

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Introduction

Its Title: Revelation. It is not the Revelation of St. John the Divine. This is Church of England foolishness and not a part of the inspired text. Verse 1, chapter 1, contradicts this Episcopal title in the KJV.

It is not Revelations, but Revelation. There are many visions, but only one Revelation. The Greek word ("Apokalypis") translated "Revelation" means "to remove the cover, to take off the veil, to expose to view, or to gaze upon that which has been covered up or unseen. It is a book of thing revealed, not things concealed---an apocalypse, not an apocrypha. It is a book of things for the understanding of God's people (Deut. 29:29). It is not a puzzle picture or dark sayings, but a revelation. To study this book is not to intrude into the secret things of God.

Its Author: the Apostle John. This was almost universally maintained by the early church. The author called himself John (1:1,4,9; 21:2; 22:8). John never called himself an apostle in this book. The Johnine authorship was rejected by the Alexandrian School of Theology, including Dionysius (bishop of Alexandria A.D. 247 and follower of Origen), because of their amillennial views. Other scholars have advanced the idea that the John of the Revelation is another person known as John the Presbyter or John the Elder. If the Revelation was not the inspired record of John the apostle it would have been rejected by the seven churches that he addressed, but the earliest testimonies in these churches are in favor of John as the writer.

Date: Conservative scholars date it A.D. 95 or 96. Some date the book about 68 or 69 (Wescott, Lightfoot, Hort, Salmon, and others). The early date is supposedly supported by a statement attributed to Papias to the effect that John was martyred before the destruction of Jerusalem. The date of A.D. 96 accords with evidence from Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius to the effect that the banishment of John to Patmos was in the later time of the reign of Domitian, A.D. 81-96.

Canonicity: Papias, a pupil of John, was bishop of Hierapolis, near Laodicea, the seventh church addressed in Asia Minor by John, attests its canonicity. Irenaeus refers to old copies of the book and people who knew John. A number of others early in the second and third centuries mention the book. The circulation and wide use of the book as Scripture are evident by the beginning of the third century.

The reasons for the slow reception arose from the unusual character of the book and the grammatical difficulties. The Alogi, Causis the Roman presbyter, and the sixtieth canon of the Laodicean Council in the middle of the fourth century rejected the Apocalypse. Luther, Zwingli, and Erasmus considered it nonapostolic.

Interpretation: Numerous methods are employed such as the following:

1. The nonliteral method. This began with Clement and Origen who regarded the book as one great allegory going far beyond the natural symbolism which is found in the book. They were amillennialists and claimed the book should be spiritually interpreted.

2. The preterist method. This view holds the book is a record of the conflicts of the early church with Judaism and paganism with chapters 20-22 showing the triumph of the church. They make it a symbolic history rather than a book of prophecy.

3. The historical method. They hold the book is a symbolic history of the total church history, culminating in the second advent of Christ. This is the view of the postmillennialists. They say the pope and the papacy are the beasts of Revelation 13.

4. The futuristic method. This view regards the book as a book of prophecy and therefore subject to future fulfillment. This does not preclude the use of symbols or figures of speech, but these must be explained in the context of the book, or the other books of the Bible. All must be understood literally if not declared otherwise by the text itself.

A Book Of Prophecy: "Prophecy" means "to speak in behalf of another---be a mouthpiece of the Deity." Seven times this book claims to be a book of prophecy (1:3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7,10,18-19). It is the crown jewel of prophecy. It is not a history like the Book of Acts. Revelation completes and consummates all prophecy. No authoritative prophecy has been uttered since the close of this book. All prophecy since this book has been false prophecy.

Divisions: The book (1:19) gives its own threefold division. (1) "The things which thou hast seen"---the glorified Christ, 1:9-20; (2) "The things which are"---the seven churches, 2:1-3:22; (3) "The things which shall be hereafter"---the tribulation and the coming of Christ, 4:1-22:7. Verse 1 to 8 of chapter 1 is the introduction and chapter 22:8-21 is the conclusion. It begins with a blessing to those who read it (1:3) and ends with a curse to those who take from or add to it (22:18-19). A promise to the reader but plagues for the rejector.

A Book Of Sevens: The seven churches (Rev. 1:4,11,20), the seven Spirits (Rev. 1:4;3:1;4:5;5:6), the seven candlesticks (Rev. 1:12-13,20; 2:1), the seven stars (Rev. 1:16,20;2:1;3:1), the seven lamps (Rev. 4:5), the seven seals (Rev. 5:1;5:5), the seven horns (Rev. 5:6), the seven eyes (Rev. 5:6), the seven angels (Rev. 8:2,6), the seven trumpets (Rev. 8:2,6), the seven thunders (Rev. 10:3-4), the seven thousand (Rev. 11:13), the seven heads (Rev. 12:3;17:3,7,9), the seven crowns (Rev. 12:3), another seven angels (Rev. 15:1,6-8;16:1;17:21:9), the seven plagues (Rev. 15:1,6-8; 21:9), the seven vials (Rev. 15:7;17:12:1:9), the seven mountains (Rev. 17:9), the seven kings (Rev. 17:10-11), the seven beatitudes (Rev. 1:3; 14:13;16:15;19:9;20:6;22:7;22:14), the seven years of judgments (Rev. 11:3;12:6,14;13:5), the seven divisions of each of the seven letters to the seven churches (Rev. 2:1-3:21), the seven "I am's" of Christ (Rev. 1:8,11,17,18;21:6;22:13,16), and the seven doxologies in Heaven (Rev. 4:9-11; 5:8-13;7:9-12;11:16-18;14:2-3;15:2-4; 19:1-6).

STUDY IN REVELATION

I. THE PREFACE (1:1-3).

1. The revelation which God gave to Jesus Christ, the Mediator (v. 1).
 - (1) "Revelation" is a translation of the Greek word apokalypsis which means "an unveiling." The book is not intended to be mysterious or confusing, but illuminating and revealing.
 - (2) "Which God gave to him"---this means either that Jesus Christ is the Revealer or that He is the subject of the Revelation. It is made by Him and it concerns His future manifestations. This revelation had been previously mentioned (John 3:34-35; 5:20-24; 7:16; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10,24; 16:15; 17:8). The humanity of Christ is seen here (Mark 13:32; Luke 19:15).
 - (3) "To shew unto his servants"---Bondslaves. Not merely John, but all followers of Christ and all students of the Word (Rom. 6:19-22).
 - (4) "Things which must shortly come to pass"---future events (Dan. 2:28-29,45; Rev. 4:1; 22:6). These events are made necessary by the will and purpose of the Divine Being (Dan. 11:36).
 - (5) "Shortly" means they will be completed in a short space of time when they begin to happen. The coming of Christ is imminent in the Bible. Or, the reference may be to seven periods of church history disclosed in chapters 2-3.
 - (6) "Signified." This does not mean the whole book is nothing but symbols, but that it does contain some symbols.
 - (7) "By his angel"---John's guardian angel under whose care John seems to have been placed. This angel does not come forth until chapter 17:1 and 19:9-10. Previous to this the revelation comes from Christ or others.
 - (8) "His servant John"---the Apostle John its human writer.
2. The book is an actual eye-witness record of what John actually saw (v. 2).
 - (1) "Bear record" is terminology which clearly identified John the apostle as the writer (John 19:35; 21:24; I John 1:3).
 - (2) "All things that he saw"---the complete revelation of all about the future which God wanted us to know (Rev. 19:9-10).
3. The blessing to the readers, the hearers, and the keepers (v. 3).
 - (1) "Blessed"---the first beatitude. Six others follow (Rev. 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14).
 - (2) "He that readeth"---the only book which contains such a direct promise of blessing. This seems to anticipate that many would probably neglect to read and study this book. We cannot keep it unless we understand it.
 - (3) "This prophecy"---the book as a whole is prophetic and

demands the futuristic approach.

- (4) The imminence of the time is stressed again---"the time is at hand."

II. THE SALUTATION (1:4-6).

1. The seven churches in western Asia Minor, the proconsular Asia of which Ephesus was the renowned capital (v. 4).

- (1) This is the first of many sevens to follow. Recall the seven feasts in Israel (Lev. 23) and the seven kingdom parables (Matt. 13).
- (2) This is not the church universal, but the churches---local churches with real visible members with problems.
- (3) "Grace be unto you, and peace" is apostolic (II John 1:3).
- (4) "From him which is, and which was, and which is to come," the first of a series of Divine titles following through verse 8. The unspeakable and incommunicable name of God the Father---the Jehovah of Israel---the I AM (Rev. 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; Ex. 3:14).
- (5) "The seven Spirits which are before his throne." The Holy Spirit in His sevenfold office (Isa. 11:2-3), the fulness of His activity. The Spirit acts governmentally from Heaven on earth. Grace and peace is not mediated through angels, but through the Holy Spirit.

2. Christ's titles and work (v. 5).

- (1) "And from Jesus Christ"---this completes the Trinity which started in verse 4. Grace and peace come from our Lord Jesus Christ, and the other two Divine persons.
- (2) "The faithful witness" (Isa. 55:4; John 18:37; Rev. 3:14). The word "witness" (Greek martus) is the source of our word "martyr." Christ was a faithful witness unto His death.
- (3) "The first begotten of the dead"---Christ was the first one to receive an immortal resurrection body (Ps. 2:7; Matt. 27:52-53; Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4; I Cor. 15:20-23). Christ rose from the dead not only first in point of time but also in rank.
- (4) "The prince of the kings of the earth"---a prince is a king in preparation. Christ has now gone into Heaven to receive the kingdom (Luke 19:12-15). In Revelation we see Him taking the kingdom as king of kings (Rev. 19:16) and sharing the kingdom with the saints (Rev. 20:4-5).
- (5) "Loved us" and "washed us"---the washing is the results of His love. Those loved are washed (Rev. 3:19). "Wash" is lutron in the Greek, and its means a ransom paid for our release. Jesus Christ loosed us, or freed us, from our sins.

3. Christ has made us kings and priests (v. 6).

- (1) Israel was a priestly nation (Ex. 19:5-6) and a kingly nation (Dan. 7:22,27). In the N.T. every believer is a priest (I Peter 2:5,9; Rev. 5:10). Washing was for the priests (Ex. 29:4).
- (2) God is to have glory to infinite duration.

