areas of **controversy (thunder)**.

¹²⁷ [10:6] Thus, this prophecy brings us to **1799, The Time of the End**.

¹²⁸ [10:7] See Daniel 12:12.

- 10:9 So I, along with Bro. Miller and others of the Adventist Movement, saw in the events of the French Revolution and Time of the End a greater understanding of Daniel. And, just as Daniel 12 had predicted that this time would bring purging and purifying, that there would be bitter as well as sweet experiences,
- 10:10 I took the Book of Daniel, applied the lessons from the history of the Revolution, and began to digest this wonderful prophecy.

But, as was predicted, it had a wonderful taste of discovery; but it also provided the indigestion of imprudent eating. Many expectations of the Adventist Movement failed.

- 10:11 But one good thing came of it all. The angels and the pages of Daniel said to me (as a reminder again of the Seventh Trumpet to come), “You will have another opportunity to approach this wonderful prophecy of Daniel. You will understand it then clearly, and you will witness its import to all the hungry ears of the sea class — and even to rulers!”
- 11:1 The Adventist Movement did give us something of great value — a measuring standard, a chronology, a staff to guide the sheep. And the Lord¹²⁹ began to explain how the opening of Daniel gave us a whole new and timely assignment near the end of Philadelphia. He told us to spring into action — to re-measure or reconsider the plan of God.¹³⁰ (Having thrown off Papacy, it was virtually the time to reconsider Christianity.) He told us to measure the altar — to reconsider what constitutes acceptable sacrifice and consecration. He told us to measure the worshippers — virtually to examine ourselves in the light of all the new truth.
- 11:2 He was very particular about our not measuring the court. It was time to begin to realize that while the court looks religious in its appearance, it is not spiritual. We should not be concerned about what apostate Christianity was saying. The court is outside the temple building where the saints dwell. Those living in the court were Gentiles, not Jews.¹³¹ And it was given to them to appear religious in the past in order to persecute the saints for 42 months.¹³²
- 11:3 During that time of 1,260 years the Old and New Testament writings looked like someone dressed in mourning because their teaching authority was either suppressed or denied. (But the opening of the “Little Book” told us these days were over. Our new measuring standard changed our world!)
- 11:4 These wonderful Words of God are symbolized so many ways. There are two olive trees¹³³ because of the soothing effects of the oil. There are two lamp

¹²⁹ [11:1] That it is the Lord speaking in this passage is suggested by 11:3: “My witnesses.”

¹³⁰ [11:1] The **Temple** is a symbol of **God’s entire purpose for man and the Church**.

¹³¹ [11:2] **Gentiles** represent the **unconsecrated**.

¹³² [11:2] The **42 months** are the **1,260 years of Papal persecuting powers**.

¹³³ [11:4] The **olive** is the symbol of the **Holy Spirit**.

stands because they send forth light wherever they are — they serve the Lord of all the earth.

11:5 The power of God’s Words is legendary — even when they were “in mourning.” Whenever someone wanted to discredit God’s Two Witnesses, the power of truth issued forth with an answer so right that it would consume the error. There is no other way to slay the error of any who would challenge God other than with a “Thus saith the Lord.”

11:6 God’s Two Witnesses (Old and New Testaments) are much like Elijah and Moses who in some ways typified them:

- Somehow God arranged that much of the information — the life-giving rain about the spiritual calling — could be suppressed for the “three and a half years” of their prophesying in mourning (somewhat like Elijah).
- Somehow God arranged that the truths¹³⁴ contained in them could appear undrinkable — or even death-producing. These great truths could even be seen as plagues or used to plague society in any way God saw fit (somewhat like Moses).

11:7 Let me rehearse the history of how these Two Witnesses came out of their 42 months (1,260 years) of mourning:

The people in general really never had any power on their own.¹³⁵ But during the French Revolution, the people took over! And their governing authority (“The Republic”) actually legislated to OUTLAW THE SCRIPTURES! The Bible was DEAD in France!

11:8 The Two Witnesses were like bodies lying in the by-ways of what had been part of that great city called Babylon — but which were now outlawed in France. In one sense, it was good to see the city dead. It was as sensual and uncompassionate as Sodom; it was as barren and pagan as Egypt. What was worst of all was that Babylon kept “crucifying” Jesus in “the Mass”!

11:9 There were two reactions against the prohibition of the Two Witnesses:

- The people without deep roots in the old order kept quiet about it for the 3-1/2 years of prohibition; but they instinctively knew the value of the Old and New Testaments and refused to consider that they would truly be forgotten.
- Those who had roots in the old order — those who still maintained the attitude of power — were delighted to be rid of what they considered the shackles of religious superstition.

¹³⁴ [11:6] **Water** represents **truth**.

¹³⁵ [11:7] The **beast** here is **the body** of a beast later to be considered. The **body of the beast** is the **people**. The **abyss** represents the **powerless condition** in which the general population had existed for millennia.

The old religious system and the restraints of Scripture were torments to them.

They celebrated the banishment of these things — even to giving themselves the Cathedral of Notre Dame — renamed The Temple of Reason — as a present for their cleverness!

11:11 But all of this lasted only 3-1/2 years.¹³⁶ The ban was lifted. God arranged that LIFE came back for the Two Witnesses! And what life! Once they again stood with authority, they began spreading in influence as never before — causing great concern for many in all walks of life who were fearful of the spread of such influences.

11:12 In the religious world, there was a particularly loud voice encouraging the exaltation and spread of Scripture. It was Protestantism. It shouted that the Scriptures should be exalted as THE AUTHORITY in the religious world. Bible Societies sprang up. And the troubles¹³⁷ of the French Revolution era actually helped the exalting of the Holy Word. The enemies of the Bible saw it happening, and could not do a thing about it!

11:13 This all happened at that time¹³⁸ which we call the French Revolution. It was an immense social upheaval. And since France constituted a tenth of that “Great City” symbolically called Babylon, its fall was a prototype of what is yet to come.

In the days of Elijah (I Kings 19:18), 7,000 still worshipped God without Elijah’s awareness. But during the peak of this “Reign of Terror” in France, it is likely that no such true faith class existed. The rest of those “professing” faith were so terrified by the events of the Revolution that they returned to their worship of Papacy.¹³⁹

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11:14 That is the story of the Sixth Trumpet period. It was a mighty “woe” for the old order. It, plus the first “woe” — the Fifth Trumpet — had worked great damage to the apostasy. Now comes the third (and final) woe!

¹³⁶ [11:11] It was for 3-1/2 actual years that France outlawed the Bible and religion.

¹³⁷ [11:12] **Clouds** represent **troubles**.

¹³⁸ [11:13] **Hour** symbolizes a **period of certain characteristics**.

¹³⁹ [11:13] “**God of heaven**” in this book of symbols likely is not God, but the ruler god/ruler of the religious world, **the Pope**. France re-established its relationship with Papacy by a concordat.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET
Covering the Period from A.D. 1874 - ??
(Laodicea)
(Revelation 11:15-19)

Interpretive Reading:

11:15 Charles Taze Russell trumpeted — the Seventh and last of such trumpeting. And throughout the religious world, throngs of voices of the saints who heard and appreciated it responded loudly, echoing the long-awaited proclamation:

“The sovereignty of the world has now been placed directly in the hands and administration of God and His Anointed. And God’s reign will be eternal!”

11:16 There were wonderful reactions: The Old Testament prophecies — still the authorities by which to judge what was happening — concurred with the proclamation. They fell in worshipful gratitude to God that their prophecies were finally being fulfilled.

11:17 They said:

“O Lord God, The Almighty, Who art and Who wast, we give Thee thanks because Thou hast fulfilled Thy Word by us by assuming Thy great reigning power.”

11:18 The prophecies continued, being specific to list those things which this reign would bring:

“We prophesied how the nations would become enraged, how Thy special wrath would come. We saw how the time would come to judge the dead — to give reward to Thy bondservant prophets, to the saints, even to those who revere Thy Name, small and great. We saw that Thou wouldst destroy that old order which destroys society.”

11:19 And, perhaps the whole time of this Seventh Trumpet could best be summarized by saying that

- God’s plan was made clear to the spiritual class.
- The New Covenant arrangement was seen and understood — we could peer into the Most Holy!
- But, before the Covenant, there must come blinding flashes of increasing light, multitudinous “explanations” offered because of vast and important changes in society and

religion, controversies erupting from increasing light, upheavals in the social order, and the hard truths which will become an intolerable weight, beating away all remnants of the old order.
(What a “woe”!)

**THE FOURTH TRIP
THROUGH
THE GOSPEL AGE
(Revelation 12:1 — 13:1)**

**THE WOMAN,
THE DRAGON,
AND THE COUNTERFEIT MICHAEL**

A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 12

While Chapter 12 constitutes another “tour” through the Christian Age (from the First Advent until now), it does so a little differently than our previous “tours” through Churches, Seals, and Trumpets. Instead of “visiting” one-by-one the seven eras during the Christian or Gospel Age, Chapter 12 looks at the period by presenting a one-chapter stage play or motion picture.

This short play has only three characters in order to show us the three important forces during the age. These characters are (1) government — as represented by a dragon, (2) God’s covenant — as represented by a woman who has children, and (3) the one, undesirable, unique, evil child resulting from that covenant. His name is Michael, and he represents the OFFICE of the Pope.

The story line of this little motion picture is simple. Yet, in its simplicity, it perfectly symbolizes and encapsulates the very complex history of the last 2,000 years.

The script is as follows:

- 12:1-4 These verses introduce the players.
- 12:1, 2 We are first introduced to the Sarah Covenant. (See Galatians 4:21-28.) She is the “mother” of the spiritual arrangement we call Christianity. Unfortunately, she not only bears the true, promised seed, but she also fosters a “tare” or counterfeit seed as predicted by Jesus in Matthew 13:25. As the play opens, she is ready to give delivery to this apostate “Christ.” As Paul forewarned in II Thessalonians 2:7, “the mystery of iniquity doth already work” in his day.
- 12:3, 4 These verses introduce us to the second player, the government of Rome. They explain to us that Rome seduced ministers (“stars”) into being part of the panoply of Rome’s civil influences (“earth”). But Rome’s biggest masterpiece of a plan was to INCORPORATE Christianity (“devour her child”) as the state religion. Hence, to this very day, we have the ROMAN Catholic Church.
- 12:5, 6 These verses summarize the entire plot before the action begins.
- 12:5, 6 Papacy (the ROMAN church head) came into existence, totally ruled Christianity, as if he were God, and caused

the real work of God's covenant to operate behind the scenes (in the "wilderness") for over 1,200 years.

12:7 – 13:1 The rest of this chapter gives the more detailed explanation of how the above general plot progressed. These verses constitute the actual on-stage play.

Here are the details:

1. The Pagan Roman government for a while struggled to retain its own religious authority. But it had a constant struggle with emerging Christianity for dominance in religious affairs. (12:7)
2. But Rome's old pagan-governmental system gave way. It decided to give in and make Christianity the official religion of the realm, and the government was restricted to civil functions. (12:8, 9)
3. Once the Roman church was in full power, it made incredible claims. It said that IT was Christ's Kingdom on earth. (12:10, 11)
4. And the Papacy then used the civil power to enforce the church's desires. IT could do this because it could limit the rulership of kings who would not cooperate! (12:12)
5. So, the governments cooperated with this false religion and persecuted any deviation from Papacy's dictates. Thus the covenant had to operate for 1,260 years in relative secrecy. (12:13, 14)
6. Eventually, the "Dark Ages" gave way to the "Age of Enlightenment," and governments and institutions promoted scientific and philosophical "truth" in order to drown the "superstitions" of religion. That has been going on since the French Revolution until our very day. (12:15, 16)
7. But the government never relents (until the Kingdom comes) in its attempts to suppress the work of the covenant and its attempts to hold the common people down. (12:17 – 13:1)

THE WOMAN, THE DRAGON, & THE COUNTERFEIT MICHAEL (Revelation 12:1 — 13:1)

As we approach our fourth tour of the Gospel Age, it is again important to ask the reason for yet another sightseeing trip through the period. This will be the first tour which does not have seven stops. The purpose of this survey of history is to give us a sweeping view of the entire age to show us how the true Church has had to contend with the Roman Empire which would amalgamate with the apostate church. In short: The true Church, for the entire age, would experience opposition BOTH from civil power and from apostate ecclesiastical power.

As are the cases of the previous three tours of history and the fifth tour to be seen later, this fourth view begins at the Ephesus stage of the Church and continues through Laodicea.

Interpretive Reading:

- 12:1 A great evidence appeared in the religious world to indicate the change from the Jewish Age to the Gospel Age. The Grace Covenant¹⁴⁰ became active: the Church appeared! She was justified¹⁴¹ and authorized by the message Jesus had preached.¹⁴² She had a solid footing on the prophecies which God had provided throughout the previous age.¹⁴³ And her thoughts¹⁴⁴ and prospects of victory¹⁴⁵ came from the messages and encouragements of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.
- 12:2 This Sarah Covenant had the desire and purpose of bringing forth the True Seed. (See 12:17.) But early in the age she was already seen to be distressed in also bringing forth a counterfeit seed — an apostate church.
- 12:3 Another player in this great drama appeared. It was, in part, a religious player in that its emperor was the chief religious ruler. **Behold** its details carefully, because it will be a major factor throughout the age. It was GREAT — so sizeable that it considered itself UNIVERSAL. It was RED because its motivations and doctrines were less than pure. It was a DRAGON¹⁴⁶ because it

¹⁴⁰ [12:1] A **woman** represents a **covenant** which forwards the progress of the great covenant with Abraham.
Compare Galatians 4:21-31.

¹⁴¹ [12:1] **Clothing** represents **status**.

¹⁴² [12:1] The **Sun** represents the **Gospel light**.

¹⁴³ [12:1] The **Moon** represents the **Law and Prophets**.

¹⁴⁴ [12:1] The **Head** represents **thinking**.

¹⁴⁵ [12:1] The “**victory wreath**” represents the **benefits of faithfulness**.

¹⁴⁶ [12:3] Rome adopted the Red Dragon on its banners during Trajan’s reign. (A.D. 98-117)

was, above all else, a civil power. It was to have seven different HEADS or empire forms of governing.¹⁴⁷ (See Chapter 17.) It displayed the support of ten HORNS.¹⁴⁸ Its CROWNS of authority rested on its heads. It is known as Rome (and later as Holy Rome).

- 12:4 Constantine, the last¹⁴⁹ emperor ruling from that city, (who also was the last emperor of what we call Pagan Rome), called the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325. About one-third of Christian bishops attended. Constantine cleverly threw them out of their spiritual world into co-operation with him in the governance of Rome. (Rome became “Christian”!) Thus this “dragon” just waited and pretended to serve Christian interests so that he might absorb “Christianity” as part of the power of the empire.
- 12:5 And, as noted, the woman did have an apostate child — one who ultimately would usurp rule of all the nations with unbending and merciless authority. Its head was named Papacy, and he was exalted to speak as if he were God and had God’s judgment and authority.¹⁵⁰
- 12:6 The resulting problems for true Christians were enormous. The Grace Covenant’s true seed, the true Church, was forced to hide in a condition of mental separateness — a condition prepared by God so that she could find nourishment in spiritual things for the 1,260 years following Papacy’s exaltation.
- 12:7 As Pagan Rome was disappearing and “Christian” Rome was ascending, it caused great religious struggles. The false head of the false church, named Michael (“One Who as God”), in honor of the one whose power he was usurping, and those who cooperated with him, struggled for ascendancy over the great Roman civil power and the vestiges of its pagan influences. Rome and its constituencies fought back to retain as much of the religious influence as possible.
- 12:8 But Rome was not strong enough to maintain its hold on religious authority.
- 12:9 That giant civil monolith finally lost all religious authority. It had been so great as to have itself figuratively called “The great dragon, the old serpent, the devil, and Satan” (after its originator). It had deceived the whole habitable world with its invincibility! But now it was degraded to being only civil in authority, and all of its pagan supporters fell with it.

¹⁴⁷ [12:3] **Heads** (which represent **thinking**) in this case show that the empire would, over time, undergo seven changes in its approach to governing.

¹⁴⁸ [12:3] **Horns** represent **supporting governments or powers** — entities somewhat smaller in influence than heads.

¹⁴⁹ [12:4] **Tail** represents the **last part**.

¹⁵⁰ [12:5] By the A.D. 530’s, he held the title of Chief Religious Ruler (Pontifex Maximus) — held previously only by emperors.

- 12:10 **And I heard** then a most extraordinary boast in the religious world — right out of the lying and proud mouth¹⁵¹ of the new religious tyrant (Michael)! Here was his claim:
 “The Kingdom of our God and of His Christ has come — along with its opportunity for salvation and reigning power! Rome, who has accused and persecuted the saints day and night, has been vanquished!
- 12:11 “And how have the martyrs of the church won this victory? They did it because of the Mass and because of their faithful testimony in support of the Pope — and they did not mind dying for their values. We revere these saints of the ‘Universal Church’!
- 12:12 “THEREFORE, we utter this bull:
 If you are members of the Catholic Church you may rejoice! If you are merely members of society or of the discontents, you need to FEAR! We will use the devilish¹⁵² civil power to persecute you. He is very angry (having lost part of his authority), and he knows he can retain his civil power only as long as he serves us! His time is limited by our command!”
- 12:13 Once the civil authority realized that his only influence now was civil enforcement powers, he particularly enjoyed using those powers to persecute the Sarah Covenant’s true seed. She had given birth to Rome’s religious conquerors; the dragon could now pay her back!
- 12:14 Thus it can clearly be seen why the Lord needed to provide for the safe continuance of those of the Sarah Covenant. He gave her the wisdom from the Old and New Testaments in order that she could flee to the refuge of God’s Word to keep her sustained and separate. In that condition she was able to endure for the entire 1,260 years dating from Papal exaltation (A.D. 539) to the Time of the End (A.D. 1799), even though she had no favor from the old serpent.¹⁵³
- 12:15 Near the close of the 1,260 years, the personal devil’s spirit moved the new French civil power to do something calculated to rid itself of the woman! He poured out truths in drowning amounts in one big attempt to wipe away all vestiges of superstitious religion! The observing world even called it “The Age of Enlightenment.”

¹⁵¹ [12:10] Compare Daniel 7:8.

¹⁵² [12:12] **Devil** is **one of the four names** given **Civil Rome** in 12:9.

¹⁵³ [12:14] Note that **Dragon and Devil** (2 of the 4 **names of civil power**) have been used to this point. “**Serpent**” is now used to stress the **SUBTLE approach against the Church**: “Kill her with truth!” The French Revolution was a **CIVIL** tool against religion. No doubt the literal Satan was behind it; but, consistent with the symbolism of this chapter, it is **one face of CIVIL AUTHORITY (the serpent)** which tries to eradicate the Church — the subtlety of “The Age of Enlightenment.”

- 12:16 Strangely enough, though, society inadvertently helped the woman by absorbing the spirit of spreading truths — actually opening the way for the freedoms the woman desperately needed to survive!
- 12:17 Civil power, however, still never lost its hatred of the woman and the constraints she, by example, put in his way. So, ever since — and yet to the end — he will be an enemy of her offspring (the saints) who continue to be faithful to God's directions, and who are relentless in their testimony about what Jesus will accomplish.
- 13:1 Thus, to this day, the civil power treads on the sand-of-the-seashore class — suppressing the desires of the people for truth and for learning of the Kingdom.

**THE FIFTH TRIP
THROUGH
THE GOSPEL AGE**

(Revelation 13:1 — 14:5)

**TWO BEASTS,
AN IMAGE,
AND THE OVERCOMERS**

A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 13 (Revelation 13:1 – 14:5)

As with Chapter 12, this fifth view of the Christian age is given to us as a stage play or motion picture in order to summarize the age from a slightly different perspective.

We saw in the stage play of Chapter 12 how Roman government absorbed “Christianity” and the combination persecuted true Christianity. Chapter 13 has as its purpose, using another stage play, to show the difficult history and divisions in false Christianity, and the victory of the Sarah Covenant and her true seed.

This stage play makes references to the previous play. Thus we will see the old dragon again in 13:2, 4. And we will see the 1,260 years again in 13:5.

While this play is primarily about the old Roman church-state history which we saw in Chapter 12, it will also introduce other religious entities which challenged, but, in a sense, inadvertently worked to support the Roman church. But, most importantly, it will show us how the poor woman and her good children gain victory — something not shown in the stage play of Chapter 12.

Here is how the script for this play is written:

13:1-8 We are introduced to the first player. Act I of the play presents his whole history. It is a beast with 10 horns. It is the COMBINATION of the government and church which we met in the Chapter 12 play. (13:1, 2)

We find out in the first act of this play that this beast (because he is around so long!) has SEVEN different looks (“heads”) to it as time progresses. It has to change costumes often!

During one of its seven costume periods, it is almost destroyed by Protestant challenges. (13:3) But it miraculously survives and gets to persecute the saints for all 1,260 years without significant restraint. (13:5-8)

That is the end of the first act of this play.

13:9,10 The screenwriter wants us to understand a moral lesson from what we have just witnessed. So, in verses 9 and 10 he gives that moral lesson — a condemnatory lesson based on how the 10-horned beast acted. The lesson:

“What you sow ye shall reap” —
but, we’ll have to WAIT a while to see that happen! (13:9, 10)

13:11-17 These verses are Act II of the play. They are here to let us know what Chapter 12 didn’t tell us: Other actors come on the scene. The old Roman church doesn’t always have exclusive rights to persecute during the age! So, we have the emergence of a second “beast” — also a church-

state cooperation. It is the Church of England and Ireland (the Anglican Church). And the King of England (another “dragon”) is its head or spokesman. (13:11)

Then we see its history also. It functions contemporaneously with and very much like the first beast, but in its own next-door realm. (13:12-14)

Once the 2-horned beast has played its part, Act II introduces a third player. It is said in the world that “imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” That is the basis of the next part of this play. Since the world saw TWO SUCCESSFUL attempts by religions to amalgamate with governments in order to control their peoples, the world said to itself, “Let’s make some more copies of the same sort of arrangement!” (13:14)

Thus, the success, in Act II, of the English Church was a STIMULUS to many of the emerging Protestant denominations to be an IMAGE to whatever degree possible of the old concept of “God and Country.” It is with us to this day! And these images do what the original two beasts did. They, one way or another, say, YOU cannot teach people what YOU think about God unless you have our approval! You must either think like us (“foreheads”), or you must do like us (“hand”). (13: 14-17)

13:18 That is the end of Act II of the play. BUT, just in case we want to BE SURE who this 10-horned beast is, who was the model for everything in this play, the screenwriter gives us a puzzle to identify the character in history. If you’ve “got his number,” you know who he is! (13:18)

14:1-5 This play, however, doesn’t end here. It extends through 14:5. This is Act III. We have Act III here to show us what eventually becomes of the children of the Sarah Covenant we met in the play of Chapter 12. These children, Christ and his true Church, end up REIGNING in the Kingdom (“Mount Sion”). (14:1)
So all of the efforts to persecute them turned out to be futile!

We then see that it all results in beautiful music especially written to reward those who had been persecuted. (14:2, 3)

What they did during the age is summarized for us. (14:4, 5)

They never “swallowed” the messages of the denominations (“women”).

They remained aloof from apostate earthly leaders.

Being “virgins,” they were constantly faithful to their one and only head and prospective bridegroom: Christ. Jesus BOUGHT them, and they become the FIRST RESULTS of the Divine Plan for salvation.

Their message throughout the age was based on SCRIPTURE, not creeds, and thus was without fault.

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TWO BEASTS, AN IMAGE, AND THE OVERCOMERS (Revelation 13:1 – 14:5)

This is the fifth and final tour of Gospel Age history. Its purpose is to give us a perspective which we might have missed during our previous four trips. The purpose of this historical scenario is:

1. to view the relationship between the two major “beasts” of the age;
2. to view the emergence and influence of Protestantism;
3. to review the connection of churches with civil powers;
4. to see how the overcoming saints will always live above the influences and threats of the apostates.

We have encountered the symbolism of “BEAST” before this point only in Revelation Chapter 11. We can see immediately by comparing 13:1 to 12:3 that there is some sort of connection between “beast” and “dragon.” They are NOT THE SAME, but they ARE RELATED.

The symbolism of DRAGON particularly emphasizes the civil-power nature of the creature. BEAST, on the other hand, is used to symbolize a corporate entity which is very complex. Its BODY represents the people over which it has influence. As with the dragon, its HEADS represent governing philosophies which change over time; and its HORNS represent the powers which support those heads. The CROWNS represent the governing authority.

This might seem confusing. It might seem that the distinctions between dragon and beast are insignificant. However, the Lord chose to make distinctions to help us learn subtle things about history.

When we considered Chapter 12, we were faced with a constant CONTRAST between apostate church and the state. Thus IT WAS INCONVENIENT to have church represented in the dragon! But now, in Chapter 13, we are looking at ANOTHER REALITY. Once Christianity conquered the old Roman Dragon, church and state actually AMALGAMATED. The Lord needed a new symbol to represent this amalgamation. He chose BEAST.

We will see later (Chapter 17) that the Lord wishes to show yet another viewpoint — a viewpoint which has the apostate church’s long-term interference in state matters result in its own destruction. In that chapter, to accomplish that viewpoint, he will show the apostate church SEPARATED from the beast and symbolized by a HARLOT.

In short: A beast represents a group of people and their rulers (usually with the involvement of religion). It never is a flattering corporation!

Interpretive Reading:

13:1 And I saw one final view of Gospel Age history. Arising out of the sea of discontent as Pagan Rome ended, **I saw** a new governmental arrangement which included the apostate church. Over the span of the age, it had seven governing arrangements, or heads. In support of these over-all empire arrangements (nominally known as the Holy Roman Empire), I saw the complete European political fabric — ten horns. It was upon them that I saw crowns.¹⁵⁴ The heads were remarkable in that they accepted the intervention of the Papacy in their rulership — a characteristic which God calls blasphemy!

13:2 I couldn't help but notice that this was the fourth beast of Daniel 7 — and it incorporated the characteristics of the three previous beasts. Like Greece's LEOPARD, it was camouflaged and claimed to be the seat of learning. Like Medo-Persia's BEAR, its size and power allowed it to walk all over Europe. And like Babylon's LION, it had an enormous mouth that roared.

There is, however, no way that it could have prevailed except that the civil power (by absorbing Christianity) actually allowed it its influence, its judgment authority, and even the right to poke its nose where it really did not belong.

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13:3 (Let's look at the history and characteristics of this beast before I tell you about another beast which I saw.)

The most notable historical event for the beast was when **I saw** that its third head (The Holy Roman Empire)¹⁵⁵ was fatally injured by the Reformation. But this did not kill the beast! It simply was reorganized after the Peace of Westphalia with a fourth head.¹⁵⁶ The whole world was impressed by its resiliency.

13:4 And mankind, ever since, has had the attitude of worshipping “God and Country” — all because the civil power clearly favored religion by incorporating it, and because it was manifest that the arrangement was invincible! “Who is like the beast? Who can challenge him?”

¹⁵⁴ [13:1] Compare 12:3 where the crowns are on the heads. There, in the view of the “Dragon,” the larger political entity (the empire) was in control. But in this picture, the Beast likes to let the smaller units (horns) think that they have authority. It was much easier for the beast (church and state) to handle political influences in this way.

¹⁵⁵ [13:3] See notes on Chapter 17 for identification of the heads.

¹⁵⁶ [13:3] The empire retained its old name, Holy Roman Empire. But it was so politically changed that it symbolically is pictured with a new head.

- 13:5 This beast was favored by having a mouth which never hesitated to issue arrogant proclamations — even positions which clearly made God look bad. Yet God allowed him the usurpation for a period of forty-two symbolic months (from A.D. 539 to 1799).
- 13:6 And he fully took advantage of his “authority” during that time to target the reputations of
- God’s character,
 - God’s plan of redemption, and
 - the true saints who preached that plan.
- 13:7 He was allowed not only to fight the influence of the saints, but to be successful in suppressing them. And his authority gave him the power to dominate the masses — to keep them in darkness, subjected to his every whim.
- 13:8 Those in places of authority and influence, those who were personally profited by this arrangement, were thrilled with their advantages. They worshipped the system! But, please understand, despite their calling themselves “Christians,” they were totally unacknowledged by God. They had never been written into the book of True Christians whose faith was in the slain Lamb.
- 13:9 There is an important lesson here — a word of caution and advice during these “forty-two months”:
- 13:10 If a person finds himself sympathizing with slavery to any extent, he will later find himself enslaved. If a person misuses Scripture to harm or control others, he will later find himself a victim of the same harm. These have been the tools of the beast. The true saints will endure, but not submit to these things. Their faith will be their stability throughout the rule of this beast. And the lessons of this verse will come back to haunt the apostasy!

- 13:11 **And I saw** another church-state empire, another beast. But this one emerged from the existing apostate-Christian world. Unlike the ten-horned beast which came out of the sea, this beast, the church-state Empire of Great Britain, only had two horns — its support coming from England and Ireland — two horns which were notably more docile in nature than their European counterparts. This beast had another peculiarity: its proclamations primarily were from the civil ruler, the king, as he was considered also the head of the church.
- 13:12 In his own realm, this beast was no different from the ten-horned beast; he exercised all of the same powers and deceptions — and he had no fear of doing this right in front of and in challenge to the first beast. Consequently, he was very much an encouragement to European society and to those who profited from that society, to continue in their worship of the first beast after its wound was healed. (The two-horned beast, you see, came on the scene at just about

the same time that the first beast recovered from the fatal wound to its third head.)

13:13 This Anglican beast (just like the Roman beast) claimed and exercised the sole power of judgment — telling, right in the faces of men, that he could enforce heaven’s decrees against people.

13:14 And he got away with it! Those who had connections to and reliance on the things of this earth actually believed the bogus signs and manifestations of spiritual authority.

This all had another effect. You see, once the Anglican beast mimicked the Roman beast right to its face and got away with it, it suggested, by example, that establishing any copy of the Roman beast was a valid thing to do. Consequently, many with earthly minds did that very thing. Protestantism was strengthened¹⁵⁷ in a bad way.

13:15 Thus, the Anglican beast was able to validate a copy or image of previous spiritual harlotry! Protestantism came alive — and for the remainder of the age would utilize what life it had (or could get) to make its own illicit proclamations from time to time — even including the pronouncing as spiritually dead any who do not worship its teachings!