STUDY IN REVELATION

III. A PROPHETIC TESTIMONY (1:7).

1. "Behold, he cometh"---the post-trib coming back to the earth. This is the fulfillment of Matthew 23:39.
2. The second advent of Christ will be with clouds. In the O.T. times the Lord descended in clouds (Ex. 16:10; 19:9; 34:5; Lev. 16:2; Num. 11:25; Ps. 18:11; 104:3; Isa. 19:1). Christ was received by a cloud at His ascension (Acts 1:9-11), so He will come in the clouds of Heaven (Dan. 7:13-14; Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; Rev. 14:14). Christ does not come in a cloud at the Rapture; we go up to meet Him in the clouds of Heaven (I Thess. 4:17).
3. "Every eye shall see him"---this speaks of the universality of His revelation and manifestation---every eye on earth (Matt. 24:27).
4. "They also which pierced him"---the Jewish nation (Zech. 12:10; 13:6; Ps. 22:16). John saw the spear which pierced the side of Christ (John 19:33-37). Israel rejected their Messiah (Isa. 53).
5. "All kindred of the earth"---Gentile nations (Matt. 24:30).

IV. THE DIVINE SPEAKER (1:8).

1. "I am"---the self-existing and ever-existing One (Ex. 3:14).
2. "Alpha and Omega"---the first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet. The dignity of the Speaker demands profound attention. Christ is the source, the beginning of truth revealed, all promises given, and all testimony committed to men. His glory is the goal. Everything finds its answer in Him.
2. "Which is, which was, and which is to come"---said here of Christ, but said of the Father in verse 4 of chapter 1.
3. "The Almighty" (Hebrew Shaddai). This title occurs often in Revelation, but nowhere else in N.T. except II Cor. 6:18.

V. JOHN'S VISION OF THE GLORIFIED CHRIST (1:9-18).

1. The island called Patmos (v. 9).
 - (1) "I John" compares with "I Daniel" (Dan. 7:28; 9:2; 10:2).
 - (2) "John. . . your brother, and companion in tribulation"---well known to the seven churches and who suffered with them in all their troubles.
 - (3) "The kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." John and the members of the seven churches were in the spiritual kingdom of God. The suffering of tribulation was preparing them for the coming kingdom (Matt. 5:10; Acts 14:22). Note the closeness of relation between Christ and His people (Matt. 25:40,45; Acts 9:4).
 - (4) "The isle that is called Patmos"---a small island, rocky and forbidding in its terrain, about 10 miles long and 6 wide in the Aegean Sea southwest of Ephesus. John was sent there under the rule of Domitian and forced to labor in the mines there. Upon Domitian's death in A.D.

96, John was permitted to return to Ephesus under the Emperor Nerva. He was the last prophet or apostle alive at that time.

- (5) "The testimony of Jesus and the word of God"---though destitute of human learning (Acts 4:13), he fearlessly and faithfully preached the Word. He had not learned the modern art of trimming the Word to suit the taste of the people. Thank God for him! Give us more Johns!

2. The Lord's Day (v. 10).

- (1) "I was in the Spirit"---under the influence of the Holy Spirit in his worship on this day.
- (2) "On the Lord's day"---the first day of the week, the day of Christian worship and rest. The construction is used only one other time ("the Lord's Supper" I Cor. 11:20). The Lord's Day is no ordinary day, nor is the Lord's Supper an ordinary meal. There is also "the Lord's tithe."
- (3) This expression is different from "the day of the Lord" (I Cor. 5:5; II Cor. 1:14; I Thess. 5:2). John was not caught up to see the day of the Lord until chapter 4.
- (4) The trumpet like voice was sounded to secure John's attention. A trumpet sounded at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:16), when the service of the temple began in the morning, in the removal of the ark (II Sam. 6:15), at the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:9). One will sound at the Rapture of the saints (I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess. 4:16).

3. The command to write the book (v. 11).

- (1) The voice repeats the "I am." Here it is Jesus Christ, and elsewhere it is the Father (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12).
- (2) "What thou seest, write in a book"---See chapters 1:2, 19; 10:4; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5). Here is complete verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.
- (3) The seven assemblies actually existed in that day. They are enumerated in clockwise order.

4. The vision of the seven lampstands (v. 12).

- (1) This reminds us of the seven-shaft lampstand in the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:31-32,37; 37:23; Heb. 9:2) and of the one Zechariah saw (Zech. 4:2).
- (2) This does not refer to the church in all her branches, but to seven local churches in Asia Minor (Rev. 1:20).
- (3) Not seven shafts on one stand, but one shaft on one stand. This is individual gospel churches bearing the Light of the world (Matt. 5:15-16; John 8:12).
- (4) "Seven" shows the completeness and perfection of the entire history of true churches on earth.

5. Christ in the midst of His churches (v. 13).

- (1) This implies Christ's continual presence (Matt. 18:20; 28:19-20) and ceaseless activity in His churches (Eph. 3:10,21). He is interested in what they do.

- (2) Christ's royal robe of priestly dignity---"a garment down to the foot" (Ex. 28:2,4,31). Here is the kind of clothing God approves of even for men.
- (3) A golden girdle was about His breast which speaks of dignified priestly judgment.
6. The head and the eyes of the Judge of all the earth (v. 14).
- (1) His hair looked much like an English judge. Compare with Daniel 9:9-10.
- (2) White hair also signifies seniority, superiority, and its accompanying sobriety. He is the Ancient of Days.
- (3) The eyes of fire speaks of His omniscience, His all-searching righteousness against sin and sinners.
- (4) Here we see the eyes of the Judge piercing, penetrating, perceiving, consuming, commending, and condemning (Jas. 5:9).
- (5) Isaiah speaks of this same Person (Isa. 11:1-5).
7. The feet and the voice of the great Judge (v. 15).
- (1) His feet like fine brass durable and shining. This points to the certainty of His judgment and His awful unyielding strength in judicial matters. Compare with Ezekiel 1:7.
- (2) Brass is a symbol of judgment. The altar at the door of the tabernacle was of brass where judgment fell and wrath was appeased and guilty expiated. Christ has borne the holy wrath of God and is qualified to execute wrath upon the unholy.
- (3) His voice like the sound of many waters speaks of His majesty and power before which all human beings and angels must be silent (Ps. 93:4; Ezek. 1:24; 43:2).
- (4) Waters roars (Ps. 46:3; 96:11; 98:7). The Lord roars (Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2).
8. Further discription of the glorified Christ (v. 16).
- (1) The pastors of the seven churches in the right hand of Christ (Rev. 1:20; 2:1; 3:1). Pastors are under His power, authority, and protection. He upholds them with the right hand of His righteousness. The right hand signifies authority and honor (Ps. 110:1; Eph. 1:20; Rev. 5:1,7).
- (2) The responsibility of a star is to shine. Pastors are to shine during the darkness of the night of the Lord's absence from earth.
- (3) All saints are in the hands of God (John 10:28-29).
- (4) The sword of His mouth has two edges: one for the protection of His friends and the other for the destruction of His enemies (Deut. 32:39-40; Isa. 11:4; II Thess. 2:8; Rev. 2:16; 19:15,21). The spoken Word of God, or the written Word of God is like a sword (Heb. 4:12).
- (5) His bright countenance indicates the majesty of His appearance (Mal. 4:1 Matt. 17:2; John 8:12; Acts 26:13; II Thess. 1:8; 2:8; Rev. 10:1).

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9. John is overcome by the sight of His glory (v. 17).

- (1) The revelation of God's glory has a stunning effect upon those who see it (Gen. 17:3; Judges 13:20; Ezek. 3:23; 43:3; 44:4; Dan. 8:17; 10:8-9,15-17; Hab. 3:16; Matt. 17:6).
- (2) Christ touched him with His right hand to let John know He was still a man clothed with human nature. He speaks to him in a tender and affectionate manner (Luke 12:32; Mark 4:40).
- (3) The divine title of Christ---"I am the first and the last" (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Rev. 2:8; 22:13).
- (4) Christ does not remind John of his apostolic office, but He reminds him of His own Divine Person and the glories of His character. This is the true source of consolation.

10. The Divine consolation for human weakness (v. 18).

- (1) "I am he that liveth, and was dead"---Christ died at Calvary yet He arose from His grave to die no more (Rom. 6:9; I Cor. 15:3-4).
- (2) "I am alive for evermore"---Christ ever lives unto the ages of ages (Job 19:25; Heb. 7:25). The same is said of God (Rev. 4:9; 5:14). This proves Christ is God.
- (3) "The keys of hell and death"---Christ is sovereign over physical death and the life after death (John 11:25).
- (4) Christ's having the keys of death and hell implies that He did descend into Hades (Ps. 68:18; Matt. 12:40; Acts 2:25-31; Eph. 4:8-10).

VI. THE THREEFOLD DIVISION OF THE BOOK AND THE COMMAND TO WRITE REPEATED (1:19-20).

1. The Divine keys to the book (v. 19).

- (1) "Write the things which thou hast seen"---this expression refers to what John has seen here in chapter 1. Here in this entire verse is God's threefold outline of this book.
- (2) "The things which are"---the second division which includes chapters 2-3.
- (3) "The things which shall be hereafter"---the third division which includes the rest of the book or chapters 4-22. It is this section that is a book of prophecy (1:3).

2. The secret symbols of the writing of this book (v. 20). A mystery is not something incomprehensible, but something not as yet revealed and known to God's people.

STUDY IN REVELATION

I. THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS (2:1-7).

1. The church (v. 1).

- (1) This church was founded in A.D. 58 by the apostle Paul (Acts 19:1-7). He addressed the Jews in the synagogue for three months after this (Acts 19:8). Due to opposition, he separated his converts and organized them into a church (Acts 19:9). Paul preached two more years and many were added to the church (Acts 19:10-20). Finally, violent opposition forced Paul to leave for Macedonia (Acts 19:21-20:1).
- (2) The apostle left Timothy at Ephesus to labor with the church (I Tim. 1:2-3). Paul never returned to visit the church, although he did meet with the elders at Miletus, a town a few miles from Ephesus (Acts 20:28-32). Evidently, the church heeded Paul's last warning.

2. The city (v. 1).

- (1) Ephesus was situated upon the Cayster River on the side of a hill and was much celebrated for its local scenery. It lay between Smyrna and Miletus, not far from the Icarian Sea. It was the capital of Ionia. John lived here in his latter years.
- (2) In this city was the Temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world. It took 220 years to build at the expense of all Asia (Acts 19:28).
- (3) Ephesus was noted for its magnificent theater (Acts 19:29), which seated about 50,000 people.

3. The Christ (v. 1).

- (1) Christ is seen here possessing full knowledge of both pastor and people. He is competent to criticize and condemn His churches.
- (2) The description of Christ corresponds to the message He sent to the church.
- (3) The angel of the church is the pastor because: (1) Real angels are not overcomers; (2) There was no way John could have written to spirit beings, nor could he have sent the letters to such beings; (3) A spirit could not be subject to rebukes and heresies; (4) Angels do not preach as messengers to our churches.