13:16 Protestantism, like the beasts which preceded it, lives with the absurd conviction that it can mark men as faithful or damned depending on their support¹⁵⁸ or their convictions.¹⁵⁹

13:17 This image has banished, and will continue to banish, from spiritual exchange any who do not have its mark of approval. In essence, this “mark” is having the characteristics of the beast or approving of its workings.¹⁶⁰

13:18 Let me give to you a little piece of interpretive wisdom so that you can understand what I mean by the beast’s number (or workings). If you understand about this whole apostate history we have been examining, you can CALCULATE by a code how the beast works. Here is the information you need:

¹⁵⁷ [13:14] Compare 3:9. It is important to note a distinction here. The rise of Protestantism accomplished things both good and bad. It was good in that religious liberty began to flourish so that the true saints were “helped with a little help” (Daniel 11:34); but it was bad in that, when they could, new denominations copied the old beast’s desire to influence or even to dominate the state. As Daniel 11:34 states, they “cleaved to them with flatteries.” The image of Revelation 13:14 and 15 clearly refers to the bad results; but the prophecy of Revelation 3:9 shows the PRINCIPLE shown here: the old beasts HAD TO ACKNOWLEDGE the existence (if not the validity) of the new attempts to mimic what they themselves had done.

¹⁵⁸ [13:16] **Right-hand** represents **favorable actions and support**.

¹⁵⁹ [13:16] **Forehead** represents the **total spiritual identity of an individual**.

¹⁶⁰ [13:17] **Number** is a symbol akin to the modern expression, “I’ve got his number” — meaning that **we know what to expect of a person**. We can calculate what he will do or say because we understand how he works. Thus having “the number of his name” means that we appreciate or condone the workings of the beast.

The MAN OF SIN (II Thessalonians 2:3) is another name for a part of the Roman beast. And this Man of Sin has a hidden code number on him which symbolizes how he functions.

- That MAN OF SIN is the Papacy who displays a Latin title for his position. It is VICARIVS FILII DEI, which translated is “The Vicarious Son of God.” This means that he places himself between God and Christians.
- This title EXPLAINS what all Christians throughout the age have needed to notice and avoid: Anyone who places a man or an institution between you and God is suspect. That is the meaning of his title or name.
- The code number for this apostasy is 666. Add the Roman numerals in VICARIVS FILII DEI. You will have calculated or computed the identity. You’ve “got his number”!

Avoid all religion that places anyone or anything between you and your God. That is the “number of his name.”

14:1 **And I looked** after having seen the whole age thus summarized; and, **behold**, I saw the glorious results which would come out of all this apostasy and deception:

I saw the Lamb in control of the spiritual kingdom, Mount Sunshine!¹⁶¹ And he was not alone. With him were 144,000 whose spiritual identities¹⁶² had the same characteristics¹⁶³ as the Lamb and the Heavenly Father. (They had overcome the beasts and image.)

14:2 **And I heard** a message from this new heaven. It was the voice of the 144,000, and it manifested itself in three parts — representing the whole history of this group:

1. They had the “voice of many waters” because their origin was the sea class of humanity.¹⁶⁴
2. They also had a voice of “loud thunder” because their first responsibility before peace is the thunderous destruction of the old order.¹⁶⁵
3. Then they will make music,¹⁶⁶ harmonizing for everyone all that God has ever taught.

¹⁶¹ [14:1] **Zion’s** etymology is “sunny.”

¹⁶² [14:1] **Forehead** symbolizes **total spiritual identity**.

¹⁶³ [14:1] **Name** symbolizes **character or characteristics**.

¹⁶⁴ [14:2] See 5:9.

¹⁶⁵ [14:2] See 2:26, 27; Psalm 77:18; Jeremiah 25:30, 31.

¹⁶⁶ [14:2] See Isaiah 14:7; Psalm 30:5, margin.

- 14:3 They had a song they were singing — a song which was very personal, a song which no others could ever learn unless they were part of that 144,000 who had been purchased to be new creatures. And they sang it before the throne — placing themselves in service to the Most High even as their Master had done.¹⁶⁷ They sang it in gratitude and reverence to God's Attributes; they sang it in praise of the prophecies which sustained them and were fulfilled in them.
- 14:4 These 144,000 are those who, during this whole Gospel Age intrigue which we have reviewed, never were defiled by the apostate churches; they kept themselves spiritually separate — uninvolved with the religious-political harlotry. Instead, they followed the Lamb, his teachings and precepts, regardless of where it might lead them. They were purchased by the Lamb from among men — and they maintained that separateness from men. Now they are the first of salvation's fruitage — a gift to God and to the Lamb.
- 14:5 Because of their reliance on God's Word, their collective testimony throughout the age has been truth. Their lives and the courses of their lives have been justified by God.¹⁶⁸ (I report this in contrast to the beasts and image and their adherents.)

¹⁶⁷ [14:3] ONLY HERE do we ever see the Church **BEFORE THE THRONE** — a position of servitude. They are, of course, IN THE THRONE (Revelation 3:21); but the Revelator here wishes us to know that their attitude of service to God never ends — even as Jesus wears the girdle of servitude after his glorification. (1:13)

¹⁶⁸ [14:5] See Hebrews 9:14; Romans 8:33.

**REVELATION,
PART II**

**FIVE VIEWS OF THE
HARVEST**

(Revelation 14:6 – 19:21)

REVELATION, PART II

FIVE VIEWS OF THE HARVEST (Revelation 14:6 – 19:21)

We have concluded our five sightseeing journeys through the entire Gospel Age. During those journeys we have had glimpses of the Harvest since the Seventh Church, Seal, and Trumpet are all in the Harvest period. But now the Lord will lead us with great detail through five sightseeing tours of the Harvest as an isolated period of history. This seems very appropriate since Jesus, in the Wheat and Tares parable, made it clear that the time of Harvest was, indeed, very unique and special.

On the following page is a chart which summarizes our five tours. Each gives us a unique perspective of the period. Each begins as the Harvest opens (A.D. 1874) and concludes with the total destruction of Babylon (though not always by that name).

Revelation

PART II, SUMMARIZED

Five Views of the Harvest

Picture No.	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 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 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 the Divine Plan revealed in 1874 (19:14) Sleeping Saints glorified in 1878	(19:20) Beast and False Prophet thrown alive into Lake of Fire

**HARVEST TOUR NUMBER ONE
(Revelation 14:6-20)**

**THE HARVEST WORK
and its
Relationship to the
Decline and Fall of Babylon**

HARVEST TOUR NUMBER ONE **(Revelation 14:6-20)**

THE HARVEST WORK and its Relationship to the Decline and Fall of Babylon.

Immediately it becomes obvious that this tour of the Harvest begins in the middle of a chapter. Chapter and verse divisions are modern (14th Century), and unless translators understood God's plan (which they did not), there is no way that they could always choose the divisions of the text accurately.

This view of the Harvest is divided into two large parts. We will deal with three "angels" in verses 6-13. Then the Lord Jesus will appear in verse 14 — dividing the chapter, and giving us a second view of the period we had just visited. Then we will deal with three more "angels." Jesus is the centerpiece.

The first half of this tour deals with the Harvest MESSAGE itself and its effect on Babylon and on the saints.

The second half deals with the Harvest WORK and its two objectives: The gathering of the Wheat, and the burning of the Tares (in that order).

Interpretive Reading:

14:6 **And I saw** then how the Gospel Age Harvest would unfold:

A PREACHING ANGEL¹⁶⁹ spread his message throughout the religious world, showing no partiality in its distribution.¹⁷⁰ It was the eternal Gospel (the good message of the Abrahamic Covenant) sent forth as a final witness — not only to the more receptive sea class, but even among those with strong roots in the old order. (Compare 10:11.)

¹⁶⁹ [14:6] This "angel" can certainly be identified with the **teaching work of C.T. Russell**. However, the Revelator seems to want to stress three parts of the harvesting message: (1) spreading it; (2) having it point in judgment against Babylon; and (3) having it separate the saints. Hence, **these angels** are best seen as **inanimate parts of something** rather than as sentient beings.

¹⁷⁰ [14:6] "**Midheaven**" demonstrates its **equal distribution**. All of Christianity is judged in the Harvest. The message which stimulates that judgment must be heard everywhere.

14:7 It was not a quiet witness! Its distribution made it heard around the globe! The epitome of its contents was:

“It is time to revere God instead of the creeds of our own making. It is the time to give glory to Him instead of to the imaginations of our own minds because the Harvest is the very time that He will put to judgment what Christianity has taught and done. Worship Him Who created heaven, earth, sea, and the freshwater sources. Don’t worship the CREATED; worship the CREATOR. Lack of doing this has caused all of the problem to date.”

14:8 Accompanying the PREACHING ANGEL, there was another angel — a CONDEMNING ANGEL. He was second because Guilt follows Exposition. Once we had heard the eternal Gospel, no conclusion was possible other than that which the second angel proclaimed:

“Fallen, Fallen¹⁷¹ from favor is Babylon¹⁷² the Great. You who are spiritual must now recognize her as that religious entity which mixed church with state, blurring the identity of the spiritual versus the profane, and causing the painful anger among nations.”

14:9 And another angel, a third one, accompanied the first two. He is the WARNING ANGEL. If, indeed, we’ve seen the eternal Gospel, AND we’ve seen that most of churchianity has been apostate, it is only logical that this brings us a RESPONSIBILITY — “Get out!” This, indeed, was this angel’s blaring message:

“If anyone continues now to worship the church-state beast or its Protestant copy; if anyone is willing to be marked with their character-likeness — or even to be co-operative with them,

14:10 then that person will experience the sense-dulling, perception-blocking, error-locking, stupor-producing anger which God intends, unmixed with mercy, to pour on Babylon. Those who thus continue in their affiliations will suffer the torments of seeing their belief structures burned and their arguments poisoned. And all of this will happen as the true saints and the returned Lord watch.

14:11 “And the evidences of the torments upon those remaining in Babylon will continue until the age ends — and even be a witness for eternity. These will have no rest in their mental and emotional struggles whether they are awake or trying to

¹⁷¹ [14:8] The fact that there are **TWO “fallens”** — not three — shows that this is a **REJECTION** rather than a **DESTRUCTION**. We see the latter at the END of the chapter. A **three-fold statement** (such as “Holy, Holy, Holy”) proclaims **totality**. Thus the angel in REJECTING Babylon does not **DISMISS** it from the Christian experience. It is alive and active until the Church’s completion.

¹⁷² [14:8] This is the first mention of “Babylon” in Revelation. This verse’s commentary helps to identify it for the reader.

sleep! The situation will only progress from bad to worse for those who continue in their obeisance to beast or image — or to any whose characters have the mark of the beast's character.”

14:12 This, throughout the Harvest, must be the long-term patience of the saints who are faithful to God's Word, and who keep their faith in what the returned Jesus is doing. (It will seem like a long wait!)

14:13 But there WILL BE a compensating benefit because **I heard** a pronouncement from heaven itself with these reassuring words:

“John, publish this comforting message: ‘Those saints who finish their earthly lives at and since the date of Babylon's fall from favor, will, according to what the Holy Spirit has taught (I Thessalonians 4:15, 16; I Corinthians 15:51, 52), rest from their struggles in the flesh, but immediately begin their work with the Lord as spirit beings.’”

14:14 **And I looked** to see what more I could learn about the Harvest message and work. And, **behold**, I saw an entirely new scenario showing what was behind the spread of truth and what its results would be. I saw trouble, represented as a cloud. But the cloud was white — showing that this was righteous trouble! Controlling the cloud of trouble was Jesus — the one whose ministry began as a man, but now was exalted with the Divinely-appointed wreath of victory and authority on his head — demonstrating also that his thoughts and plans were directed by God. And in his hand was the harvesting tool, the sickle of truth sharp enough to make clean cuts.

14:15 The angel of CHRONOLOGY stepped forth out of God's plan. It had a voice so loud that it would dominate the Harvest message. It spoke directly to him who controlled the trouble and said:

“Put your sickle to work!
The TIME OF HARVEST has arrived,
and the wheat is ripe.”

14:16 And, thus, having received the command from God's own time-clock, he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle throughout Christian society until all of the wheat was reaped.

14:17 But, apparently, there was more to be done once the reaping was finished. Another angel, a part of God's plan, still was left in the religious world. (We know it as THE GREAT MULTITUDE.) It also was supplied with a sharp sickle. But it was not yet using it.

14:18 At this point I saw another messenger; it was the glorified Church — the Church who now had been granted power over destructive judgments. This angel, who

had been, symbolically, an offering on the altar, was now come out from the altar; the sacrificing was complete.

With a loud, unmistakable, message, the Church called down to the Great Multitude holding the sharp sickle, and gave it these directions:

“Use your sickle on the ‘Vine of the Earth’ — Christendom — and gather her ‘grapes of wrath.’ Her iniquity is full; her fruitage is ripe for the gathering.”

14:19 And the Great Multitude responded, swinging its sickle into the existing religious apostasy. It gathered the ripe fruitage and forcibly threw it into the final trouble of the age — the great winepress of God’s anger.

14:20 And in the contemporaneous trouble in Israel — well outside the boundaries of Babylon — God had Jesus trample out the life of Babylon. All pretense of spiritual life was gone — even the ability to control any direction of doctrinal standards.¹⁷³

Babylon had finally been fatally wounded. By the measure of the Christian “race course,” her total testing, (usually measured by the number 40),¹⁷⁴ proved her a total failure. The testing was squared to 1,600; and by all measures she was doomed to lose her life.

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**“Mine eyes have seen the glory
of the Harvest of the Lord;
He has trampled out the vintage
where the Grapes of Wrath are stored.”**

¹⁷³ [14:20] Compare also Zechariah 14:20, margin.

¹⁷⁴ [14:20] The Biblically symbolic number which represents a full period of testing is 40. **Babylon**, however, is the **antitype of Israel**. And, like Israel’s Jubilee antitype which was calculated by squaring, Babylon’s antitypical testing also is symbolized by 40 squared = 1,600. The “furlong” is from the word “stadii” — stadium or racecourse.

HARVEST TOUR NUMBER TWO
(Revelation 15:1 — 16:21)

HISTORICAL EVENTS
Which Weaken the Apostasy
Throughout the Harvest:

“THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES”

HARVEST TOUR NUMBER TWO (Revelation 15:1 — 16:21)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES, AND THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

When we toured the Gospel Age Churches, Seals, and Trumpets, each series of seven was preceded by an introduction. This is, once again, the case. Chapter 15 will introduce us to the Seven Last Plagues; Chapter 16 will take us through the Harvest period tour of the Plagues themselves.

As with each of the Harvest Tours, the story of the Plagues (including their introduction) begins as the Harvest opens, and continues to the end of the Harvest.

The tour of the Harvest which we have just concluded showed us the Message and Work of the Harvest. Why do we need a second tour? Just as we needed five tours through the Gospel Age in order to get a sufficient perspective, we also need five tours through the Harvest (a very complex time) to help us keep our equilibrium in perhaps the most confusing time in history. And HISTORY is the point of this tour. The plaguings are, indeed, historical events which have filled the Twentieth Century and are now continuing into the Twenty-First Century. The visible line-up of these historical events is perhaps the single most valuable tool to saints in answering the questions, “Where are we in time? How much is left? What should we yet expect?”

Enjoy this tour! It will be a thrilling roller-coaster ride through the highlights of the near past, the present, and the near future!

INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAGUES (Revelation 15:1-8)

Understanding the Introduction to the Plagues is made much easier if we see the layout of Chapter 15.

Note first that verses 2-4 are set apart by John's traditional section marker: "**And I saw...**" Verses 2-4 comment on the activities of the risen saints. In 14:13 we saw that the saints are raised in order to "work" with the Lord; but no explanation heretofore has been given about what they are doing. Here, however, the placement of comments about them and about their song suggests strongly that they are to participate in the act of plaguing Babylon.