4. The commendation (vv. 2-3,6).

- (1) The Master commends before He complains (v. 2).
- (2) This church was patient. Christ valued their waiting as well as their working (v. 2).
- (3) They could not endure heretics and guarded their pulpit (v. 2; II Cor. 11:13-15).
- (4) This church was very active for Christ (v. 3).
- (5) This orthodox church hated the deeds of heretics (v. 6). The Nicolaitanes were a sect existing at Ephesus and

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- (3) They could not endure heretics and guarded their pulpit (v. 2; II Cor. 11:13-15).
- (4) This church was very active for Christ (v. 3).
- (5) This orthodox church hated the deeds of heretics (v. 6). The Nicolaitanes were a sect existing at Ephesus and

STUDY IN REVELATION

Of all the seven letters dictated by Christ and recorded by John, the briefest is the one to the Smyrna Church. Not one word of reproach is addressed to this witnessing and suffering church. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke to them only words of commendation and encouragement.

II. THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA (2:8-11).

1. The church (v. 8).

- (1) Nothing is known as to the origin and founder of this church, but we do know that a church existed there in A.D. 96 when this epistle was written.
- (2) Paul could have been its founder as Acts 19:10 says all Asia Minor heard the gospel preached by the Apostle Paul during the two years he was at Ephesus.
- (3) As to who the pastor was when this letter was written we are uncertain, but it probably was Polycarp, himself a disciple of the Apostle John.

2. The city (v. 8).

- (1) The city of Smyrna dates from about 1500 B.C., having been founded by some piratical Greeks. It was located 40 miles north of Ephesus at the mouth of a small river, Meles. It was one of the most beautiful Greek cities ever erected.
- (2) Smyrna received its name from her traffic in the Balsam herb for which it was famous. It was the port of the fragrant perfume Myrrh. The same Greek word translated "Smyrna" in Revelation 2:8 is also translated "Myrrh" in Matthew 2:11 and John 19:39.

3. The Christ (v. 8).

- (1) The two natures of Christ can be seen in His twofold description.
- (2) His deity is seen in "the first and the last." He is the eternal Jehovah. He was the first since He existed before all things (Micah 5:2). He is the last in that He is after all things, closing all up, etc.
- (3) Since Christ was the cause of all things their sufferings had been foreordained by Him. As the last He would be with them to the end of their life and into eternity.
- (4) "Which was dead, and is alive." I have been through what you are suffering on account of your faith and fidelity. Death did it worst to Me, but I conquered.

4. The commendation (vv. 9-10).

- (1) "I know thy works." This was a working church.
- (2) "I know. . .thy tribulation." They were being subjected to persecution, affliction and oppression. They were in a city which worshipped many gods.
- (3) "I know. . .thy. . .poverty." This tribulation had produced their poverty. It cost something to be a Christian.

STUDY IN REVELATION

The Church at Pergamos was the most northern of all the seven churches in Asia Minor. The chief problem of this church was licentiousness, a sin quite common in this ancient city and our modern world.

III. THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS (2:12-17).

1. The church (v. 12).

- (1) As to its origin we are uncertain, but Paul was probably its founder. He may have planted it during his two years at Ephesus (Acts 19-20; Rom. 15:19; II Cor. 2:14).
- (2) Acts 16:7 tells us that Paul and Silas paid a visit to Mysia of which Pergamos was the capital.

2. The city (v. 12).

- (1) In a legend it was supposed to have been founded by a son of Hercules on a lofty hill. The word "Pergamos" signifies "high and lofty," or "a tower."
- (2) Pergamos was the seat of the Roman government in the province of Asia during the time of John the apostle.
- (3) In this city there was a royal library of 200,000 volumes---and all of this some 1500 years before the invention of the printing press. These books were all hand written.
- (4) Religiously, it was the headquarters of heathen worship and the home of pagan divinities. It contained temples to Aesculapius, Jupiter, Bacchus, Minerva, Apollus, and Venus. The worship of these was attended by gross immoralities.
- (5) It was the first city to establish the worship of the Roman emperor.

3. The Christ (v. 12).

- (1) Christ has a sharp two-edged sword (Rev. 1:16; 19:15). This denotes the authority of His Word---a word-sword (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).
- (2) Pergamos was a royal city possessing naturally the power of the sword.
- (3) Only the Bible could solve and settle the problems of this church. Had they been using the sword of the Spirit as they should Christ would not have threaten them with a sword.

4. The commendation (v. 13).

- (1) Christ knew the setting and environment of this church. This church was surrounded by gross immorality, intellectual paganism, false science, religious fanaticism and hostile governmental powers.
- (2) "Satan's seat" is properly "Satan's throne." Some make

it the altar of Zeus, which had the appearance of a throne. Some the worship of the Roman Caesars. Others the famous library with its heathen literature. It may have included all of these as well as the gross immorality of the city.

- (3) It is not wrong for a church to be located near the headquarters of Satan (Matt. 16:18).
 - (4) They upheld the name of Christ. The early Christians believed in the name of Christ (John 1:2), prayed in His name (John 16:23) and preached in His name (Luke 24:47).
 - (5) They had not denied the system of faith taught in the Bible.
 - (6) Antipas was pastor of the church at Pergamos and was burned to death in a brazen bull filled with fire. His name, "anti-pas," means "against all odds."
5. The complaint (vv. 14-15).
- (1) Balaam advised Balak and the princes of Moab to use the Moabite and Midianite women as instruments to draw the Israelites into idolatrous practices and criminal intercourse. By such evil practices Balaam believed Israel would incur the Divine anger and be cut off in punishment by God.
 - (2) Balaamism is the idea that fellowship with the ungodly does not contaminate the Christian. Some in the church at Pergamos took the doctrinal position of Balaam. They taught that church members could worship at heathen temples and engage in gross immorality and remain good church members.
6. The command (v. 16).
- (1) Christ told the church to repent. The entire church was to blame for permitting such to go on.
 - (2) Christ said He would fight against the heretical church members with punishment and judgment---the sword of judgment.
7. The comfort (v. 17).
- (1) Note the threefold promise to the overcomer. First, "the hidden manna." The manna in the wilderness was a type of Christ (Ex. 16:16-35; John 6:47-58), the true spiritual food for the soul.
 - (2) "A white stone"---a token of acquittal and victory.
 - (3) "A new name" known only to the receiver. A name of honor and happiness, a promotion and a glory to the bearer. Do you want such a new name? Then be an overcomer.

STUDY IN REVELATION

Thyatira was what we might call a lax church. This is the longest letter of the seven, and it is written to the church in the least important city. Thyatira is also the only church in the seven in which a woman's name is mentioned.

IV. THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA (2:18-29).

1. The church (v. 18).

- (1) This church may have been founded by Paul and Silas during their visit at Philippi when they preached to Lydia, a woman who lived at Thyatira.
- (2) There is no real proof that Lydia returned to Thyatira, nor that Paul founded a church there.

2. The city (v. 18).

- (1) Thyatira first appeared in history about 290 B.C. It was situated on the border between Mysia and Lydia, a little south of the Hyllus River, and at the northern extremity of the valley between Mount Tmolus and the southern ridge of Temnus. It was 27 miles from Sardis and a days' journey from Pergamos, and about the same distance from the sea coast.
- (2) The principle deity of the city was Apollo, worshipped as the sun-god under the surname Tyrimnas.

3. The Christ (v. 18).

- (1) The term "the Son of God" denotes Christ's oneness with the Father in nature and essence. Christ is the only begotten of the Father by an eternal generation.
- (2) "Eyes like unto a flame of fire." Christ has the power of penetration into the very reins of the heart of a man or church. There is no hiding from Him.
- (3) "Feet are like fine brass." Here are feet which trample down everything unclean and hostile.

4. The commendation (v. 19).

- (1) They not only worked for Christ, but they were working more for Him than they did in times past!
- (2) All their activities sprang from faith.

5. The complaint (vv. 20-21).

- (1) The woman Jezebel. She was a female of great rank and influence in the church who seduced the members of the church to mix heathen impurities with the worship of God.
- (2) This church permitted low moral standards to go unpunished. God gave her space to repent, but she showed no disposition to abandon her course.

6. The command (vv. 22-23).

- (1) This proves that Jezebel was a real woman, not a religious sect. She had committed adultery with some of the male members of the church.

- (2) Christ is soon to turn the harlot's bed into a sick bed. The base born children would be kill by God (Ex. 20:5; Rom. 5:19).
 - (3) In our day open sexual sins are committed by church members without any protest from the church. Marriage and divorce are common.
7. The consideration (v. 24).
- (1) Christ shows compassion toward the consecrated few members in this compromising church.
 - (2) The godly suffered because they had failed to purify the church of such ungodly members.
8. The counsel (v. 25).
- (1) Keep the faith until I return.
 - (2) The proper attitude of any church is to hold fast the faith in view of Christ's imminent return. Christ did not tell this church to hold fast until Antichrist came.
9. The comfort (v. 26-29).
- (1) The right to rule with Christ over the nations (Ps. 2:7-9). The overcome will share in the rule which the Father has given to Christ. See also Luke 22:29 and I Timothy 2:12.
 - (2) The morning star is Christ (Rev. 22:16; Num. 24:17). The Savior will give the believer a personal interest in Himself.
 - (3) The morning star heralds the promise of full day. When Christ comes He will turn our darkness into day.
 - (4) The morning star comes before the sunrise. Even so Christ comes as the Morning Star to take His churches out at the Rapture before the tribulation. When He comes back after the seven years He will come as "the Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2) to Israel at the beginning of the glad millennial day.

STUDY IN REVELATION

The Ephesian Church had left its first love. The Smyrna Church was opposed by Satan from outside. The Pergamos Church consisted of a mixed membership---the church and the world were sadly mixed together. The Thyatira Church had "Womanitis." The Sardis Church was a dead church---like many of our modern day churches.

I. THE CHURCH AT SARDIS (3:1-6).

1. The church (v. 1).

- (1) The founder of this church is not known to us. It may have been the fruit of the labor of Paul or some of his missionary team.
- (2) This church was greatly influenced by the community in which she resided. Whenever you find wealth you will almost always find worldliness.

2. The city (v. 1).

- (1) Sardis was 30 miles from Thyatira, about 60 miles from Pergamos and east of Smyrna about 50 miles. It was founded as early as the beginning of the Iron Age
- (2) It was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, and it was situated at the foot of Mount Tmolus, in a fine plain watered by the Pactolus River. Gold mines in the neighborhood furnished the city with such a quantity of treasures as made their riches proverbial.