Thus, 15:1 introduces the plaguing angels; 15:5 then continues to show their relationship to God's plan. Then, in 6:1, the plaguing begins — all under Jesus' direction, but administered by the "Seven Angels" with the cooperation of the risen saints.

Interpretive Reading:

15:1 **And I saw** another vision in heaven about how the Harvest was to progress: The vision was GREAT because it was about God's final wrath! It was MARVELOUS because it would progress with very few even knowing what was happening!

I saw Seven Angels — the same seven I had seen blow the trumpets — but now they were in glory. They had Seven Plagues — seven messages which, once forced on the earth, would completely end God's anger! Thus they are called the LAST plagues.

15:2 Now, before I learned any more about these angels, I saw something else. **I saw** that laver of mirror-like water that I had seen as the age opened. (4:6) During the age it had supplied the calming, peace-giving, cleansing truths that allowed us to approach God. But now, in the Harvest, it was shot through with fire. Truths would now become instruments of destructive judgment.

I also saw those who were given "power over fire." (14:18) They were the risen saints who in their lifetimes had been victors over the influences of the Beast and the Image (Chapter 13) and over the trademark functional character (13:18) of the Beast.

These risen saints controlled this body of judgment truths; but they also had in their hands harps, the harmonized plan of God. Thus destruction was to be good!

- 15:3 They were singing about what the plagues would accomplish:
- They were singing the JUDGMENT SONG of Moses (Deuteronomy 32), the bondservant of God who epitomized all of the Old Testament prophecies.
 - They were singing the BLESSING SONG of the Lamb who epitomized all the work of the New Testament toward the establishment of the New Covenant blessings.

Their song included these sentiments:

“Great and Marvelous (15:1) are Thy works
(these plagues), O Lord God, The Almighty.
Righteous and True are Thy ways,
Thou King of the peoples of earth.
Who is there who will not come to revere Thee,
O Lord, and to glorify Thy Name?
Thou alone art holy; and by the revealing of Thy righteous acts,
all the nations will come and worship before Thee.”

Thus, the risen saints confidently and happily await the work of the plagues!

- 15:5 After seeing the Seven Angels and the risen saints, **I looked** to see how this all would function, and I viewed, in brief, the whole Harvest summarized:

The Harvest opened by having the MOST HOLY of the Tabernacle of the Covenant opened in the religious world. What I mean, of course, without the symbolism, is that the true saints were able finally to comprehend the antitypical significance of the whole Tabernacle type. They could now look into the Most Holy — understand its intent, comprehend the whole New Covenant concept.

- 15:6 Then, once the Harvest had accomplished these blessed teachings, I saw the Seven Angels having the Seven Plagues come out of the Most Holy condition — no longer men, but Divine beings! Their righteousness and success in the Narrow Way was symbolized in their clothing: clean, bright linen of righteousness, and, just like I saw Jesus (1:13), girdled with the spirit of service around their hearts — Divine, golden service!
- 15:7 And one of God’s attributes (I believe it was Power) gave to the Seven Angels seven Divinely-appointed bowls — delivery vehicles, historic events which would deliver the plaguing truths which the angels already possessed. These events were full of God’s anger. But though He lives forever and ever, His wrath will not continue beyond these events!

15:8 And, even though we had been able to look into and understand the Most Holy, it was filled with smoke,¹⁷⁵ as had been the case at the dedication of Solomon's Temple.¹⁷⁵ God's Glory had been manifested by bringing the sleeping saints into glory — an incredible manifestation of His Power! But, as much as the desire of all was to have access to the New Covenant's functioning — for the smoke to clear once the Church would be complete — it was plain that no one could enter the New Covenant arrangement until the Seven Plagues were completed by the hands of the Seven Angels.

¹⁷⁵ [15:8] The bringing of the Ark into the Most Holy (I Kings 8:6, 10, 11) represents the bringing of saints into their spiritual reward (1878). The "Glory of God" (via Jesus) in the earth is said to date from the same time. (Revelation 18:1, 2) Other texts harmonize with this viewpoint. Solomon says that God said He would dwell in the darkness. Solomon was quoting the 97th Psalm — the only source in Solomon's day of this information. The Psalm's content interprets the smoky darkness as the general time of trouble.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

(Revelation 16:1-21)

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES (Revelation 16:1-21)

This series of historic events is designed specifically so that apostate Christianity (and, to some degree, the rest of the world) will have its foundations pulled out from under it. God did not design to put the old age to rest with one act. Even these Seven Plagues are the end of a series of earlier events meant to expose, consume, and destroy all that has been done, unauthorized, in His Name. The 1799 “Time of the End,” in one sense, could be thought of as the beginning of the downfall. We could, however, start even earlier — when the First Woe (8:13), the Fifth Trumpet, began to blow. While there, indeed, will be one final cataclysm (the Seventh Plague), it is vital to an understanding of prophecy that we acknowledge that God has determined that all will learn best if the lessons are served in pieces.

These Plagues begin when the “Times of the Gentiles” end (1914). [See Luke 21:24.] The forty years before this were devoted to the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet — the Third Woe. (11:14, 15) One of that Trumpet’s messages was to GET OUT before the Plagues begin. (18:4; 14:10) The Lord allowed forty years to take that action.

Keep in mind three ingredients for these Plagues:

1. The Plagues, themselves, are not new. They are the same messages, directed at the same groups, as were delivered by the Trumpets. (A comparison will show the parallelisms: The first Trumpet and Plague are on the EARTH; the second on the SEA, etc.)
2. The Bowls (or Vials) are new. They are a new means of delivery — something significantly more potent than the mere blast of a trumpet!
3. The Wrath (which is said to be in the bowls) is an added feature. The messages are truths; but truths are not usually characterized as ANGER.

What this is telling us is that THIS DISTRIBUTION of truth is not for the same purpose as the distribution during the age. Here, TRUTH IS DESIGNED TO HARM. We have two precedents for this already:

- a) The laver of 4:6 is RE-USED in 15:2 for a destructive purpose.
- b) The censer of coals of 8:3 was to augment the prayers of saints. But in 8:5, it, too, changes into an instrument of destruction. Likewise, now, in Chapter 16. The blessed Trumpets of the age have become Plagues.

The fact that the plaguing angels are, indeed, the glorified Seven Angels of the Seven Churches and Seven Trumpets will be made clear once we approach Chapter 17.

Interpretive Reading:

16:1 **And I heard** the dynamically loud notice directly from God’s plan — the proclamation of the end of the “Gentile Times” — that said to the Seven Plaguing Angels:

“It is time! Go forth into the established order of things and pour out the seven historical events which will function to let society know of God’s wrath.”

16:2 And the First Angel in order to do so was the glorified Apostle Paul. He poured out World War I on the very geographical center of Christianity’s establishment — Europe’s church-state empires. This most-established of governing dynasties developed a running sore — an incurable cancer: the inability to maintain any more a lasting and stable form of governing. This cancer was aimed specifically at the home of those who had for centuries worshipped or were marked by beast and image.¹⁷⁶

16:3 Then, in quick succession (1917), the Second Angel, the glorified Apostle John, initiated the Bolshevik Revolution — aimed directly at the restless masses who had been downtrodden all through the age. It taught the lesson well. (Not only had we seen the inability of kings to rule well, but here we were to see the inability of the people to do so.) The people, demonstrating the inability of dead men to rule, divided into two factions: one part of them remained fluid and restless; the other part formed little “clots” — groups that organized to accomplish their own selfish ends. Interestingly, the whole event virtually interrupted Christianity in Russia.

16:4 A little time passed (1931), and then the Third Angel, the glorified Brother Arius, arranged for the new “Jehovah’s Witnesses” organization to be let loose on Christendom. And efficient they were! (What other group had ever tried to knock on every door in the world?) They had just enough truth to raise doubts! They attacked the old reservoirs of Christendom; they attacked the sources of Christian “orthodoxy.” Their basic message? — “You are drinking blood; your doctrines don’t produce life.”

16:5 **And I heard** a little editorial comment on this plague from Brother Arius — a very appropriate reaction from this “Angel” who spoke originally to the Church called “Earthly Elevation”¹⁷⁷ [Pergamos]. He said:

“Righteous art Thou Who art
and Who wast, O Holy One,
because You have judged these
poisoned water sources!

¹⁷⁶ [16:2] For a refresher on the identities of these characters, review Chapter 13.

¹⁷⁷ [16:5] Compare 2:12-16 and 8:10, 11.

16:6 “They have poured out the life-blood, the vitalizing spirit and teachings, of the saints and the prophets with casual abandon! But now, YOU have made THEM drink blood! They truly deserve this embarrassing challenge!”

16:7 **And I heard** also an agreeing thankfulness coming from the altar (because true saints were still sacrificing and were pleased to hear open challenges to apostasy’s errors). Their words:

“Yes! O Lord God Almighty!
Your judgments in the land
are true and righteous!”

16:8 Peter Waldo, the Fourth Angel now glorified, had the honor of sparking World War II. Its effect was to be a plague on the Gospel — to take it out of the mouths of its detractors: to show that their interpretations of it could not answer the vital timely questions. So, Waldo was allowed to burn men’s faith in the Gospel via the Holocaust and the burning radiation of the atomic bomb.

16:9 And men DID find their faith burned — substituting “God is dead” theories and Existentialism as well as a reluctance even to talk about religion. Their answers in ignorance spoke ill of God and His character — all questioning why, if He exists, would He allow such plagues!

But even this was not enough for them to change course, to seek Him out and give Him any glory.

16:10 Then, in the late 1950’s John Wycliffe, the glorified Fifth Angel, was empowered to pour out his bowl against the religious judgment authority of what we have known as the ten-horned or Roman beast.

Wycliffe instituted the Vatican II Council, and it did, indeed, function to undermine Papacy. His whole realm was plunged into confusing and contradictory darkness. When Catholicism converted their services to vernacular languages, it only enhanced the confusion and questioning, adding to their pain.

16:11 Even the Pope¹⁷⁸ had constituents speaking of him disrespectfully, and priests and nuns abandoned their posts because of the mental anguish and the running sores — the inability to stabilize the church hierarchy. Strangely, this was yet not enough for them to turn away from their old way of doing things. They remained Catholic!

¹⁷⁸ [16:11] “**God of heaven**” here is most likely a symbol for the **ruler of the Roman religious world — the Pope.**

16:12 Then came the Sixth Angel, Martin Luther. Even as the Sixth Seal and Trumpet were multifaceted and complex, so was the bowl poured by the glorified Brother Luther. It was an event spread over many years. We call it the “information explosion.” And even as Luther, as the Sixth Angel, had directed his message to the people, so also he directed this plaguing event. He poured it on that great flowing body of humanity which had for so long supported Babylon and its institutions: the great River Euphrates.¹⁷⁹ The result was that the people’s support for all the parts of the old Babylonish order began to and continued to dry up. This was necessary. The new government, the Church, the Kingdom of the Rising Sun of Righteousness, could not well take over until the world felt totally ill at ease with its own old order.

16:13 **And I saw** a reaction. The civil powers, the Roman Beast, and the False Prophet, a rather vitalized form of the old Image (13:14, 15),¹⁸⁰ were frightened by the continuing withdrawal of the people’s support. Consequently, they issued three unholy teachings jointly — in a rather boastful, croaking manner — in order to re-establish their influences.

16:14 Their teachings were unusually effective because they were instigated by the fallen angels working through these powers. Consequently, they were able to empower their positions with signs that seemed to give them legitimacy. This whole cooperative effort went well beyond Christendom — to the ruling forces of the whole earth. This was good. It was being utilized by God to bring them all into a condition just right for the final cataclysmic events planned by God, The Almighty.

16:15 This Sixth Plague development would be the final testing for separation of Church and Great Multitude. Therefore, Jesus interrupted the narrative:

“**Behold!** Remember that I taught that I am coming like a thief. Don’t let current signs and deceptions make you think otherwise! Stay awake! Keep your justification in order lest you walk about and make it obvious to your Christian brethren that your clothing is inadequate! Blessed are you if you heed this timely warning.”

16:16 And the demonic teachings were successful in gathering the whole world into the condition called “Mount of Destruction” — the destruction of Satan’s age-old kingdom.¹⁸¹ In Hebrew, the condition¹⁸² is called ARMAGEDDON. That it is named in Hebrew is an indication that its instigation will occur in Israel (“outside the City” — see 14:20).

¹⁷⁹ [16:12] It is interesting to note that Euphrates means “Good and Abounding.” Not only did Luther have faith in the people, but God does also. While their actions will not be truly good until the Kingdom, they do well serve God’s purposes in the transition to a new age.

¹⁸⁰ [16:13] Compare False Prophet carefully with 19:20. The strong implication is that the false prophet is an active cooperation of Anglican beast and Protestantism.

¹⁸¹ [16:16] A **mountain** is symbolic of a **kingdom**.

¹⁸² [16:16] **Place** is a symbol for **condition**.

16:17 Thus it was now time for the Seventh Angel, the glorified Charles Russell, to pour out the last, the seventh, bowl. And, seeing who were the real instigators of the Sixth Plague deceptions, it is only appropriate that he poured his bowl on the powers of evil spiritual control¹⁸³ — the fallen angels. Their deceptions were to be exposed.

Then it seemed like everything happened!

First, there was an unmistakable proclamation out of God's plan — directly from the One Who has the authority of judgment. It said:

“It is done!”

The sin offering was complete! The 144,000 all were chosen!

16:18 Thus, there was no longer need for delay.¹⁸⁴ The final collapse was triggered. There were suddenly blinding exposures of truths on all levels; there were futile excuses and explanations for these exposés, but they only resulted in more deafening controversies — and it all erupted into violence. Thus came the greatest revolutionary upheaval of all time.¹⁸⁵ Never in the history of mankind was there such an overturn of everything — I cannot overstate its might!

16:19 The Babylonish coalition of Civil, Roman Beast, and Protestant powers fell apart. There was now nothing to unify them. National polities even crumbled!¹⁸⁶ And God took one look at Babylon the Great, and she drank the final dregs of His anger for one ghastly demise!

16:20 The devastation was incredible! The republics, the kingdoms — they all evaporated.

16:21 And there appeared one great, over-riding lesson sent down from heaven upon those who had illegitimately professed Christianity. The hard,¹⁸⁷ huge truths concerning the value of the individual¹⁸⁸ (which had largely been ignored by the apostasy) were severely impressed by way of this plague. The tare class did not get the point at this time — they would later, when they looked back. Instead, they only heaped more infamy against God because of their sufferings. They had lost their faith and their world! The tares were burned, and they did not know what was coming.

¹⁸³ [16:17] Ephesians 2:2.

¹⁸⁴ [16:18] Compare 7:1-4.

¹⁸⁵ [16:18] Compare Ezekiel 38:19, 20; Matthew 24:21, 22.

¹⁸⁶ [16:19] Compare Ezekiel 38:21-23.

¹⁸⁷ [16:21] **Hailstones (frozen water)** represent **truths presented in a painful way**.

Their weight is significant. (See next footnote.)

¹⁸⁸ [16:21] “**A talent in size**” seems to represent **the value of a man**. See I Kings 20:39.

**HARVEST TOUR NUMBER THREE
(Revelation 17:1-18)**

**POLITICAL AND SOCIAL EVENTS
Which Destroy Babylon**

HARVEST TOUR NUMBER THREE (Revelation 17:1-18)

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL EVENTS WHICH DESTROY BABYLON

Our third sightseeing journey through the Harvest is primarily for the purpose of seeing the part which governments and people will have in the destruction of the apostate church which, throughout Gospel Age history, has dominated the rulers and the people of the Roman, 10-horned beast.

This chapter has an inseparable connection to Chapters 12 and 13. All three chapters deal with the same entities; but all three chapters symbolize them slightly differently in order to give us differing perspectives. Chapter 12 gave us the seven-headed, ten-horned DRAGON so that we could focus on how Christianity grew by dominating the civil power. In short, Chapter 12 says that civil power absorbed “Christianity” for political strength, but found, in the end, that “Christianity” (the apostate Michael) took over and subjugated the civil power.

Chapter 13, on the other hand, deals with how the church-state system which developed in Chapter 12 suppressed the true Church. Thus, Chapter 13 amalgamates civil and religious powers into a beast → then into two beasts → then into two beasts and a rising tide of Protestantism.

Now, in Chapter 17, the Lord wishes to SEPARATE the identity of the religious part of the ten-horned beast so that He can show how the other parts of the beast will destroy the religious part. Hence, we will have the same beast, but with its apostate church part shown separately as a harlot who rides the beast.

There is in Chapter 17 a factor which is both thrilling and instructive — a factor which throws light on much of Revelation. This chapter opens (17:1) with “One of the Seven Angels who had the seven bowls.” It is by tracing the identity of this individual that we learn the identities of all seven of the plaguing angels. It is also by tracing the identity of this individual that Chapters 17-22 have much of their meaning revealed.

This “Angel” TEACHES John beginning in 17:1. We can follow his continuing to do so until his last words in 22:11. The careful student will want to list all of the points which this Angel teaches to the John class. This will unmistakably reveal his identity as the Seventh Messenger to the Church, Charles Taze Russell. Once this has been conclusively proven, we then know (by authority of 17:1) that one of the plague-pourers is the glorified C.T.R. This, by deduction, identifies that the other plague-pourers are the other six stars in Jesus’ right hand.

Interpretive Reading:

17:1 Brother Russell (one of those who would become the seven glorified angels who were given the plagues bowls) came and spoke with me to instruct me. He said,

“If you are willing to come to me, humble enough to receive the due truths through a man, I will show to you what the Lord has revealed about the final judgment of that great church-state harlot who controls so many peoples —

17:2 that unfaithful “church” with whom earth’s rulers and powerful ones have been in league, and who have been inebriated by the benefits to themselves from this collusion.”

17:3 I wanted to learn from him. So, he carried my mind back to review the 1,260 years when the true Church had to exist in a wilderness condition. (12:6, 14)

And I saw, as he taught, things I never before understood. He taught me HOW to compare Scripture to history. Therefore, I could see the history of the Gospel Age beast clearly:

There was an unfaithful “woman,” an apostate church. And she was sitting in control of a scarlet beast — a sinful amalgamation of religion, state, and society.¹⁸⁹ This beast appropriated all kinds of names for itself (Christ’s Kingdom; a “HOLY” Empire; Christendom; etc.) — names which blasphemed God’s good Name.

This beast had, during the age, seven successive and distinct heads — governing units for the empire. And those heads had the support of (nominally) ten nations — the political ruling fabric of Europe.

¹⁸⁹ [17:3] Note that in 17:1 she sits on waters. Here she sits on the beast.
The “waters” are the **peoples who constitute the BODY of this beast.**

The seven heads likely are these:

1. Justinian's Rome (which made the Pope "Pontifex Maximus" — Chief Religious Ruler).
2. Charlemagne's Empire (which is first to allow Papacy to crown the emperor).
3. The "Holy Roman Empire" (founded by Otto the Great in A.D. 962, and which does not change until A.D. 1648). It was this head which was slain (13:3) by the Reformation.
4. The newer "Holy Roman Empire" (which is a new function, under Leopold I, in an old name following the Peace of Westphalia in A.D. 1648. Its last emperor abdicated in A.D. 1806).
5. Napoleonic France (when Papal power is re-instituted by concordat — but with the emperor crowning himself!)
6. The Victor Emanuel Dynasty (when the beast has shrunken to its smallest size).
7. The Nazi-Fascist Empire (Hitler's reign which was to "last a thousand years").

(Because there were no ten horns until the fall of Western Rome in the days of Justinian, the first opportunity for the woman to sit on a beast with ten horns was in Justinian's day.)

17:4 The "woman" who dominated this whole order of things appropriated to herself the royal power and dignity of a monarch — dressing herself in regal purple and scarlet, and adorning herself with the gold and jewels of worldliness. She usurped the Divine cup meant for the symbolization of the sin offering and filled it with all of the filthy doctrines of her illicit relationships.

17:5 And at the very core of her "spiritual" identity was engraved her true name (which was kept a secret, a mystery, from all that worked with her). What a name! ----

"BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
and of
THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

What an identity it reveals —

Great Confusion — Not only a harlot herself, but instigator of the same trait in others! And the one who gave birth to society's aberrations and disgusting defects by example, promotion, and sanctioning!

17:6 **And I saw**, I understood, the whole counterfeit! I saw the Roman Church inebriated with the power she had to kill both the influences and bodies of saints — those who were the true witnesses of Jesus. And as I contemplated with great wonder how the whole world could be so deceived for so long, I was astounded!

17:7 But Brother Russell had more to teach. He said to me:

“If you think her apostate history is a marvelous thing, just wait! I have much more important things to tell you. I want to tell you hidden things about her and about the whole politico-social system that kept her going — the beast with seven empire heads and ten supporting powers. I want to explain her JUDGMENT. (17:1)

17:8 “Let me explain the sequence of things, looking at them now — in the time of my earthly ministry as the Seventh Angel.

“John, if you remember the BEAST OF THE ABYSS (11:7) at the time of the French Revolution, we can start our prophetic look with it. You recall that it was the BODY of the ten-horned beast, the people of France, who rose up in revolution. If you look around you now, you can see that that beast (the people without a head!) IS NOT. However, the time is coming during this Harvest when it WILL, indeed, again come up out of its powerless condition (or abyss) — this time to be destroyed forever. In other words, the people as a revolutionary force will be a thing never again to be seen.

“When this body of the beast again asserts itself, it will be a great shock to those who now rely on their vested interests in the current order of things — those who yet call themselves “Christians,” but who have never been written yet in the book of life because they are tares. You can imagine their horror at the appearance of that force which they thought was long gone, isn't here now, but suddenly is present with them, face to face!

- 17:9 “Apply now the wisdom which comes from the understanding of symbols you have learned:
- “The seven forms of government on this beast are seven empire phases — and the apostate church controls, dominates, or is the sole religious factor in all of them.
- 17:10 “These heads are so characterized by their initial leaders or kings, that we tend frequently to call each head by the name of its king (— Napoleonic France, for example).
- “The first five of these empire-phases are gone. The Victor Emanuel head is currently in existence. One more (Hitler’s Reich) is yet to come — but he will remain only a little while.
- 17:11 “The BODY of the beast (the revolutionary people) which rose up in France, is not currently active. But, since it comes back AFTER THE LAST HEAD, we have to reckon with it — sort of like an eighth thing to contend with. It is NOT an eighth head! But, as you have seen, it was an important part of the history of the seven heads which we have seen. But he, like they, will go into destruction.
- 17:12 “Now, let’s deal with the political powers (the ten horns) which you saw. They, in my day, are without any unifying kingdom. (The sixth head has only one supporting horn — Italy!) But when the PEOPLE’S BEAST re-appears, these ten horns will receive a kingly authority with it for one peculiar moment in history! — that ‘one hour’ which will stun the world!¹⁹⁰
- 17:13 “These horns will have a unified purpose, and this will make them use their power and authority as virtual gifts to the People’s Beast.
- 17:14 “Together, horns and beast will war against the Lamb to frustrate the in-coming Kingdom. But they will lose the battle. The Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and those working with him are the Called, the Chosen,

¹⁹⁰ [17:12] Compare 8:1.

and the Faithful.” (They all will be glorified; thus, this happens during the last plague.)

17:15 Brother Russell had a few more details to teach. He said:

“The waters which you saw (17:1), which were dominated by the harlot church, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues — the sea class of humanity, the body of the beast, the eventual ‘People’s Beast.’

17:16

“And the ten horns (or lesser governments) which you saw will, **ALONG WITH** the People’s Beast, come to **HATE** the harlot church. They will **DESOLATE** her — make her without forum for expression. They will make her **NAKED** — expose her for what she is. They will **EAT HER FLESH** — consume her polity. And they will **CONSUME HER WITH FIRE** — totally eliminate her!

17:17

“And they will do this as a result of God’s putting into their hearts an idea which will accomplish His ends! Thus these horns will give their kingdom authority over to the People’s Beast until all that God has spoken is fulfilled.

17:18

“And, let the identity be clear:
The harlot church which you saw is that great religious capital, Babylon, the Roman Catholic Church, which usurps authority over the civil powers of the ‘Christian’ world.”

**HARVEST TOUR NUMBER FOUR
(Revelation 18:1 – 19:10)**

**THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
which result from
The Decline and Fall of Babylon
(with Subsequent Rejoicing!)**

HARVEST TOUR NUMBER FOUR (Revelation 18:1 — 19:10)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS which result from The Decline and Fall of Babylon (with Subsequent Rejoicing!)

We have thus far seen three views of the Harvest: One showed us the message and work; another showed us historic events; the third showed us how political and social forces will destroy Babylon. Our next journey is to view the economic forces of the Harvest and their effects on (1) the world's leaders, (2) the capitalists, and (3) the business world and its laborers.

This fourth view of the Harvest is unique in one pleasant respect. It closes by showing us the universal rejoicing which will follow Babylon's final collapse. This is obscured by the chapter division; but a careful consideration will show that this tour extends through 19:10 — giving a very satisfying end to this sightseeing tour, and making the rest of Chapter 19 more easy to interpret.

Interpretive Reading:

- 18:1 Once I had been instructed about the harlot, **I saw** another scenario. I saw Jesus¹⁹¹ returning to earth at his 1874 thief-like second advent. He was vested with great authority. And, even though they were ignorant of the source, all of society was aware that great illumination on virtually every topic was surrounding them suddenly.¹⁹²
- 18:2 Jesus had a very special message to deliver, and he utilized the mighty voices of science, philosophy, thoughtful theologians, and honest questioners (as well as of prophecy) to announce in 1878 ¹⁹³ the inescapable conclusion and verdict:
“Babylon the Great is fallen, fallen from favor. She has become inhabited by demons and their lies! She holds prisoner all who hold untenable teachings and those who prey on others like scavenger birds! They cannot find their ideals elsewhere!
- 18:3 “She became this way because all the peoples became inebriated by the selfish advantages they gained by imbibing her teachings,

¹⁹¹ [18:1] Jesus **here** is called an “angel” rather than the Lamb because he serves as an angel — a **deliverer of messages** to us, not as returned Lord for the world.

¹⁹² [18:1] Compare Psalm 97:4.

¹⁹³ [18:2] Compare Revelation 14:8.

passionate with worldliness. And not only the peoples, but even the rulers and the capitalistic¹⁹⁴ princes of society have luxuriated due to her love and encouragement of sensuality!”

18:4 **And I heard** another voice in the religious world. It was again Charles Russell,¹⁹⁵ announcing in harmony with, and by authority of Jesus’ proclamation:

“Jesus is telling us to ‘Come out of Babylon, My people!’ Don’t stay in her to participate in her fatal sins! Come out so that, when her plagues do come, you will not be recipient of their faith-shaking objectives.

18:5 “Her sins have been so cumulatively great that they figuratively knock at the door of heaven; God can no longer look without responding! He has kept a running record of her iniquities.”

18:6 As he continued, it seemed his words were BOTH a prayer to God and an exhortation to the saints:

“The time has come for repayment.¹⁹⁶ What she had done, let it be doubled to her according to her deeds: (She paid out death; she will, as an institution, get second death. She could not destroy the faith of saints, but saints WILL destroy the faith of Babylonians. She mixed a cup to hurt; we will carry out a witness that will slay the faith of tares. In a few Harvest years, we, by grace, will more than double what she has sent over the centuries!) Mix twice as much for her!

18:7 “As she has spared no expense to exalt herself and her comforts, Let us also spare no effort to spread the message which will undermine her centuries-old esteem.

“To this day (Brother Russell’s day) she still claims to be married to the state — her protectorate; and she considers it her eternal right! She never expects to be a mourning widow!

18:8 “Because of this pride, that one special and peculiar day will come, known as the day of her plagues. The year 1914 will mark the DEATH of the old order. It will be followed by the MOURNING as she suffers the resulting losses.¹⁹⁷ Then she will begin to feel the pangs of FAMINE¹⁹⁸ (as the Euphrates turns aside). Then, and finally, she will be consumed in the raging FIRE of anarchy.¹⁹⁹ The Lord God Who judges her is strong!

¹⁹⁴ [18:3] It is worthy of note that capitalism was a product of Renaissance Italian “enlightenment.”

¹⁹⁵ [18:4] It seems no coincidence that the contents of Volume 4 of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES parallels the remarks of this angel. There is NO INDICATION that Brother Russell was aware that Volume 4 was, indeed, a running commentary on Revelation 18!

¹⁹⁶ [18:6] Compare 6:10.

¹⁹⁷ [18:8] Regarding MOURNING, compare 14:10, 11; 18:10, 11, 15, 19.

¹⁹⁸ [18:8] Compare 16:12.

¹⁹⁹ [18:8] Compare 17:16.

Beginning at this point, the Angel notes a series of groups and how they react to the “slow burn” of Babylon since 1914.

18:9 “THE WORLD’S LEADERS — those who had been ‘in bed’ with Babylon and who had consequently lived sensuously — will have somewhat of an emotional reaction, crying and lamenting when, beginning in 1914, they see the evidences of her smoldering destruction — the dissolution of the old order of church and state.

18:10 “They will keep their distance because they fear sharing in her torments. They express TWO²⁰⁰ “woes” — because they know it is not over yet. And they lament, ‘That Great, strong city (we respect strong!), Babylon. In one short memorable moment YOUR²⁰¹ judgment has come!’

* * * * *

18:11 “And, also, THE CAPITALISTS of society react. They weep, and they remember and long for their past productive relationship. Their more selfish perspective is that Communism and such things have cut into their profits —

18:12 “And what profits! They have such worldwide, unrestricted markets in such things as gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linens, cloth of rich purple and silk and scarlet. There is citron wood, ivory, other costly woods, copper, iron, and marble.

18:13 “Additionally, there is cinnamon and other spices; there is incense, perfume, and frankincense. There is wine and oil, fine flour and wheat. There are cattle and sheep and horses and chariots. There are even slaves and human lives! There is nothing too sacred for their greed; and the change of the religio-political order has threatened them. Yet they address Babylon:

18:14 “ ‘And YOUR²⁰² luxurious fruitage of the past has departed from you; and all you remember that was splendid and excessive has passed out of your control! People no longer seek you out to find these advantages!’

²⁰⁰ [18:10] Compare 18:2 and 8:13.

²⁰¹ [18:10] They address her as “Your” — They still speak with each other, but at a distance! This also demonstrates that she still is present.

²⁰² [18:14] **Capitalism** also still speaks with Babylon at a distance — but not regarding judgment. Moral issues are inconsequential to capitalism. Capitalists want excessive luxuries. Again, this demonstrates that Babylon is yet present.