3. The Christ (v. 1).

- (1) The "seven Spirits of God" describes the one Holy Spirit in His sevenfold office. (Isa. 11:1-5). The Spirit in all His perfection and fulness.
- (2) Christ has the fulness of the Spirit (John 3:34). He alone can empower the seven stars (the pastors).
- (3) Why the omission of "the seven golden candlesticks"? Did Christ find it difficult to point to the church at Sardis as a fit representative of Himself?
- (4) Christ is presented to them as the source of light and life. The difference between a dead and dark church and a live and light church is the presence of the Spirit of Christ.

4. The censure (v. 1).

- (1) There is no commendation for good works---a dead church has no good works.
- (2) She professed to have true spiritual life, but it was in name only. She was a sham and a mockery.

5. The command (vv. 2-3)

- (1) Their city was known for impregnability. The church needed to wake up and be watchful.
- (2) The church was not wholly dead, but it was about to die.
- (3) They were not fulfilling the purpose for which Christ instituted His church.

- (4) A dead church can be revived. People consider it criminal to desert a man ready to die. Then surely it must be highly unscriptural to desert a church ready to die.
 - (5) Sardis needed to return to the old paths and the old landmarks; they needed to put life in their religious exercises.
6. The caution (v. 3).
- (1) Christ warns them of swift judgment, if they did not repent. He is soon coming to judge all His churches.
 - (2) How tragic for a church to be found in the condition of this church was in at the Rapture in spite of the warnings given in the Bible of His speedy coming.
7. The Christians (v. 4).
- (1) The Lord looked over their membership roll and found a few who were faithful to Him.
 - (2) How bright the prospect of wearing a white robe and walking together in perfect mutual communion with our Lord.
 - (3) They are worthy to be in Christ's bride. Worthiness is required to have this white raiment (Rev. 19:8).
 - (4) May the Lord help us to keep white down here so that we may wear white up yonder!
8. The comfort (v. 5).
- (1) They shall "be clothed in white raiment." This looks back to verse 4.
 - (2) Their names will not be blotted out of the book of life. Jesus Christ does not say here that some names will be blotted out. Rather, He makes it plain they will not be blotted out.
 - (3) The overcomer's name will be confessed before the Father and the angels.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

II. THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA (3:7-13).

1. The church (v. 7).

- (1) The Lord Jesus had nothing but commendation for this church. We might call it an ideal church.
- (2) Most likely the church at Philadelphia was the fruit of the missionary labors of Paul or some of his co-workers.
- (3) This church out lasted the other six. The historian Gibbon speaks of "Philadelphia alone" surviving "by prophecy or by courage."

2. The city (v. 7).

- (1) The city of Philadelphia was located 15 miles from Smyrna and 28 miles southeast of Sardis. It was situated in the plain of Hermus about midway between the river of that name and the termination of Mount Tmolus.
- (2) The city of Philadelphia was founded in 140 B.C. by the king of Pergamos, Attalus Philadelphus II, from whom it received its name. In 133 B. C. the city passed into the hands of the Romans.
- (3) The lands of Mysia and Lydia and Phrygia all bordered at Philadelphia in the apostolic age. It was "an open door" for trade on the main road from Smyrna to the cities of Phrygia.

3. The Christ (v. 7).

- (1) The description of Christ in each of these letters is adapted to the condition of the church.
- (2) "Holy"---Jesus Christ in His person is essentially holy.
- (3) "True"---Christ is the perfection of truth (John 1:9,14,17; 8:40,45; 14:6; 18:37; I John 5:20).
- (4) "The key of David"---all authority and power is vested in the hands of Christ (Isa. 22:22). He opens the kingdom of Heaven. This verse strongly teaches that Christ now has the crown rights to the throne of David (Isa. 9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33; Rev. 11:15-17; Acts 15:16).
- (5) Christ possesses the highest administrative powers over His churches and kingdom. He does not share this right with some earthly church clergy. Peter opened the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles, but he left the door open. Christ can veto the decision of any church!

4. The commendation (v. 8).

- (1) This open door is not Christ, for Christ is said to open the door. This was the door of opportunity and service, a field of usefulness.
- (2) This church did not pray for doors to be opened; they were already open
- (4) "Thou hast a little strength"---the church was feeble in spiritual life and small in number (Isa. 40:29).

- (5) "Kept my word." They had not repudiated the Word, nor gone modern. They loved and obeyed the Word (John 14:21, 23).
 - (6) "Not denied my name." They would not publicly renounce Christ before cruel magistrates.
5. The confirmation (v. 9).
- (1) A Jewish synagogue bitterly opposed this church. All opposition to the Lord's church is from the Prince of darkness.
 - (2) One day these false teachers will be made to worship before the feet of this church. What a glorious future await the New Testament Baptist churches!
6. The consolation (v. 10).
- (1) Keep the word and you will be kept from the universal trials coming upon the earth.
 - (2) No local suffering could be said to "come upon all the world" and "to try them that dwell upon earth."
 - (3) The ultimate fulfillment of this awaits the Rapture and the Great Tribulation. These words prove that Christ will deliver His churches from the trial as well as the period of time in which the trial occurs.
7. The crown (v. 11).
- (1) This verse demonstrates the means by which Christ is to deliver His churches from the period of world-wide suffering. It will be by the Rapture and the Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - (2) Those who do not waver in their Christian profession are to be crowned by the returning Christ. The Philadelphia Church was expected to hold fast to Christ's Word, Christ's name, Christ's patience and Christ's coming.
 - (3) Rewards are given out at Christ's return.
8. The comfort (v. 12).
- (1) "A pillar in the temple" of God. (II Sam. 18:18). The pillars of Hercules.
 - (2) "I will write upon him the name of God." The overcomer will wear the brand of Heaven; he will bear in his body the marks of God's ownership (Rev. 22:4).
 - (3) "The city of God, which is new Jerusalem." The victorious believer is a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem. (John 14:1-3; Gal. 4:26).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Four

Beginning with chapter 4 we will study "the things which shall be hereafter." We will be dealing with events which have to do with the consummation of this world. All the events from here on in the main are future. These things follow the church age, and they describe the tribulation period beginning with chapters 6 to 19. Chapters 4 to 5 describe a scene in Heaven where the churches and the saints are.

The church is mentioned 19 times in the first three chapters of this Book, but it is no mentioned once as being on earth from chapters 4 through 18. In chapters 2 and 3 we read: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." This is repeated seven times. In chapter 13:9 we read: "If anyone has an ear, let him hear." The church is left out. It seems unthinkable that God would omit mention of the church if it were still on earth during these devastating judgments.

I. THE THRONE IN HEAVEN (4:1-3).

1. The door opened in Heaven (v. 1).

- (1) This verse begins and ends with the same word in the original, "after these things." This takes in the entire church age, and marks the third division of the Book (1:19). The events beginning at this point occur after Christ's dealings with His churches on earth.
- (2) Heaven is here open to receive John (cf. 3:8,10-11; II Cor. 12:2-4). Heaven is opened again twice after this in the Book (15:5; 19:11).
- (3) The trumpet-like voice was the same as in chapter 1:10.
- (4) John is here raptured through the opened door in Heaven like the saints will be at the Rapture (I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:52).
- (5) "Come up hither"---this Christ says to His churches and the saints at the Rapture (S. of S. 2:10; John 14:1-3; I Thess. 4:17; II Thess. 2:1). John is like a living saint who will be translated (John 21:22).
- (6) "Shew thee things which shall be hereafter." These things will not happen until the church is in Heaven with Christ as was John. Prophecy has its source in Heaven.

2. The throne and the throne sitter (v. 2).

- (1) In the twinkling of an eye John is in Heaven (I Cor. 15:52). He then begins to describe the heavenly tabernacle of which the earth was a type (Heb. 7:1-6,24). Note "in the spirit" (1:10; 17:3; 21:10).
- (2) "A throne was set in heaven"---a picture of the universe under God's sovereign control (I Chron. 29:11; Ps. 9:7; 103:19). The Book of Revelation is the "throne room" of the Bible, and the word "throne" occurs at least 37 times in the Book. It opens with a throne (1:4) and closes

- with a throne (Rev. 22:3).
- (3) "One sat on the throne"---God the Father (5:13; 7:10; 19:4). Some say Christ (3:21; 6:16). No description is given of the sitter (I Tim. 6:16) other than what follows.
3. The description of the throne-sitter (v. 3).
- (1) The sardine stone is blood-red, the jasper purple or violent, and the emerald is green (a color we never get tired looking at with our eyes).
 - (2) The rainbow is first mentioned as the sign of the Noahic Covenant (Gen. 9:13-16). It was originally the sign of covenant mercy founded on acceptable sacrifice (Gen. 8). It is a symbol of God's everlasting covenant. It shows that God is a covenant-keeping God.
 - (3) The rainbow is mentioned in Ezekiel's vision of the glory of God (Ezek. 1:28). It is mentioned again in Revelation (10:1).

II. THE ELDERS ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE (4:4-5).

1. The twenty-four elders in Heaven (v. 4).
- (1) The word "seats" is in the Greek thronos, the word for "throne."
 - (2) Who are these favored individuals, seated in state, and dignified with crowns?
 - A. Some say they are angels, but angels are never called elders in the Bible. They are all the same age being created at one time.
 - B. They are redeemed men (Rev. 5:8-10). The term "elder" is used only of men. They wear white raiment (3:5) and crowns (2:10; 3:11) as promised to the overcomers. They were not seen in Heaven in Isaiah 6 or Ezekiel 1-10 because prior to the resurrection of Christ all the redeemed were in the Paradise section of Hades.
 - C. There were 12 elders of Israel, the 12 sons of Jacob (Gen. 29-30). There were 12 elders of the church, the 12 apostles of Christ (I Cor. 12:28). See Rev. 21:12-14.
 - (3) Why 24 elders? The O.T. priesthood was represented by 24 orders of priests (I Chron. 24-25; Luke 1:5). There were 24,000 Levites who served the house of God (I Chron. 23:3-4). God was to be praised with 24 instruments of music (I Chron. 25:31). The Temple had 24 porters (I Chron. 26:17-19). The twenty-four elders are the chief priests of the heavenly courses (I Pet. 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10; 20:6).
 - (4) They have white garments (4:4)---ordinary priestly attire (Ex. 28:42; Lev. 6:10; 16:4). They have harps, songs, and golden bowls---priestly employment (I Chron. 25:3-6; 5:11-13).
 - (5) The 24 priestly courses of the Levites represented the whole body of the people of Israel, putting their hands upon the sacrifices and praying in behalf of the worshippers. These in Revelation represents the O.T. and N.T. saints caught out at the Rapture.