18:15 “The traders in these markets who became wealthy by their affiliation with Babylon will also (as did the rulers) stand at a distance, weeping and mourning — mostly from the fear that her diminishing might mean their own! But note how the lament of this class differs from that of the rulers: (Compare 8:10.)

18:16 “ ‘Woe, Woe! Such a GREAT city; she was so regally wealthy — so impressively dressed and adorned; (capitalism admires great wealth!)

18:17 “ ‘Yet, all of a sudden such long-term wealth and influence has been hollowed out!’ ”

* * * * *

18:17 And Brother Russell continued in his review of the effects of the diminishing of Babylon on various classes:

“Every major businessman,²⁰³ every investor,²⁰⁴ every small business owner,²⁰⁵ and every laborer²⁰⁶ also kept a distance, but did not address Babylon directly. They, unlike the mightier ones, have never had an ‘inside track.’

18:18 “But they do cry out as they see the evidences of the dissolution of what had been a stable and predictable life style. They felt ill at ease now, and uncertain. They questioned:

‘Is there anything that can replace this great city?
Is there something that can re-establish reliability?’

18:19 “In the traditional sign of mourning over loss,²⁰⁷ they threw dust on their heads; they, too, had weeping and mourning, and joined in the double ‘woe’:²⁰⁸

‘Woe, Woe! That great city by which our employers had such steady and flourishing business! In this one peculiar hour of history she has been hollowed out!’ ”

* * * * *

²⁰³ [18:17] **Shipmasters** are below capitalists, but they do **control their own units of commerce**.

²⁰⁴ [18:17] **Passengers** in a ship are like **stockholders** in a business. They are going along for the ride.

²⁰⁵ [18:17] **Sailors**, who maneuver the ships, are like **small businessmen** who keep the larger corporations afloat by distributing the corporations’ products.

²⁰⁶ [18:17] “**As many as make their living by the sea**” represent the **vast multitudes of common laborers** who do all the work that keeps things going.

²⁰⁷ [18:19] Compare Joshua 7:6; Job 2:12; Lamentations 2:10.

²⁰⁸ [18:19] In all three groups, no one has yet given up on a future. “Woe, woe, woe,” would mean, “That’s all she wrote!” But the double “woe,” like the double “fallen,” shows that while Babylon is greatly weakened, she is yet around to talk to, and hidden hopes still live that the old order will yet somehow have some sort of miraculous recovery.

18:20 Now Brother Russell turns to the saints:

“Be joyful and happy, O ye who are the Lord’s — even all of you saints, Apostles, and prophets. You have waited for this day for centuries! And now God has pronounced His judgment against her FOR YOU!”

18:21 Then,²⁰⁹ once this slow burning had progressed through the Harvest, that strong “angel”²¹⁰ named Armageddon picked up Babylon (which claimed to have been built on that “stone,” Peter!). Babylon had become a gigantic millstone, turning out poisoned grist for the whole age. And the angel hurled it down into the raging masses of discontented, disappointed, discouraged, and disgusted mankind.²¹¹

And the angel said:

“Thus, WITH VIOLENCE, will Babylon, that great city, be hurled down — and THEN she will never be seen again.”

18:22 And he addressed Babylon, before its demise, saying,

“And all of the things you used to do to some degree will never again be in you:

NO harpists — those who try to make harmony of the Word;
NO musicians — those who witness, singing about the message;
NO flutists²¹² — those who inspired us to dance in response to the message — (our character teachers);
NO trumpeters — dispensational truth proclaimers;
NO craftsmen — teachers, those who assemble ideas;
NO mill — the preparation place of food.

18:23 “Likewise missing will be: The light of a lamp — Scriptural truths to enlighten our walk; the voice of the Bridegroom — the message of the Kingdom; the voice of the Bride — the message of joint-heirship of the Kingdom.

“And WHY will you no longer have any remnant whatsoever of these things? It is because you SOLD OUT to the great men of worldly power and repute. You became commercial. You drugged the population by deceiving them.”

18:24 Once her fall was complete, people probed her ruins and found the horrors of the past:

²⁰⁹ [18:21] John returns as narrator at this point.

²¹⁰ [18:21] This is the third and final “strong angel” in Revelation. In 5:2 and 10:1 we witnessed the others. Each is a major trouble which changes history.

²¹¹ [18:21] This is the “People’s Beast” of 17:16 which will devour the harlot.

²¹² [18:22] Compare Luke 7:32.

In her was found the murders of the bodies and reputations of prophets, saints, and all who were banished from approved society.

* * * * *

- 19:1 After I witnessed the plunge of Babylon into the sea, **I heard** the reactions. There was a great proclamation from the multitude of the heavenly hosts:
“Praise Yahweh! Salvation, glory, and power — they all are rightly the possession of our God
- 19:2 because He has accomplished what He promised regarding Babylon. His judgments are true and righteous; He has judged to destruction that great harlot who was corrupting society with her worldly and illicit entanglements. He has avenged on her the lives of His bond-servants.”
- 19:3 And a second round of praise went out — this time looking to the future:
“Praise God! The permission and remembrance of her evil will benefit all forever and ever!”
- 19:4 The fulfilled prophecies of the Hebrew Bible, and all the qualities which make God great, now all were seen as living testaments to God and His righteous authority of judgment. Their fulfillments worshipped Him with a constant
“Amen! Thus it is! Praise God!”
- 19:5 And Jesus’ voice came from the throne. He had begun Mediation! The first step was enunciated:
“Give praise to our God — all of you who will now wish to serve Him, you who now revere Him²¹³ regardless of your station in life.”
- 19:6 **And I heard** a response from the earth to Jesus’ first command. It came from all three groups left inhabiting the earth:
1. The great many who had been known as “those who dwell on the earth” — now ready to plant roots in the new earth —
 2. The many waters, the sea class of humanity, who had been known as “every tribe, tongue, people, and nation” —
 3. And the faithful Ancient Worthies²¹⁴ whose lives had been living controversies —
- All three classes responded:
“Praise God! The Lord God Almighty reigns. We have been liberated!
- 19:7 “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. We have a new government!

²¹³ [19:5] See Proverbs 1:7.

²¹⁴ [19:6] Those of Hebrews 11.

19:8 “We recognize her worthiness; she is rightly clothed in fine, bright, clean linen, for it represents her righteous acts.”

* * * * *

19:9 And the Seventh Angel²¹⁵ said to me:
“Publish this extra doctrine which seems to have been lost sight of: ‘Blessed are those of that Great Multitude class who are special guests of the Lamb’s wedding supper — the Millennial Age feast on high!’ ”²¹⁶

And he further said to me, knowing of the likely skepticism of some:
“This message is truth. Seek it out in Scripture, and God’s Words will confirm the whole matter.”²¹⁷

19:10 And I was so overwhelmed by the Lord’s grace in sending me the teachings of this Seventh Angel, that I fell at his feet to worship him! But, appropriately, he was immediate to caution me:

“DO NOT, under any circumstances, do that! You KNOW that I am merely a fellow servant with you and with all your brethren who hold fast to telling about Jesus. The testimony of HIM in our lives and teachings — THIS is the true spirit and point of all prophecy.”

²¹⁵ [19:9] The “he” of this verse has no antecedent since 18:4; therefore, it seems certain that this is yet the voice of C.T. Russell teaching the John class. This connection between 18:4 and 19:9 is strong corroboration that the first ten verses of Chapter 19 belong to the narrative of Chapter 18. It also is an important fact that C.T.R. is the first since Apostolic days to teach the doctrine of The Great Company (Multitude) Class.

²¹⁶ [19:9] Just as the slaying of the Passover Lamb typified the deliverance of the Church, and the Passover Feast typified the Gospel Age of applying the benefits (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8); thus, also, the Marriage Feast is a picture of applying the benefits given to the earth as a result of the marriage. The Great Company is privileged to be a part of that spiritual world which will aid in the distribution of these benefits for the entire Mediatorial Reign.

²¹⁷ [19:9] See Chapter 7.

**HARVEST TOUR NUMBER FIVE
(Revelation 19:11-21)**

**THE SPIRITUAL VIEW
of the Harvest**

THE FIFTH TOUR THROUGH THE HARVEST (Revelation 19:11-21)

THE SPIRITUAL VIEW of the HARVEST

We have come to the fifth and final tour through the Harvest period. This view shows us how the Saints view the progress of the Harvest. It is an important tour. It will include, as did Chapter 14, an insight into the part which the Great Company (Multitude) class plays in the scheme of things. It will also set the stage for the Millennial Age considerations of Chapter 20.

There is an important factor here to keep in mind. When we studied Chapter 16, we saw the collaboration of Beast, Dragon, and False Prophet. (16:13) Chapter 19 will dispose of two of these three entities before the Mediation begins. The third entity, the Dragon, is treated in Chapter 20.

Interpretive Reading:

19:11 **And I saw** one final view of the Harvest period. Heaven opened: My understanding of spiritual things became clearer than ever due to the Harvest message of the 1870's and following. **Behold**, for the first time since Ephesus there was a WHITE HORSE — pure, clean doctrine! Riding it, controlling it, was my Lord, Jesus. (See 3:14.) He had a two-part assignment, both parts fulfilling righteousness. (1) For forty years he conducted a judgment period for the old order — an OPPORTUNITY for reform. (2) Then, because there was no response, he began to wage war in 1914.

19:12 His far-seeing wisdom allowed perfect judgmental destruction. As his crusade progressed, he accumulated the crowns which others had worn. And he had a deep character glory written in his being which only he and his Father knew.²¹⁸

19:13 And his bloody clothing represented his commission — he had a “commission to exterminate”!²¹⁹ And those who understand are able to call him by his true identifying name: The Logos of God — the one who pronounces all that God has to say.

²¹⁸ [19:12] Compare 2:17.

²¹⁹ [19:13] Eugene Burns' phrase.

19:14 As the Harvest begins, he has armies — one in the literal heaven, the other in the religious sphere of earth. Both are clothed in righteousness as is he — fine, white, clean linen. And these, like him, finally have white horses to ride!

19:15 The Biblical message comes from his mouth — no longer tainted by the apostasy. And with the truths of God’s Word he will strike down the false imaginations of the peoples; and then he will shepherd them with the Shepherd’s rod that, for their good, will be unbending. And the remnants of Babylon he will eliminate, treading the life from it in the fierceness which ends the wrath of The Almighty God.

19:16 His name is KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. It is written on the robe which represents his office, and on his thigh²²⁰ — on his very person to show him as heir of the Abrahamic Promise.

* * * * *

19:17 **And I saw** an additional elaboration of detail regarding the treading of the winepress.

Once the Church was gone, there was yet the Great Multitude²²¹ standing in the light of the Gospel. And once its silence²²² had ended, it shouted loudly to those who had become the discontents in Babylon:

“Come together! It is time for you to devour.²²³ God has prepared a feast to satisfy your discontent.

19:18 “You may eat her muscle so that she may not have ability to function —

- the ability of kings to rule will disappear;
- the ability of leaders to command authority will be gone;
- the ability to claim power will be past;
- the ability of doctrines to sway men will be gone;
- those who controlled teachings will have no influence by their ‘isms’ and agendas;
- the claims of all who called themselves Christians (the tares) will be burned;
- those who chose their religions or were merely born into them will alike be disabled;
- those who had little or much to say, or to work with, will find no ability to function.”

* * * * *

²²⁰ [19:16] Compare Genesis 24:2, 9 and 47:29.

²²¹ [19:17] Compare 14:17.

²²² [19:17] See 8:1.

²²³ [19:17] Compare 17:16 and Ezekiel 39:4, 17-20. The Ezekiel text deals with Gog; the Revelation 19:17, 18, with Babylon. Apparently one event will stimulate and be contemporaneous with the other. The fall of Babylon is inseparably linked to Israel — “outside the city.” (Revelation 14:20)

19:19 **And I saw** the battle and fate of the old order come to its crashing end.

The Papal remnant of the old Roman beast, in collusion with the mighty of the old order and all who supported them, decided to ward off the influences of him who sat on the white horse and of his now-completed-in-heaven army.²²⁴

19:20 But the Beast was seized, as was the False Prophet²²⁵ — the one which formerly worked deceptive signs in the face of the Beast, and who had, thereby, deceived those with the Beast characteristics and who supported the Image. These two, still functioning, were cast into the lake of destruction which destroys by having truth poison error.

19:21 And the others, who knowingly or unknowingly supported their folly, had their aspirations to retain the old order destroyed by the continuing revelations of truths concerning the lies of Churchianity. The application of cutting truths from the mouth of him controlling the white horse was irresistible! And all of the anarchists had a sufficiency of vengeance against the old order. They needed no more retribution; they were now prepared to receive the glorious replacement government.

²²⁴ [19:19] Army now is singular (compare 19:14) because the Church is complete (as shown by the Great Company activity of 19:17, 18).

²²⁵ [19:20] Compare this verse carefully with 16:13 and 13:11-15 to see that the Protestant False Prophet is some sort of amalgam of the Two-Horned Beast and Protestant denominations.

**REVELATION,
PART III**

**FIVE VIEWS OF THE
MILLENNIAL AGE**

REVELATION, PART III (Revelation 20:1 – 22:5)

FIVE VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIAL AGE

We have seen the Gospel Age five times; we have seen the Harvest five times. In each of these tours, we have actually seen the beginnings of the Millennial Age also because the Seventh Church, Seal, and Trumpet, and the entirety of the Harvest are chronologically in the Millennium. Thus, as we sightsee our way through the Millennial views, we will again see many aspects of the Harvest — the first century-plus of the Millennium.

The five tours we will now take will allow us to cover parts of the Millennium to see:

1. The manner and purpose of “binding Satan.” This will not be primarily about the personal devil, but rather about the symbolic devil.
2. The judgment of individuals on the earth — the time we call “The Mediatorial Reign.”
3. An explanation to the John class — the saints yet in the flesh before the Mediation begins — of the meaning of what is transpiring. This is an extremely valuable “tour.” The saints are claiming BY FAITH that the Millennium has begun. In this tour, Jesus will bolster that faith with explanations.
4. The glory, function, and scope of the office of the Bride class — the New Jerusalem.
5. How life for the world will be attained and maintained.

The chart on the following page summarizes the sightseeing tours we will be offered.

Revelation
Part III, SUMMARIZED

Five Views of the Millennium and Their Purposes

No.	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 Judgment	20:11 — 21:1	This view shows how the <u>judgment 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	Sustenance in the Kingdom: Light, Food, & Water	21:22 — 22:5	These verses show symbolically how life will be <u>attained and sustained</u> in the new order.

**MILLENNIAL AGE TOUR
NUMBER ONE
(Revelation 20:1 - 10)**

**THE MILLENNIUM
AND THE “DEVIL”**

MILLENNIAL AGE TOUR NUMBER ONE (Revelation 20:1-10)

THE MILLENNIUM AND THE “DEVIL”

Before beginning this tour, it is important that we remind ourselves of things we have witnessed during previous tours.