- (6) "Clothed in white raiment"---the heavenly attire of the saints in Heaven (Rev. 7:9; 19:8,14).
 - (7) "On their heads crowns of gold"---crown of victory given out at the judgment seat of Christ (II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4). The Rapture has occurred, for these elders are already crowned.
2. The throne of judgment (v. 5).
- (1) The lightnings and thunderings remind us of Sinai (Ex. 19:16).
 - (2) There is an alluding to the lights of the earthly sanctuary (Ex. 37:17; Heb. 9:2).
 - (3) "The seven Spirits of God" point to the Holy Spirit in all of His gifts and fulness (Isa. 11:2-3; I Cor. 12:4-5; Rev. 3:1).

III. THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES BEFORE THE THRONE (4:6-8).

1. The sea of glass and the living creatures (v. 6; Ezek. 1:22; 24:10).
- (1) The sea of glass is before the throne on all four sides, separating the throne of God from all His creatures surrounding it. This is the antitype of the laver in the tabernacle (Ex. 30:18-21) and the sea in the temple (I Kings 7:23; II Chron. 4:2-6), both were used for cleansing the priests before they could minister in the work of the Lord.
 - (2) In John's account the sea is not moving water but still as crystal. It is a literal sea of glass for men for men are said to stand on it (Rev. 15:2). The sea before the throne is motionless, for pure humanity dwells there.
 - (3) The tabernacle was placed in the midst of the camp of Israel, so in the throne of God here. The priests were round about that, so are the twenty four elder-priests here. There were seven lamps on the candlestick, so there are seven Spirits before the throne here. There were four princes that were standard-bearers, who were placed at the four corners of the camp, so here four living creatures as standard-bearers. Judah at the east, whose symbol was a lion; Ephraim at the west, whose symbol was an ox; Reuben at the south, whose symbol was a man; Dan at the north, whose symbol was an eagle.
 - (4) The identity of the four living creatures.
 - A. They are not the four gospels, for the creatures call forth wrath on the earth (Rev. 15:7) and worship God.
 - B. The word "beasts" is zoon in the Greek, and it means "living creatures." They are not deity for they are called creatures. Deity is not created.
 - C. They are round about the throne, on each side, but also in the midst of the throne, closer to God than any of His creatures. They are the highest of the angelic hierarchy. They are vibrant with life. Hence called

living creatures. They are real beings, not symbols (Rev. 4:9; 5:14; 6:1,3,5,7; 15:7).

D. "Full of eyes before and behind" showing their great power to see objects around them---nothing escapes their view.

2. The appearance of these creatures (v. 7; Ezek. 1:5-6,10).

(1) Again we see the standards of the order of Israel camped around the tabernacle (Num. 2:2). The lion is the king of beasts (Prov. 30:30), the ox the chief of cattle, the eagle the chief of birds, and man the head of creation. The lion and the eagle were unclean by the law.

(2) We also see the cherubim over the ark of the covenant (Ex. 20:17-22; Ezek. 1:12; 10:20-22). Consider Isaiah 6:1-7 and Ezekiel 1:13 here.

3. The work of the four living creatures (v, 8).

(1) They have six wings like Isaiah's seraphim (Isa. 6:3).

In Ezekiel they have four wings (Ezek. 1:6).

(2) "They rest not day and night"---they are immortal then.

(3) They worship and adore the holiness of God. God is perfectly holy in creation, redemption, and the consummation of all things.

IV. THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE ELDERS WORSHIP GOD (4:9-11).

1. The four living creature praise God because of creation (v. 9; Luke 2:13-14).

(1) Angels cannot praise God for redemption, seeing they were never lost. They can praise God for election.

(2) This is all happening in the Heaven of Heavens where God's throne is (I Kings 22:19; Ps. 89:5-7; 103:19-22). The Third Heaven is north of this earth (Isa. 14:13; Ezek. 1:4).

2. The elders worship God because of creation (vv. 10-11).

(1) This worship doubtless includes all the glorified saints as well as the elders. This is their first response after the Rapture and the reward seat.

(2) We will lay our rewards at God's feet. Our faithfulness was because of His faithfulness. We accomplished only what He willed and enabled us to do through Christ. All things are of God. What if by unfaithfulness you have no crown to cast down?

(3) They see God as the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1; Acts 17:24; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Rev. 10:16). Without creation there would have been no redemption. There is not a theistic evolutionist or an Arminian in the crowd.

(4) Verse 11 shows why God created all things---because He wanted to do so (Prov. 16:4; Isa. 43:7; Rom. 11:36).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Five

In chapter five the vision of the throne in Heaven is continued that was begun in chapter 4. Two additional features are added: a book of seven seals and the slain Lamb.

I. THE BOOK OF SEVEN SEALS IN THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD (5:1-4).

1. The seven-seal book (v. 1).

- (1) The books of the ancient consisted of skins of parchment rolled up together upon a round piece of wood and fastened with strings (Isa. 29:11; 34:4; Ezek. 2:9-10; Jer. 32:10-15).
- (2) A part of verse 1 would better read: "A book written within, and sealed on the backside with seven seals"---the contents being secret until the seals were broken.
- (3) This book is the title deed to the redeemed of God's inheritance (Ps. 24:1-2; 115:16). Its contents reveal the foreordained process by which our Lord will claim our inheritance for us. This is the revelation proper and covers the things from here to the end of the Book (Rev. 1:1).
- (4) Daniel was inspired to deliver a series of prophecies concerning the setting up of Christ's kingdom. His book was sealed up (Dan. 12:4,8-9). This is the book of Daniel's prophecies now ready to be fulfilled (Rev. 22:10).
- (5) This book also concerns the year of jubilee for Israel after their 490 years of servitude and subjection (Ps. 2; 37:11,34; Rom. 8:20-21). This is the year of Israel's restoration, restitution, reparation, and liberation.
- (6) Roman law required a will to be sealed seven times. Seven seals indicate it was firmly sealed, and that only a qualified person could open it. Only its Author knew its contents.

2. The proclamation of the strong angel (v. 2).

- (1) A kinsman redeemer is sought (Lev. 25:23-25,48; Ruth 1-4).
- (2) One must be found who can claim the uttermost parts of the earth (Ps. 2:8). The property must be restored to those whom it had been wrested and confiscated. A kinsman must institute the prosecutions for the ejection of the usurper.

3. No kinsman redeemer could be found in all the universe (v. 3).

- (1) The Greek reads "no one" here. The statement comprehends all the creation of God, even angels, demons, and the Devil.
- (2) No angel could qualify, for it was man's lost estate that must be reclaimed.
- (3) Not even the million of saints around the throne could qualify because it was their estates which must be restored.

(4) The Devil and the demons have no desire to see man's inheritance restored, neither do they have the power to do it.

4. John weeps (v. 4).

- (1) John wept at man's terrible unworthiness in doing anything to redeem himself. This was not the emotions of a disappointed curiosity as some foolishly suppose.
- (2) No person could be found. The scroll remained sealed. The title deed remained unclaimed. Arminianism is wrong!
- (3) The crisis hour had come in human history, and it seems no one can meet the crisis.

II. THE LAMB WORTHY TO RECEIVE THE BOOK (5:5-7).

1. The Lion of the tribe of Judah (v. 5).

- (1) A title of Christ who came from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:9-10; I Chron. 5:2; Heb. 7:14).
- (2) The Root of David is another title of Christ (Isa. 11:1,10; Matt. 1:1; 22:42-45; Rev. 22:10). As a man Christ was of the family of David; as God He was the root or Creator of David.
- (3) "Hath prevailed to open the book"---in the past tense and looks back to Calvary where Christ was triumphant over the enemies of all of God's elect (Col. 2:14-15; Ex. 6:6).

2. The slain Lamb in Heaven (v. 6).

- (1) Instead of a Lion, the fiercest of all creatures, John saw a lamb, the meekest of all creatures. He see not a conquering King, but a suffering servant.
- (2) This Lamb was not on the throne, but in the midst of the company there, among the elders and living creatures before God's throne. Christ was said to sit on His Father's throne in Rev. 3:20, now He is seen standing to take His kingdom by great judgments.
- (3) The term "lamb" occurs in Revelation 28 times and is a title of Christ (Isa. 53:7; John 1:29,36; Acts 8:32; I Pet. 1:19). In Israel a lamb suffered for the sins of a guilty people (Num. 28:3-4).
- (4) The seven horns denote universal and irresistible power (Luke 1:69; Matt. 28:18). The eyes are His omniscience (Zech. 3:9; 4:10). Christ has all power and all knowledge even as the incarnate One. The seven lamps before the throne represented the Holy Spirit among the Godhead and here that Christ was anointed of the Spirit (Acts 10:38).

3. The Lamb takes the book (v. 7).

- (1) Christ comes up to the seat of God, a thing which a mere creature could not do without a mediator.
- (2) He had already given Christ the authority to open the book and to accomplish the events by successive periods of time (Rev. 1:1).
- (3) His purpose in taking the book is to open it and to reveal its contents.

III. THE LIVING CREATURES AND THE ELDERS WORSHIP THE LAMB (5:8-10).

1. The elders and the living creatures fall down before the Lamb (v. 8).

- (1) This is the usual posture of profound worship (Matt. 2:2; I Cor. 14:25).
- (2) "Before the Lamb"---the incarnate Son of God. They are rendering Him Divine honor even in the Father's presence, showing He is truly God.
- (3) Harps in Heaven (Rev. 14:2; 15:2). It is a well-known stringed instrument of music (I Sam. 16:16; Ps. 33:2; 49:4; 137:2; I Cor. 14:7). Josephus describes it as having ten strings and as struck with a key. Our non-musical friends won't feel at home in Heaven when this happens. This Scripture reveals that God loves stringed music, and Heaven there will be plenty of it.
- (4) Some scholars believe the participle, "having," is to be constructed, not with both beasts and elders, but only with elders. Angels are not redeemed.
- (5) "Golden vials full of odours"---an allusion to the golden censer full of incense which ascended upward and was of a sweet smell (Lev. 16:12; Ex. 30:34; 37:29). "Vial" means "a bowl, bason, goblet, or cup."
- (6) The golden bowls represent the prayers of the saints. Their unanswered prayers are stored up in bowls awaiting the personal attention of the Lord. These prayers concern the second coming of Christ and the kingdom (Matt. 6:10).
- (7) Our prayers are sweet incense before God's throne (Ps. 141:2). In the tabernacle there was an altar of incense just outside the vail before the mercy seat (Ex. 30:8; Luke 1:8-10). Compare with Heb. 13:15 and I Thess. 5:17.
- (8) There is no sanction here of Rome's dogma of the saints praying for us and offering our prayers to God. These prayers were prayed by the saints while they were living on earth. Nor is there any warrent here for Christians praying for the saints in Heaven. We must pray only to God (Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9).
- (9) Compare with Revelation 8:3.