It is a great mistake to become too literal as we tour Chapter 20. Revelation (1:1) informed us that we are reading a prophecy hidden in SYMBOLS. We have seen how very true that is. Very few of the words in the book have we been able to take at face value. Likewise, now, we would err greatly to think that 20:1-10 is about the personal devil. Therefore, recall these lessons:

1. In 12:9, we saw clearly that the “dragon...serpent...devil and Satan” was a name given to the civil power identified at that time as Pagan Rome. Now, look at 20:2. Is there any reason to change the meaning here? The four-name character must yet represent the CIVIL POWER — not the personal devil (even though he is surely behind the scenes using the civil power as one of his deceptive tools). If we have need to speak of restraint for the literal devil (the spirit being), the sayings of Jesus regarding this matter will give us all of the information we need.
2. Recall also our introduction in 16:13 to the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet. In our final Harvest Tour (19:20) we saw TWO of these THREE cast into the “Lake of Fire” at the end of the Harvest. What about the THIRD character — the Dragon? He is treated now in Chapter 20. He is, AFTER THE MILLENNIUM, seen to join the other two in the “Lake of Fire.” (20:10) Thus, if 16:13 was not the personal devil, then neither is the adversary of Chapter 20.

We will see in Chapter 20 the now-famous words which John uses to re-focus: “**And I saw...**” During our first tour (20:1-10) we will find these words in verse 1 and in verse 4. Thus the two sections of this tour (verses 1-3 and verses 4-10) are complete views in themselves. The first (1-3) shows the restraint of the Dragon. The second (4-10) shows who will replace the Dragon (the saints) and how the Dragon makes one final challenge when The Christ’s reign has ended.

Interpretive Reading:

20:1 **And I saw** the 1874 invisible return of Jesus. He had the ability and authority to consign to a condition of powerlessness. He also had the chain of truths — the many links of information which render errors much less able to function.²²⁶

20:2 With these powers, he began a five-step process:

- (1) He grabbed hold of civil power in this world — most notably the power that, since his first advent, had persecuted his saints — that dragon, serpent, devil and Satan. He placed his controlling hand into civil power's affairs;
- (2) and he chained its influence for a thousand years!
- 20:3 (3) And the restraint was intensified because Jesus hurled it into the abyss of powerlessness.
- (4) Then he closed the hatch on the pit to prevent any and all access to the deceptive influences.
- (5) Finally, he sealed the hatch so that this great adversary would cease to be any consideration in people's minds — so that civil government would not deceive the peoples any more until the thousand years had been completed. However, after these things, it must be released for a short time. (But I will explain that a little later.)

20:4 **And I saw** those who would be taking the ruling places which the civil authorities had held — I saw in 1874 thrones which had been assigned to the faithful saints of the Gospel Age. Judgment had been assigned to these saints — those, who still in their graves,²²⁷ were worthy because they had given up their own wills²²⁸ so that Jesus would be reflected in them, and so that they could represent and reflect God's Word. They were worthy because they had never worshipped the beast or any reflection of its character. They had never in mind or deed been marked by those characteristics.

It was a great joy to see that, in 1878, they came to life and reigned along with Christ for his reign of a thousand years!

20:5 **THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION** — coming to life and reigning with him!

20:6 The individual who gains part in this first resurrection is blessed with life within himself²²⁹ — holiness in a very special sense. This one has immunity from all possibility of death. All of this blessed group will serve as God's Priesthood along with Christ, reigning with Christ in his reign of the thousand years.

²²⁶ [20:1] Compare Psalm 149:8.

²²⁷ [20:4] **“Souls”** is a Revelation symbol for **the faithful who are awaiting their resurrection change**. Compare 6:9.

²²⁸ [20:4] **“Beheaded”** symbolizes the **relinquishing of self-will**.

²²⁹ [20:6] Compare John 5:26.

20:7 Now, when the thousand years are completed, in A.D. 2874, the imprisonment of the civil power influence will end.

20:8 There will be an emergence from the “abyss” of a civil-power attempt to deceive the peoples again in all parts of the earth. These peoples are vast in number — the “sand of the seashore” class who have received the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. Their deceivers are named Gog (mountain) and Magog (great mountain) after those who tried to destroy God’s elect, Israel, at the end of the Gospel Age.²³⁰

20:9 They came against the whole face of the new society, the new earth, and attempted to isolate it from the influence of the saints — the new government which had come to be beloved by all.

Without mercy, without warning, without delay, destruction consumed them from above — the personal devil and all who were deceived by him — all were devoured into oblivion.

20:10 And the civil power — even the civil power CONCEPT — which had deceived mankind for so long and in so many ways, was thrown into the “Lake of Fire” — an immersion into destruction — where the Beast and False Prophet have been since the Harvest. So hated will they be in mankind’s memory, that only tormenting words and thoughts will ever be expressed concerning these institutions of man’s history.

* * * * *

²³⁰ [20:8] Compare Ezekiel 38, 39. **Gog** probably refers to the **visible mountain or kingdom**. **Magog** probably refers to the **invisible, spiritual kingdom** (or **great mountain**) of Satan.

**MILLENNIAL AGE TOUR
NUMBER TWO
(Revelation 20:11 – 21:1)**

**THE THRONE OF
INDIVIDUAL JUDGMENT**

THE SECOND TOUR OF THE MILLENNIAL AGE (Revelation 20:11 — 21:1)

The Judgment of Individuals

Our first Millennial Age sightseeing tour covered the entire age — and even beyond it, through the “Little Season.” The judgments of the two parts (the age itself versus the “Little Season”) were quite different. The age found “Satan” bound so that there could be NO DECEPTION; but “Satan” was loosed for the “Little Season” for the very purpose of DECEPTION. Thus we have learned that the judgment of the Millennial Age is based on OBEDIENCE; the judgment of the “Little Season” is based on the ability to avoid DECEPTION. But our first tour did not talk much about individuals. It focused mainly on rulers. Tour number two is going to look at how the judgment of the Millennial Age deals with people, one on one.

Again, John has kindly provided for us his focus marker: “**And I saw...**” It appears in 20:11, 20:12, and 21:1. Each section, while related to the others quite directly, stands alone in the sense of imparting a particular lesson.

Interpretive Reading:

20:11 **And I saw** the great, righteous throne of judgment authority set up in 1874. And I saw Jesus, who controlled it. From his presence there was nothing that error could do except run! The old earth, the old society, fled away; the old heaven, the old religious order, also fled away — all during the years of the Harvest. There was no place for them. They were obsolete. Indeed, the judgment of individuals was impossible while those were yet in existence.

20:12 **And I saw**, then, as a result of the passing of the old order and the initiating of the new, that the poor dying world (the great and the small) were given an opportunity to stand — no longer crushed by the terrible requirements of the now-gone old order. And they stood before the throne of judgment authority. The books of Scripture, the books of understanding and revelation, were opened for their benefit. They could finally comprehend! And, then, another book, the Register of Life, was also made available to them for the first time. Their objective was entry into this blessed journal.

And the poor, dying world began its resurrection by judgments²³¹ — growing and being perfected by the things revealed to them from the newly opened understandings and by conforming themselves to those ideals.

20:13 The masses of discontented, unrooted, humanity began to gain life and stability. Everyone who had been dying — even those who were already literally dead — began to gain life. Each individual was judged by and made progress by his conforming his deeds to the new requirements.

20:14 The whole dying process (including the oblivion caused by actual death) was thrown into the proverbial “Lake of Fire.” The “Lake of Fire” (the “Immersion into Extinction”) is what we know as THE SECOND DEATH — the condition from which there is no return.

20:15 Ultimately, because they refused to reform, those whose names were not written into the book called the Register of Life — these also went into the “Lake of Fire” — the second death from which there is no return.

21:1 **And I saw**, thus, the wonderful result: There was a new spiritual government. There was a totally new society. The former religious and social orders had totally passed. There was no remnant of their corruption. And among men there was no longer anyone without roots — no one uneasy or restless. Total stability reigned!

²³¹ [20:2] See John 5:29.

**MILLENNIAL AGE TOUR
NUMBER THREE
(Revelation 21:2-8)**

**THE NEW ORDER SUMMARIZED
FOR THE HARVEST SAINTS**

THE THIRD TOUR OF THE MILLENNIUM (Revelation 21:2-8)

An Explanatory Summary for the Saints

This third tour of the Millennium is divided into two parts.

Verses 2-4 summarize the Kingdom from the beginning of the Mediation (not the beginning of The Millennium) until the close of the “Little Season.”

This section seems particularly well suited as a job summary for the John class yet in the flesh during the Harvest, awaiting their deliverance. (This concept will be strengthened as we consider verses 5-8.) The focus of this section is the completion of the Church (verse 2), God’s part during the Age (verse 3), and the eternal conditions which will follow the “Little Season.” (verse 4)

The second section (verses 5-8) is directly addressed to the John class awaiting the completion of the New Jerusalem (verse 1). It is here specifically, and excitingly, to help us who are yet in the flesh during the Harvest to have encouragement for our faith. The saints today are claiming and preaching that the Millennium has begun — a claim not visible except to the eye of faith. But in THESE VERSES, Jesus encourages and corroborates that faith!

This third tour, the least obvious to the eye, is in many respects the most heart-warming for those of us waiting for our deliverance.

Interpretive Reading:

21:2 **And I saw** another vision of the Kingdom age beginning with the completion of the Church. I saw the holy government — the New City of Peace — coming down from God and from heaven to communicate with mankind. This new government had been made ready by two thousand years of searching and testing to be adorned with all of the character beauties necessary to make her the perfect choice as the Bride of the new King.

21:3 And the King spoke: **And I heard** his loud announcement from the throne proclaiming the Mediation begun:

“**Behold**, we have come to the place in history when God has established, through His Mediator, a tentative dwelling among men to establish His Covenant.

“He will continue his tentative Presence among them throughout this age during the progress of the New

- Covenant. Ultimately, they will become His people, and God will dwell permanently among them.
- 21:4 “Once the Mediation is over, and once the deception test is ended, God will have wiped away every tear from their eyes. Never again will there be death, or mourning, or crying, or pain to the body or spirit. All the former things shall have totally passed away.”
- 21:5 And once I had seen this vision, I was directly addressed by my Lord, Jesus, sitting on the throne he had held since 1874:
 “Behold, John, though the vision you have just seen begins when the Church is complete, I want you to know about NOW — before the completion of the Church.
Behold: Restitution²³² HAS BEGUN! I AM making all things new — already — before the Mediation.”
 And, as if to strengthen this glorious assurance, he added:
 “You can PUBLISH this truth. Write it for all to see, because these words ARE faithful and true!” [NAS]
- 21:6 And he did not stop there! He added even more confirmation for my faith:
 “The words ARE COME INTO BEING²³³ — they are not future!
 “Now, because I have (since 1874) assumed a greater power — though not yet so great as at the Mediation — I can add the TWO-FOLD²³⁴ name to my office: I am ‘THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA’ and ‘THE BEGINNING AND THE END.’
 “Once the Mediation of this vision begins, then I will give to the thirsty one the water of life without cost when it springs²³⁵ forth from my Church.
- 21:7 “He who overcomes during the Mediation will inherit the good things of the vision you have just witnessed. I will be his God,²³⁶ and he will be my son.

²³² [21:5] Acts 3:21.

²³³ [21:6] “They are come into being” are the actual words of the Greek text!
 It is not “It is done” as in NAS and KJV.

²³⁴ [21:6] Compare 1:8, 17 and 22:13.

²³⁵ [21:6] Compare John 4:14.

²³⁶ [21:7] The fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6.

21:8

“But some will not overcome — those who persist in exercising qualities²³⁷ which make overcoming improbable:

- The COWARDLY — those in whom fear triumphs over trust.
- The UNBELIEVING — those who allow skepticism to sour confidence.
- The ABOMINABLE — those inclined toward unrighteousness — who sacrifice to be seen, and have a failure to appreciate.
- The MURDERERS — brother-haters who sow discord by accusation, and build self by comparison.
- The FORNICATORS — those who cannot distinguish the sacred from the profane.
- The SORCERERS — (Greek = *pharmakeia*) — those who mix combinations of truth and error to exaggerate the senses of right and wrong in others.
- The IDOLATERS — those appropriating or attributing to self or others honors belonging to someone else.
- The LIARS — those who engage in hypocrisies, to whom truth is expendable and expandable.

Their part will be immersion into extinction with the poisoning of their legacy — the second death from which there is no return.”

²³⁷ [21:8] Perhaps Jesus gives the Harvest Church this extensive list of deadly qualities not only because it can thus know what it will be judging, but also because society today is so full of these things that we can use the list as a protection for our own faithfulness and overcoming in the last days of the Church on earth.

**THE FOURTH TOUR OF
THE MILLENNIAL AGE
(Revelation 21:9-21)**

**THE NEW GOVERNMENT:
THE BRIDE,
THE NEW JERUSALEM**

MILLENNIAL AGE TOUR NUMBER FOUR (Revelation 21:9-21)

THE NEW GOVERNMENT: THE BRIDE, THE NEW JERUSALEM

John begins this tour of the Millennial Age by re-introducing us to “one of the seven angels...who had the seven last plagues.” We have not heard from Brother Russell since 19:10. His re-appearance here strikes a lovely balance. When we first had him address us in Chapter 17, he invited us to see the harlot — and he carried us away to the wilderness. Now he gives us the thrilling contrast. He invites us to see the Lamb’s wife, and he carries us away to the “high mountain.” Then, in incredible symbolisms, he shows us that “city” which replaces the old “city” of Babylon. The measurements had to come from God, Himself. No one else could have known the geophysical data hidden in this chapter.

Interpretive Reading:

- 21:9 Once again I was approached by Charles Russell, one of the Seven Angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues. Again, he spoke with me:
“Come and study with me. I will show you what I have learned about the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”²³⁸
- 21:10 So, he took me to see things in my mind’s eye; I was carried away in wonderment. I found myself touring that great and highest mountain of all — the peaceable Kingdom. And the Angel explained to me about the holy new government, “City of Peace,” being sent to earth at God’s direction.
- 21:11 And the city had God’s characteristics. The city was the glorified Church — so very brilliant in reflecting every facet of God’s light — just like the finest, flawless, diamond. And at what expense was she developed!

²³⁸ [21:9] Revelation purposely mixes unlikely combinations of symbols for our learning. Lambs don’t have wives. The Revelator wants us to think of the Passover Lamb because the entire object of the Millennium is the deliverance of the world. He uses “bride” because he wants to mark the effectual date of that deliverance as the completion of the Church (the marriage accomplished). He uses “wife” because he wants to show the Church’s part as a nurturing mother for the race — the partner of the Second Adam.

- 21:12 The City's symbolic architecture revealed so much! It was the bastion of protection and security which has been the yearning of mankind — a great and high wall. And there were twelve entries so that every personality-type²³⁹ of mankind could find a comfortable entry. Each gate had its angel to help with the requirements of entry; and these angels bore the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel who had been commissioned to be portals to the Kingdom.²⁴⁰
- 21:13 Mankind, regardless of where each was coming from,²⁴¹ had access, for there were three gates each on east, north, south, and west sides.²⁴²
- 21:14 This city was shaped like a cube.²⁴³ Each of its twelve edges was a foundation stone; and on each foundation there was the name of one of the Apostles of the Lamb, for Jesus had used them to lay the foundations of his Church.
- 21:15 And Brother Russell was granted a measuring standard — the Divine standard of Scripture-comprehension to be able to measure the details of the Divine plan. Thus he was enabled to comprehend the function of the new government. He was enabled to comprehend the requisites for entry. And he was enabled to comprehend its ability to secure and protect the blessings contained in this “city.”
- 21:16 The city was designed as a cube, its length, width, and height being equal. By the measuring rod of Scripture, Brother Russell interpreted the symbols of this city. He used the stadium²⁴⁴ (the racecourse) as his standard measurement since successful completion of the racecourse was needed to be a part of this city.