2. The new song in Heaven (v. 9).

- (1) "A new song"---the song of redemption, however old it may be, is still forever new. The word "new" here in the Greek denotes what is new in kind, not new in point of time. It is new compared with the song of Israel at the Red Sea (Ex. 15). It is sung when Christ takes a new office and work.
- (2) "Worthy to take the book"---He alone in the universe was found worthy to be the instrument of this revelation.
- (3) "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God"---the saints were redeemed when Christ died at Calvary (Eph. 1:7). This proves the twenty-four elders represent the redeemed saints. This cannot apply to angels. The Alexandrine manuscript omits "us" but not the Textus Receptus.

- (4) The price of redemption is the blood of the Lamb (I Peter 1:18-19).
 - (5) "Out of every. . .nation"---God's people are redeemed out of the mass of mankind. This is a limited redemption. It can only be applied to those who are actually redeemed.
3. The redeemed saints are made kings and priests (v. 10; 1:6; 20:6).
- (1) This is through our union with Christ who made us such by His death and resurrection.
 - (2) The Alexandrine, Sinaitic, and other versions read "them" instead of "us." The Textus Receptus must be preferred here and always.
 - (3) This can mean no less than all the redeemed saints, from the beginning of time to the end of the world, will reign over the earth (Ps. 149:5-9; Dan. 7:22; Matt. 19:28; I Cor. 6:2-3; II Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26-27; 20:4).
 - (4) Some suppose the heavenly Jerusalem will be suspended in the air and that David and converted Israel will be in Jerusalem upon earth. Christ is going to reign, not in the air, but in Jerusalem in Palestine (Zeph. 3:14-16) and we are to reign over the earth!
 - (5) This verse locates the Millennial Reign of Christ on earth, not in Heaven where non-millennialists believe it to be. This reign is future also "shall reign." "They reign" of the Alexandrine must be rejected here.

IV. THE WORSHIP OF THE ANGELS (5:11-12).

1. The angels share the anthem of the redeemed multitude (v. 11; Heb. 12:22; Ps. 68:17).
- (1) The number of redeemed will be several billion, but the number of angels will be greater.
 - (2) What an innumerable throng in one mighty symphony of praise.
2. The mighty sevenfold anthem of praise to the Lamb (v. 12).
- (1) For the work of creation there was a threefold anthem to God (4:11), and a sevenfold for the Lamb's work of redemption.
 - (2) These are the perfections of which Christ emptied Himself in His humiliation. He laid aside not His goodness, but His greatness. He gave up His power to become a servant; His riches to become poor; wisdom by making Himself of no reputation; His strength by becoming weak and subject to death; honor to become a man of obscure birth; glory for shame and disgrace; blessing to become a curse for us. Now we see His native right restored. He who was emptied on earth is seen exalted and magnified in the highest Heaven!

V. THE WORSHIP OF ALL CREATION (5:13-14).

1. All creation re-echoes this exalted theme (v. 13).
- (1) A scene more sublime than this cannot be seen. God and Christ, all the redeemed host of blood-washed saints, and

- an innumerable company of angels---the several melody of voices of men and angels---billions of harps playing, etc.
- (2) "Every creature" can mean no less than all created things. "In heaven"---angels, redeemed men, sun, moon, stars, and the fowls of Heaven. "On the earth"---demons, fallen angels, men, beasts, creeping things, mountains, hills, and trees. "Under the earth"---men in Hell, metals, minerals etc. "In the sea"---fish and all kinds of sea creatures.
2. The four living creatures wish it might be so and the elders worship (v. 14). "Him that liveth for ever"---either God or Christ (Rev. 4:9-10). Some versions omit "him" and leave it to refer either to God or Christ, or both.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Six

Chapter 6 marks an important milestone in the progressive revelation of the end of the age. Beginning in this chapter, we see Christ opening the seven-sealed book which brings tremendous events on earth. We see the terrible judgments which will fall upon the earth after the saints and the churches are caught up to glory. This is the beginning of the tribulation period or the seventieth week of Daniel (Deut. 4:29-30; Jer. 30:4-11; Dan. 9:24-27; 12:1; Matt. 24:4-31; I Thess. 1:9-10; 5:4-9). This is God's judgments upon Israel and the Gentile nations. It does not concern the church whose judgment is at the Bema Seat of Christ in Heaven.

I. THE FIRST SEAL---THE WHITE HORSE AND HIS RIDER (6:1-2; cf. Zech. 6:1-3).

1. The Lamb opens the first seal (v. 1).

- (1) The Lamb by the right of purchase redemption now takes the power of redemption. He paid the price at Calvary, He now take the power to rule and reign in righteousness.
- (2) The judgments begin here and extend to 19:4. Four horses are seen in succession as the Lamb opens the seals.
- (3) "The noise of thunder"---the roar of thunder indicates the beginning of a storm. Here it is the beginning of God's stormy judgments on earth.
- (4) "One of the four beasts"---one of the four living creatures before the throne of God in Heaven.

2. The white horse and his rider (v. 2).

- (1) This white horse rider is Antichrist (Dan. 9:26; 11:36-43; II Thess. 2:7-8; Rev. 13:1-8). He is a great political leader and military strategist. He rides on a white horse like a war lord of old. Napoleon and George Washington rode white horses. He is the head of the revived Roman Empire and the coming world ruler.
- (2) We must not confuse this rider with the One in Revelation 19:11. Christ is still in Heaven breaking the seals when this rider appears. The rider in Revelation 6 is Antichrist; the One in Revelation 19 is Christ. Here we see the imitative work of the Devil.
- (3) Reasons why the white horse rider in Revelation 6 is not the same as the One in chapter 19.
 - a. The rider in Revelation 6 does not come from Heaven. He rides across the earth.
 - b. The rider in chapter 6 is followed by the red, the black, and the pale horses. In chapter 19 Christ is followed by the armies of Heaven (Rev. 19:14).
 - c. The rider in chapter 6 is given a crown. Christ has obtained already all power (Matt. 28:18). He needs no crown to be given to Him. He needs only to take His great power and reign (Rev. 11:17). When Christ comes from Heaven He has many crowns (Rev. 19:12).

- d. This rider has a bow; Christ comes with a sword and a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15).
- e. Christ's reign does not bring famine and death, but peace and prosperity.

II. THE SECOND SEAL---THE RED HORSE AND HIS RIDER (6:3-4).

1. The second beast tells John to come and see (v. 3). Notice there are four beasts and four horses.
2. The red horse and his rider (v. 4).
 - (1) This horse symbolizes war, strife, and violence as the rest of the verse indicates (Jer. 25:3; Ezek. 14:21; Dan. 9:26; 11:33; Matt. 24:6).
 - (2) The rider of each horse is the same person. The different horses with their colors only indicate the changed conditions of the different periods of his reign.
 - (3) This national and international war and blood shed.
 - (4) "Power was given him"---by the Devil and God's permission.
 - (5) "To take peace from the earth"---no universal disarmament coming. Peace treaties will become worthless scraps of paper.
 - (6) "They shall kill one another"---human life will have little value. Blood will be spilt like water. We are being conditioned today to accept violence and murder.

III. THE THIRD SEAL---THE BLACK HORSE AND HIS RIDER (6:5-6).

1. The black horse of famine (v. 5).
 - (1) Famine always follows war. There is no one to work the fields. Crops and farms are destroyed by battle (Lev. 26:20; Jer. 14:1-2; Lam. 4:8-9; 5:10; Hag. 1:11).
 - (2) This is the opposite of the reign of Christ (Ezek. 36:29-30).
 - (3) "A pair of balances"---a set of scales weighing and selling grain. This is a symbol of scarcity of provision. This means food rationing again (Rev. 13:17).
2. The great scarcity of food and the high price of food (v. 6).
 - (1) A voice in Heaven utters these words. The famine comes on earth from secondary causes, but primarily from the seat of God in Heaven. Man may rule, but God overrules.
 - (2) "A measure of wheat for a penny"---one denarius which was a day's wages for a working man in John's day (Matt. 20:2,9). A measure was about three pints---the daily ration of a slave.
 - (3) "Three measures of barley"---a cheaper grain generally fed to animals but enough here for three meals a day for one man. What will his family eat if it takes all he makes to feed himself? A denarius would have bought sixteen measures of wheat in Cicero's time and twenty in the days of Trajan. In John's day a denarius would buy eight times this much.
 - (4) "hurt not the oil and wine"---these were used in medicine in those days (Luke 10:34). Oil was also a source of energy (Matt. 25:1-13). Compare Isaiah 24:7-11.

IV. THE FOURTH SEAL---THE PALE HORSE AND HIS RIDER (6:7-8).

1. The Lamb opens the fourth seal (v. 7).
2. The pale-green horse brings pestilence (Matt. 24:7).
 - (1) Literally a pale green like young vegetation. So deadly is this plague that Hades follows as the reaper to gather the awful harvest (Isa. 5:14; 28:15,18).
 - (2) "The fourth part of the earth to kill"---this is the greatest destruction of human life in history. The present world population is four billion. This would mean one billion people will die. This is more people than lives in Europe.
 - (3) "The beasts of the earth"---literal beasts (Lev. 26:22; Deut. 32:24; Ezek. 14:21). God has in the past used locusts, birds, flies, frogs, worms, hornets, lions, bears, and serpents to execute His judgment.
 - (4) This also includes no doubt the figurative beasts who are mentioned (Prov. 28:15; Dan. 7:17; Rev. 13).

V. THE FIFTH SEAL---THE TRIBULATION MARTYRS (6:9-11).

1. John sees the souls of the tribulation martyrs in Heaven underneath the altar (v. 9; Matt. 24:9).
 - (1) This seal introduces a new feature in the heavenly scenery, the altar of burnt offerings, where blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar (Ex. 29:12; Lev. 4:7,17-18; 5:9). These slain saints are regarded as a sacrifice, not to make atonement, but a poured-out drink-offering (Phil. 2:17; II Tim. 4:6).
 - (2) "Under the altar"---these tribulation martyrs are in Heaven in a disembodied state, having offered their lives for their Lord. They are under the blood of Christ which was sprinkled in the heavenly tabernacle.
 - (3) The price of holding to the Word of God in the tribulation is death. All the saints caught out at the Rapture are given glorified bodies; these tribulation martyrs are disembodied. This group is primarily the Jewish remnant who will be saved after the Rapture by the preaching of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:1-12) or by reading the Bible (John 20:31). These have died under the four-horse judgments.
 - (4) "The souls of them that was slain for the word of God"---the soul of man is that vital, spiritual, and immortal part of man which cannot die with the body (Matt. 10:28). Under an extraordinary impulse of the Spirit John can see souls (Rev. 20:4).
2. The tribulation martyr's desire to see justice meted out to their persecutors (v. 10; 11:18; 19:2).
 - (1) They are seen in a condition of sorrow because of their martyrdom. There is both crying and tears in Heaven (Rev. 5:4). These souls are conscious and know that those who executed them are still alive on the earth and that they have not been punished for their crime.