Each edge (or foundation) was 12,000 stadii. Thus, the twelve edges measured the 144,000 who constitute this city.²⁴⁵

Each side measured 144,000,000 square units — showing that the Church is a wall of protection for 1,000 years (144,000 x 1,000).

²³⁹ [21:12] Some studies strongly suggest that mankind falls into twelve basic personality types.

²⁴⁰ [21:12] See Zechariah 8:20-23. It certainly is possible that the Israel here is spiritual (7:4), rather than literal. But the Zechariah text is so very parallel to 21:12 as to make it seem right.

²⁴¹ [21:13] Compare Luke 13:29.

²⁴² [21:13] This verse brings to mind Israel's encampment on all sides of the Tabernacle.

²⁴³ [21:14] See verse 16.

²⁴⁴ [21:16] The word usually is translated “furlong,” but the Greek is “stadium.” The track in a stadium typically was a furlong in length.

²⁴⁵ [21:16] Compare 7:4.

The entire surface was 864,000,000 units (12,000 squared x 6 sides). This is 1,000 times the diameter of the sun, suggesting that the Church will shine as the sun for 1,000 years.²⁴⁶

21:17 Since the wall symbolized protection, the Angel measured it also to see, perhaps, how many might be protected by it. It measured 144 cubits. Its apparent thickness of 144 units times its area of 144,000,000 units suggests 20,736,000,000 as a reasonable estimate of earth's ultimate population. Thus this man, this Angel, taught us how to measure God's plan.

21:18 The wall of the city was diamond; it was transparent because protection comes from purity of character, not from being hidden. And, because the Church shines like the sun, the whole city appeared as pure gold, yet clear as glass.

21:19 The Apostles, the twelve foundation stones of the city, were decorated with every kind of precious stone, each numbered (apparently to link each to a stone from the High Priest's breastplate and to represent each of the twelve tribes over whom the Apostles were promised judgment).²⁴⁷

21:20 The first foundation was **diamond**;
the second was **sapphire**;
the third, **chalcedony**;
the fourth, **emerald**;
the fifth was **sardonyx**;
the sixth, **sardius**;
the seventh was **chrysolite**;
the eighth, **beryl**;
the ninth was **topaz**;
and the tenth, **chrysoprase**;
the eleventh was **jasinth**;
the twelfth, **amethyst**.

21:21 Access to the blessings of the city was by the twelve gates. They were of **pearl** to show that access is by consecration to overcoming, even as pearls are gems built to overcome irritants.

²⁴⁶ [21:16] Compare Matthew 13:43 and Daniel 12:3. NOTE: So many measuring possibilities exist! A stadium is an eighth of a mile = 660 feet. Therefore, one side of the city = 7,920,000 feet (12,000 furlongs or stadii). The earth's diameter is 7,920 miles. The suggestion is that the cube known as the New Jerusalem forms a box of protection and salvation for the earth for a thousand years. (The numbers work. We are ignoring cubits versus miles, versus feet, etc.) In Ezekiel 41:8; 40:5; 43:13 there is a city built on the GREAT CUBIT. This is 1.76 feet. The city (Ezekiel 48:16) measures 4,500 cubits square. The measurement brings it in conformity to earth's diameter and to the New Jerusalem in that 4,500 cubits of 1.76 each = 7,920 feet. Thus the Lord seems to confirm our speculations about Revelation and about mixing modern measures like miles and feet.

²⁴⁷ [21:19] See Matthew 19:28.

Each gate was a single pearl of great price²⁴⁸ to represent the value of the restored race. The street of the city is the “Highway of Holiness.”²⁴⁹ It was **gold** because it was the Divine standard for perfection. It was transparent as glass because nothing was hidden that might hurt.

²⁴⁸ [21:21] See Matthew 13:46.

²⁴⁹ [21:21] See Isaiah 35:8.

**THE FIFTH TOUR
OF THE MILLENNIUM
(Revelation 21:22 – 22:5)**

**SUSTENANCE IN THE KINGDOM:
Light, Food, and Water
for Everlasting Life**

MILLENNIAL AGE TOUR NUMBER FIVE (Revelation 21:22 — 22:5)

SUSTENANCE FOR THE KINGDOM

This is our final sightseeing opportunity — not only for the Millennium, but for the entire book of Revelation. There has never been better sightseeing available anywhere!

This final tour will reveal how earth's population will find everything it needs for success under the guidance of God and the Lamb — most particularly light, water, and food: not in the literal sense of these things, but the symbolic senses of seeing the way, being refreshed by the truths, and growing by way of the perfect nutrients of character.

Thus our five tours of the Millennium will have given us the perspectives of:

1. the change of rulership;
2. the judgment of individuals;
3. a summary of Mediation with a perspective on the pre-Mediation Millennium;
4. a symbolic “portrait” of the New City;
5. a promise of all things needful.

It is well worthy of note that, while John's past visions have been reported mostly in PAST TENSE, John begins using PRESENT and FUTURE tenses as he reports this vision. This in itself is inspiring. It is as if the New Jerusalem truly comes to life as the world of mankind begins to avail itself of the blessings! It is this for which the world and the Church have so long travailed in pain: the manifestation of the Sons of God with healing power.

At the close of this tour, perfected mankind REIGNS FOREVER AND EVER over this paradise restored!

Interpretative Reading:

21:22 **And I saw**²⁵⁰ another vision of how this great city would operate for the benefit of all.

What is missing is revealing. There is no temple in the New Jerusalem — no special, set-aside location to meet with God. It is no longer needed because The

²⁵⁰ [21:22] This is the last time John utters these words — his final vision. (In 22:8 he does refer BACK to having heard and seen all of the things of Revelation, but it is not another vision.)

LORD God, The Almighty, and the Mediator Lamb are now omnipresent — ever there to help. There is no need to seek them out.

21:23 Likewise, there is no need for the indirect light of the Gospel or the shadows of the Law to illuminate the way. Now it is God, Himself, Who sheds light on everything.²⁵¹ And as the Bible was once the only available lamp, now the Lamb, himself, makes the pathway clear.

21:24 All the peoples of all time shall progress by the light of this city! And all who had had power and influence — including the new Ancient Worthy²⁵² kings of earth — will all seek to use whatever influences they have to glorify the objectives of this beloved new government.

21:25 Another thing missing is darkness; uncertainty will be a thing of the past! The gateways to salvation will be well lit and never closed.

21:26 And through these gates the peoples will bring everything that is glorious and honorable.

21:27 All else they will leave behind. Access to the blessings of the city will be denied to those who refuse a consecration to righteousness.²⁵³ It will be denied to those who refuse to acknowledge the true sacrifice.²⁵⁴ Access will be denied to those who refuse to apply truth to themselves.²⁵⁵ All who make these refusals for a hundred years will die without access.²⁵⁶ Only those committing themselves to the consecration which enters them into the Lamb's Register of Life will have access.

22:1 And the Seventh Angel showed me more yet about the beloved city. He showed me, coming from the judgment-authority of God and the Lamb, not just a body of the water of truth, but rather a continuing supply — a river of truths leading to and sustaining life²⁵⁷ — waters that sparkle, giving sparkle to the eye and dancing to the heart — flowing

22:2 down the middle of the street where access is quick and easy to all on the road to holiness. And on both sides of the river — so that it matters not where you stand in your progress — stood the Tree of Life — the source for the healing of all the peoples! This tree is the saints.²⁵⁸ The fruitage is the world divided into twelve types.²⁵⁹ The fruitage is current every lunar cycle, thus representing the

²⁵¹ [21:23] Isaiah 11:9.

²⁵² [21:24] Hebrews 11:38 and Psalm 45:16.

²⁵³ [21:27] This refers to those who are, therefore, yet “unclean.”

²⁵⁴ [21:27] All merit other than Jesus' is an “abomination” in God's sight.

²⁵⁵ [21:27] They are, therefore, yet “liars.”

²⁵⁶ [21:27] Isaiah 65:20.

²⁵⁷ [22:1] Compare John 4:14 and 7:38, 39.

²⁵⁸ [22:2] Isaiah 61:3.

²⁵⁹ [22:2] Compare 21:12, 14.

New Law Covenant.²⁶⁰ The leaves²⁶¹ of the tree (the professions of the saints) were for the healing of the peoples.

22:3 And the curse which began in Eden²⁶² finally will be gone. The authority of God and the Lamb shall have been re-established instead. And all the world shall become His bond-servants under the New Covenant and will serve Him in delight and to their profit —

22:4 And they will see His favor; and God's own character will be impressed in their very beings.

22:5 Never again will mankind experience the night-time of sin. Never again will they have need to seek light, because the brightness sent by God will supply all the light needed. And the perfected race shall reign forever and ever over this Edenic earth.

²⁶⁰ [22:2] Compare this verse with REJOICING to 21:17! If each member of the Church produces one perfected human per month for the nominal period of 1,000 years, then 20,736,000,000 humans will eventually fill the earth.

²⁶¹ [22:2] **Leaves** symbolize **professions**. The record of the faith professions of the saints will be a healing stimulus to all.

²⁶² [22:3] See Genesis 3:14-19.

EPILOGUE
(Revelation 22:6-21)

CLOSING REMARKS
from
the Seventh Angel, Jesus, and John

EPILOGUE (Revelation 22:6-21)

CLOSING REMARKS from the Seventh Angel, Jesus, and John

We have taken fifteen tours. Our knowledge and appreciation of the Gospel Age, the Harvest, and the Millennium are greatly enhanced. Jesus has been REVEALED to us; his character and actions covering three thousand years have been explained. We are richer beyond comprehension. We can only thank and praise our Father for what He has chosen to show us.

As Revelation began with eight simple but significant verses of introduction, so it now ends with sixteen incredibly meaningful verses of summation.

How do you end a book like Revelation? How do you end the Bible? These sixteen verses do both of those things with words from the Seventh Angel, from Jesus, and from the Apostle John. Their words are important, appropriate, timely, sobering, and joyful.

Interpretive Reading:

22:6 And the Seventh Angel again gave me more insight:

“The message you have seen, John, is faithful and true. The Lord, The God who directs the teachings of all prophets, sent me to show the Harvest saints the important things of the near future.”

22:7 Jesus interrupted. He clearly wished to comment on the Angel’s last phrase; thus he began with the word “Even” —

“Even, **Behold**, the most important event of the near future is that I will close the door²⁶³ soon. Therefore, it is even more important and even more a blessing if you heed the words of this Book!”

22:8 With an appreciation of Jesus’ words and the Angel’s instruction, I, John, (representing the Harvest saints), was so very impressed and so very grateful to have been privileged to have seen and heard these things — so humbled to

²⁶³ [22:7] Compare Matthew 25:6 to 25:10 [NAS]. This “coming” in Revelation 22:7 and Matthew 25:10 is not his advent. It is his taking the action of concluding the High Calling.

know that I am alone, the one who comprehends — that I instinctively fell again in a worshipful attitude at the feet of the Seventh Angel who was the instrument in showing me these things.

22:9 As he had done before, he did once more. He said to me:

“Do not worship me. I am, indeed, a fellow servant with you, and of all your brethren among you who prophesy the good things, and of all of you heeding the words of this Book. The one lesson you should be getting from it all is, **WORSHIP GOD!** (Idolatry will keep you on the wrong side of the closed door.)”

22:10 He continued speaking:

“Instead of idolatry, do not stop learning from, interpreting, and applying the words of the prophecy of this Book.²⁶⁴ Because **THE TIME IS AT HAND**, you will gain the needed strength here. The Book is open.

22:11

“Let me give you some final admonitions to advise you regarding your final days.²⁶⁵ **LET** others continue in their wrong courses; **LET** others continue to dabble in the unclean if they insist; **LET** those who are, indeed, justified, pursue their justification; **LET** even others whose paths are holy remain so without your considering how you can implement their holiness! **Concentrate on self!**”²⁶⁶

22:12 Jesus again interrupts. He does so again to make the same point in agreement with the Seventh Angel’s final words:

“**Behold!** (Give it sober and in-depth thought!) I will shortly close the door. At that point my reward decisions are final. I will render to my saints their immortality. (John 2:19, 21; 6:39, 40, 44, 54) I will render to the foolish virgins according to their performance.

22:13

“Once the door is shut, I assume in totality that title which is mine. Then I proclaim: I am **THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST, THE BEGINNING AND THE END.**²⁶⁷

The Mediation has begun!

²⁶⁴ [22:10] The Angel merely is seconding the words of Jesus from 22:7.

²⁶⁵ [22:11] The advice comes from Matthew 25; we cannot make sure anyone else’s consecration. “We cannot give you of our oil.” To get beyond the door before it closes, we must concentrate on **SELF**.

²⁶⁶ [22:11] This is the last message, the final words of Brother Russell.

²⁶⁷ [22:13] Here is the first and only time Jesus states the title in its 3-fold form. It is at the shutting of the door and the rewarding of all the spirit begotten with their final destinies that the Mediation begins. It is a singular moment in history! (Compare 1:8, 17 and 21:6.)

22:14 “But Mediation begins with Israel. Blessed are they when they wash their robes²⁶⁸ — when they say, ‘Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.’²⁶⁹ Then they have a right to the Tree of Life and enter by the approved entries²⁷⁰ into the City.

22:15 “At that point the Gentiles will yet be without the gates, even

- the SORCERERS
(those who mix truth with error);
- the FORNICATORS
(those who pollute the holy with the profane);
- the MURDERERS
(those who slander);
- the IDOLATERS
(those who misdirect their worship);
- and
- the LIARS
(those who do not cherish truth for its own value).”

(A consecration against these things will be required before any of the Gentiles may enter the gates.)

* * * * *

22:16 Jesus, from the perspective of the Mediation begun, continued to explain to me how the revelations of the past culminate in the blessings of the Mediation:

“I, Jesus, sent my angel²⁷¹ 2,000 years ago to give this in-advance testimony for the benefit and hope of all the Churches. We now have reached its objective — Mediation for the world.

“I am Messiah — David’s descendant. But now, even now, I am become David’s root²⁷² — because it is now MORNING, and I am the light-bearer of this new day!

22:17 “Consequently I am beginning to pour my spirit on all flesh. The Holy Spirit’s universal influence and my Bride say, ‘Come!’ And there are responses: Many on earth who hear join in inviting others,

²⁶⁸ [22:14] Compare Isaiah 64:6.

²⁶⁹ [22:14] Matthew 23:39.

²⁷⁰ [22:14] Approved entry is by consecration to righteousness.

²⁷¹ [22:16] This is the angel of 1:1.

²⁷² [22:16] Matthew 22:42-45; Isaiah 11:1, 10; Psalm 45:16.

entering into the spirit of my call; and they, too, say, 'Come!' And the poor, halt, and lame, thirsting for good, stumble in as they grasp for blessings. All who wish may take the waters of life without cost. The way is open now."

* * * * *

22:18 Finally, I testify a caution to those who have understood the words of this prophecy. You must be sober in their use. We can add to someone's words because they do not make our point. But if we do that to this prophecy, God will add to us the same plagues which Babylon feels because we will reflect her methods.

22:19 We can remove someone's words because they say what we don't want to hear. But if we do that to this prophecy, God will remove us from the Wise Virgin class — from our inheritance in the New Jerusalem.

22:20 Jesus, who testifies to the validity of all of these things, again reminds us:

"Yes! I am coming quickly to shut the door!"

So let it be. Come, Lord Jesus. Fulfill our hopes and dreams!

22:21 May the sustaining and protective grace of our Lord Jesus be with all.

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