- (2) The sin of murdering the martyrs is so enormous that their souls cry to God, the moral Governor of the universe, to vindicate His own character and faithfulness (Gen. 4:10).
 - (3) The cry for vengeance on their enemies does not fit with this Christian dispensation (Matt. 5:39,44; Luke 6:28; Rom. 12:14; I Peter 3:9; 4:1). This is the dispensation of the law and the prophets (Ps. 79:5; 54:5; 143:12). It does not fit the economy of the church, but it does with Israel (Deut. 23:6; Matt. 5:43).
3. The answer returned to the cry of the tribulation martyrs (v. 11).
- (1) "White robes were given to every one of them"---disembodied souls can wear clothes (I Sam. 28:14; Rev. 3:4-5; 7:9,13-14).
 - (2) The soul of a saved person has some kind of a temporary body between death and the resurrection; otherwise, these souls could not wear clothes (Luke 16:19-31). They will not get their bodies until the end of the tribulation (Rev. 20:4).
 - (3) "They should rest"---these disembodied souls of the tribulation martyrs are near God's throne in Heaven and they rest in a state of heavenly bliss (Job 3:11-18; Luke 16:25; Rev. 14:13).
 - (4) "For a little season"---less than seven years. It would be hard to apply these words to 2,000 years of church history as some do.
 - (5) "Fellowservants. . .be killed." This is a reference to what is mentioned later in the Book (Rev. 11:3, 7-8; 13:10,15; 17:6).

VI. THE SIXTH SEAL---GREAT PHYSICAL CONVULSIONS (6:12-17).

1. The seismic, solar, and lunar disturbances (v. 12; cf. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18).
 - (1) It is not proper to say these things prefigure the overthrow of the powers of the earth by great social and political convulsions. An earthquake means an earthquake, the sun the sun, the moon the moon, etc.
 - (2) This is to be taken literally. These words harmonize with Matthew 27:7 and with other scripture (Isa. 13:9-10; Hag. 2:6-9; Joel 2:10,30-31; Zeph. 1:15).
 - (3) This is a judgment on the earth-dwellers, and it shows God's displeasure at the persecution of His servants.
 - (4) The shaking of the mountains is not a new or strange thing for God to do (Ex. 10:21-23; 19:18; 20:18-19; I Kings 19:11; Matt. 27:45,50-51).
 - (5) The vast worldwide network of unstable earthquake belts around the world will suddenly begin to slip on a global basis and a gigantic earthquake will ensue. There will also probably be volcanic eruptions, spewing out dust in the atmosphere. This will darken the sun and make the moon appear red.

2. Stellar disturbances (v. 13).
 - (1) This points to neeteors falling to the ground and which hit as hard as unripe fruit. We call these "falling stars."
 - (2) The earthquake in verse 12 includes the heavens as well as the earth (Matt. 24:29; Hag. 2:6; Joel 3:16). The Greek word seismos literally means "shaking."
 - (3) Will this swarm of giant meteorites trigger the gobal earthquake? God only knows.
3. The Heaven and the earth are moved (v. 14; cf. Isa. 34:4).
 - (1) The earth's crust will be disturbed by the impacting asteroids, the volcanic eruptions, and the gobal earthquakes. This continental drift will make it appear to people on earth that the heavens are moving in the opposite direction. Or, it may mean tornados or something else.
 - (2) "Every mountain and island"---islands are submerged mountains. Nothing like this has ever happened before.
4. The great social disturbances (vv. 15-17).
 - (1) This mighty display of God's power will gain the attention of the ungodly world (v. 15).
 - A. These men are distinct from the sun, moon, and stars in the preceding verses. It is in consequence of the changes which come upon these objects of nature that the kings of the earth hid themselves. Their doing so cannot be exegitical of the other. This kills the amillennial idea.
 - B. All levels of society are referred to. Everyone is in the same predicament.
 - C. These terrifying convulsions alarm the political, industrial, intellectual, and military leaders of the world (Luke 21:25-27). It also alarms the common people some of whom are in slave nations.
 - (2) Men do not flee to Christ but to the rock and the mountains (v. 16).
 - A. The humanists, socialists, atheists, communists, and evolutionists will realize that God is God (Ps. 2:1-12).
 - B. Although the rocks may collapse on top of them due to physical conditions, they prefer death in a cave to facing the wrath of the Lamb!
 - (3) The great day of His wrath (v. 17).
 - A. Compare with other scripture (Ps. 2:5; Isa. 2:10-19; 13:6-13; Zeph. 1:14-15; Nah. 1:5-8).
 - B. The day of wrath is not a 24-hour period, but it covers the whole period of the tribulation.
 - C. The day of wrath (I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Ps. 76:7-12) is in constrast to the present day of grace (Rom. 5:9; 6:14).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Seven

I. THE SEALING OF THE 144,000 ISRAELITES (7:1-8).

1. The four angels and the four directions (v. 1).

- (1) "After these things"---after the sixth seal. Chapter 7 is an interval between the sixth and seventh seals. It deals with two major groups of saints in the tribulation. Here are two companies of saved people after the Rapture. The first group is out of one nation; the second out of all nations.
- (2) "Four corners of the earth"---does not mean the earth is flat. The same Greek word is translated "four quarters" in Revelation 20:8. It means the four directions as the four winds are also mentioned.
- (3) Angels control the weather. Many prophecies of the tribulation involve freak weather conditions and storms of unprecedented intensity (Dan. 7:2; 8:8; 11:4; Luke 21:25-26).
- (4) This may explain why there will not be any rain for the first three and a half years (Rev. 11:3-6). Without the wind there can be no rain.

2. The angel with the seal of God (vv. 2-3).

- (1) Some believe the first four are the first four who later sound the trumpet and that this angel is Christ. I doubt it is Christ. Rather, it is a mighty angel.
- (2) "From the east"---the quarter from which God's glory often manifest itself.
- (3) This may include the inward seal of the Spirit (II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; II Tim. 2:19). But it seems to be some physical mark that others can see, like the blood sprinkled on the lintel and doorposts at the slaying of the firstborn (Rev. 14:1).
- (4) This mark is in contrast to the seal put upon the beast worshippers (Rev. 13:16-18). This mark is on their forehead and shows they are under God's special protection (Ezek. 9:4; Rev. 14:1; 22:4). They are preserved as a special remnant during the tribulation.

3. The 144,000 Israelites (vv. 4-8).

- (1) This is a 144,000 literal descendants of Jacob. The 12 tribes are not lost to God. Other Israelites will be saved in the tribulation, but they will die a martyr's death.
- (2) This number is as literal as the 7,000 prophets in I Kings 19. There are many places in the Bible where 12 tribes are found in national Israel (Gen. 49:28; Ex. 28:1; Josh. 4:4; Ezek. 47:13,21-22; Matt. 19:28; Acts 26:6-7; Jas. 1:1), but where do we find 12 tribes in the church?

- (3) The tribes of Israel are to be restored (Isa. 49:5-6; Ezek. 47:13-48:29). Their names are inscribed upon the foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14) as well as on the millennial city of Jerusalem (Ezek. 48:3-35; Matt. 19:28).
- (4) There is no point in enumerating the 12 tribes by name if they are not literally meant.. Why mention Israel if the church is meant?
- (5) The Seventh-Day Adventists make this 144,000 the faithful of their communion who will keep the seven-day sabbath. The Jehovah's Witnesses make them the overcomers of their religious society. Other sects do much the same. We should ask such people: "Which tribe are you from?"
- (6) This 144,000 are called "servants" in Revelation 7:3, a word applied to gospel ministers in the New Testament.
- (7) Dan and Ephraim are omitted here. Dan may be omitted because many believe the Antichrist will come from Dan (Gen. 49:17; Jer. 8:16). Then, too, Dan and Ephraim were the first to lead Israel into idolatry (I Kings 12:25-30; Deut. 29:18-21; Jud. 18:30; Lev. 24:10-16). Dan is mentioned in the distribution of the millennial land (Ezek. 48:2).

II. THE UNNUMBERED COMPANY OF SAVED GENTILES WHO WILL BE MARTYRED (7: 9-10).

1. The unnumbered multitude in Heaven (v. 9).

- (1) "After this"---the sealing of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Jew is first here again, then the Gentile (Num. 23:9; Gen. 12:2-3; Deut. 32:43; Ps. 67:1-2; Isa. 11:10-11; Rom. 1:16; 15:8-12). God's blessings for the Gentiles are dependent upon the blessing of Israel and Israel is to be first blessed. True of judgment also (Rom. 2:9; 3:10).
- (2) "A great multitude, which no man could number"---Israel was numbered and on earth. These are unnumbered and in Heaven. The 144,000 were the first fruits (14:4), these are the harvest. This multitude is seen by John immediately after the 144,000 Israelites, suggesting a causal connection.
- (3) "All nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues"--- These are Gentiles converted by the two witnesses and the 144,000 Jewish evangelists. The pouring out of the Spirit (Joel 2:14-21), the effects of the Rapture, the great earthquake and fearful signs will also be used as well as Bibles and Christian literature (Acts 3:19-21). This will be the greatest soul harvest in the history of the world because in the early days of the tribulation you will have more people living on earth than ever before in history. Some from every tribe will be saved. Praise God!
- (4) "Stood before the throne"---a place of honor and favor (I Sam. 16:21-22). This proves they are in Heaven and answers the question of Revelation 6:16-17.

- (5) "Clothed with white robes"---the attire of princes and priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).
 - (6) "Palms in their hands"---an emblem of joy and triumph (John 12:13; Lev. 23:40). These have come out of the wilderness of the world to the tabernacle of God in Heaven.
2. The praise ascribed to God for salvation (v. 10).
- (1) "A loud voice"---a vast multitude would have such a voice. This shows the greatness of their affection and joy.
 - (2) No Arminian in the whole crowd! No salvation here is ascribed to free will or the church, but to God and Christ. The palm branches speak of victory, but these claim nothing for themselves.

III. THE PRAISE OF THE HEAVENLY HOST (7:11-12).

1. The angels, elders and four beasts worship God (v. 11).
- (1) The elders represent the redeemed host of the Old and New Testament saints. They are not the same as the great multitude in verse 9. The great multitude reached Heaven after the beginning of the tribulation.
 - (2) "Fell before the throne on their faces"---in token of submission and reverence.
 - (3) "Worshipped God"---by celebrating the perfections of His nature and ascribing to Him the glory of all His works.
 - (4) What a scene in Heaven in the midst of earth's darkest hour! Instead of standing in the presents of Antichrist they stand before God. Praise the Lord!
2. Their sevenfold words of praise (v. 12).
- (1) "Saying, Amen"---approving and confirming what the multitude had said (v. 10). Each of the attributes to follow in the original is preceded by the definite article, showing that God is deserving of all the blessing and glory that exists. Compare with Revelation 5:12 and note the change from "riches" to "thanksgiving."
 - (2) "Blessing"---God is blessed in Himself and the source of all blessing.
 - (3) "Glory"---the glory of His perfections and of His work in nature, providence, and salvation.
 - (4) "Wisdom"---the only wise God whose wisdom is seen in the creation and government of the world and the scheme of redemption.
 - (5) "Thanksgiving"---for mercy and grace, for all spiritual and material blessings which are enjoyed by both men and angels.

- (6) "Honor"---which is due to Him from all creatures as He is the Creator, for all His children as He is their Father, from all his servants as He is their Master.
- (7) "Power"---which He exerted in creation and redemption. He stills exerts it in providence and the government of the world.
- (8) "Might" or strength---the Almighty God, the source of everlasting strength.

IV. THE IDENTITY OF THE MARTYRED HOST (7:13-14).

1. The question of one of the twenty-four elders (v. 13) The elder is not ignorant of these as can be seen by what follows. The question is asked for John's benefit to stir him to take notice of them.
2. The elder identifies these as the martyred tribulation saints (v. 14).
 - (1) John confesses his ignorance and ascribes knowledge to the elder. This again shows the distinction between the crowned elders and the unnumbered multitude. They were redeemed out of the tribulation and John did not know them.
 - (2) "Came out of great tribulation"---the Greek can read: "Came out of the great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21). A literal translation would be "out of tribulation, the great one." "Out of" supposes them to have been in.
 - (3) "Washed their robes. . .in the blood of the Lamb." This is the garment of salvation, or justification (Rom. 5:9; Rev. 1:5). Justification is ascribed to the saints here because they believed on Christ. Their robes are white---freed from all sin. Not their own merits or works, but they wholly trusted Christ's blood and righteousness.
 - (4) People are saved in the tribulation just like they are today by faith in the blood of Christ.

V. THE HEAVENLY BLISS OF THE DISEMBODIED MARTYRED SAINTS (7:15-17).

1. They stand before the throne and serve God (v. 15).
 - (1) This is not a promise to be fulfilled during the Millennium, nor in the eternal age as this age has no temple (Rev. 21:22,25). This is the bliss of the disembodied spirits in Heaven now and then, although this bliss will continue and become greater.
 - (2) "They are before the throne of God"---the martyred tribulation saints are before the throne of God in a place of honor and prominence (Matt. 5:8; I Cor. 13:12). These are not on earth but in Heaven where God's throne is.
 - (3) "Serve him"---in the heavenly temple (Rev. 3:12; 11:19; 14:15,17; 15:5-6,8; 16:1,17). Not a place of inactivity.

- (4) "Day and night"---denotes the constancy and uninterrupted of their service. This is an allusion to the priests and Levites who served day and night. In the present state we are incapable of this continual worship. Then no weariness and anxieties in that never-ending Sabbath! No formalists or hypocrites among these. No coldness of feeling, no deadness of love, no languishing of affect-on, no distress of soul. What a day!
- (5) "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" ---Greek can read: "shall tabernacle over them." What a fellowship and communion!
2. They are satisfied (v. 16).
- (1) In the tribulation it will be illegal for believers to buy food or drink (Matt. 25:34-46; Rev. 13:17) and they are murdered when caught (Rev. 13:15; 20:4). Many will flee and spend time in hunger and thirst---in the heat of the sun (Matt. 5:6).
- (2) These words are out of Isaiah 49:10 and will be literally fulfilled of these martyrs when they reach Heaven. True also spiritually as well (John 6:35).
- (3) Their thirst due to water pollution (Rev. 16:4) will be ended. Men in Hell thirst (Luke 16:24), but Christ by thirsting for us (John 19:28) delivered us from such in Heaven. Consider also Ps. 121:5-6.
3. They are sustained and solaced (v. 17).
- (1) "Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne"---being equal with God who sit upon it and Christ sitting by the Father's side (Rev. 3:21). In Revelation 5:6 Christ was in a different position. The multitude are before the throne (Rev. 7:9) and the angels round about it (Rev. 7:11).
- (2) "Shall feed them"---feed them as a Shepherd His flock (Isa. 40:11; Ps. 23:9; 36:8). They are possessed by immortal spirits which have powers, capacities, and desires that requires gratification. They are strangers to want which arises from painful sensation, but they are not strangers to that hungering and thirsting after God. Their spiritual desires are kept in continual exercise.
- (3) In one sense the inhabitants of Heaven are as needy as those on the earth. The highest archangel that treads its courts is as dependent upon God as the smallest insect that crawls on earth.
- (4) "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"---dry their tears and later remove the occasion of tears (Rev. 21:4). They shed tears due to their persecutions on earth, seeing their possessions stolen away and their loved ones put to death. The great tribulation is for them for ever past. They are now under the tender care and comfort of the Shepherd.

VI. SOME PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. Tears in Heaven (Rev. 5:3-4). If not why are they wiped away? The saints in Heaven see us (Luke 15:6-7; Heb. 12:1), and this must cause tears. There will be tears at the judgment seat of Christ (I Cor. 3:11-15). Tears are again wiped away at the final judgment (Rev. 21:4). This may mean that all occasion of tears will be removed for ever or that our capacity to recall unpleasants things will cease (Isa. 65:17-19).
2. No man can be happy in Heaven, who has not first learned to delight in the worship of God in His church on earth. If the service of God on earth does not now delight us, from what unknown source do we expect to derive fullness of joy in Heaven? Of what rivers of pleasure do you expect to drink? There are no sensual delights there. All joy comes from its pure and spiritual service. True of the eternal state also (Rev. 22:3).
3. Worship is not merely a duty to be performed; it is a privilege which God permits us to enjoy (Ps. 27:4; 42:2; 43:4; 63:1-2; 84:1,10).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Eight

I. THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL (8:1).

1. "Seventh seal"---this last seal seems to merge into the seven trumpets and the seven bowls of wrath. Between the seals and the trumpets there is silence, but none between the trumpets and the vials.
2. This silence is in heaven, there is none on earth as the noise of battle and nature is in turmoil. There will be a day when earth shall be silent (Hab. 2:20).
3. The elders cease their harp-singing, the angels hush their voices, the glorified saints their praise, the martyred souls under the altar their cries, and the cherubim their shouts of "Holy, holy, holy."
4. This is stillness before the storm. When the other six seals were opened each seal was instantly followed by action on earth and voices in Heaven.
5. People say, "Silence is golden." It is not true in Heaven. This is the period of silent preparation for the awful judgments that are to burst forth on earth under the trumpets and vials. Something like the silence before the foreman of the jury gives a verdict.

II. THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN (8:2-6).

1. The seven angels (v. 2).
 - (1) These are probably archangels---ministers of God's providence who stand in His Divine presence and wait to obey His Divine commandments.
 - (2) These angels are carefully distinguished from other angels (Rev. 1:4; 5:11; 15:7).
 - (3) In earthly courts men stand before the king (Esth. 1:10; Dan. 1:19). These angels behold the Father's face (Matt. 18:19). Michael (Jude 9) and Gabriel (Luke 1:19) are probably two of these. The apocryphal book of Enoch names four others: Raphael, Uriel, Sarakiel, and Raguel.
 - (4) In the Old Testament trumpets were used to sound the alarm in time of war (Ex. 19:16; Num. 10:5; Judg. 6:34; 7:16; 18; Josh. 6:13-16; I Sam. 13:3; Jer. 4:5; Amos 3:6; Joel 2:1). Note especially Job 39:25, Numbers 10:9, and Zephaniah 1:14-18).
2. The angel at the golden incense altar in Heaven (v. 3).
 - (1) "Another angel"---some say this is Christ, the Angel of the covenant (I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:24). Others disagree and say he is a nameless angel with a priestly ministry for this time.

- (2) The scene is of the ancient priest in the tabernacle before the golden altar of incense (Ex. 30:1-8). A censer is a firepan (Num. 16:6-7), and it was usually made of gold (I Kings 7:50; Heb. 9:14). It was used to take fire off the altar to be carried into the Holy of Holies where the incense was added. The incense had to be kindled by the fire from the altar of burnt-offerings. Christ intercession is founded upon His sacrifice (Isa. 53:12; Rom. 8:34). It is upon this ground that the Father hears Him always (John 11:41-42). The prayers of the saints find acceptance and answer only through His intercession.
 - (3) "The prayers of the saints." Compare with Rev. 5:8. These are the unanswered prayers of the saints of all ages for deliverance (Rev. 6:10; Ps. 141:1-2; Phil. 4:18). These prayers have been in Heaven awaiting this very day.
 - (4) The Greek word for "censer" is derived from the word for frankincense (Ex. 30:34). Frankincense was presented to Christ (Matt. 2:11), who would be burnt as a sacrifice and ascend up to Heaven for us (Heb. 4:14-16).
3. Our prayers are sweet perfume to God (v. 4).
- (1) God hears the prayers of His people. "To come up" is a figurative expression, denoting acceptance of that which is presented (Acts 10:4,31). God is hearing the prayers of the tribulation saints.
 - (2) Prayers and incense went up together (Luke 1:10).
4. The angel casts the fire in his censer into the earth (v. 5).
- (1) The voices, thunderclaps, lightnings, and earthquake are the results of the fire from the altar.
 - (2) This is a second filling of the censer. "It" is not the censer but the fire from the altar---the judgment fire of God against sin.
 - (3) This happens in answer to the prayers of the saints. The prayers of the saints, perfumed with the incense of Christ's merits, gain acceptance (Deut. 32:22; Ps. 18:6-9; Ezek. 10; 39:6; 38:22; Hos. 8:14; Amos 1:4,7,10,12). This is a baptism in fire.
5. The seven angels prepare to sound (v. 6).

III. THE FIRST TRUMPET---JUDGMENT ON VEGETATION (8:7).

1. This resembles the seventh Egyptian plague (Ex. 9:19,22-26). Micah and others hints at these plagues to come again (Micah 7:15; Isa. 11:15-16; Jer. 23:7-8).
2. There was hail and fire but no blood in the land of Egypt. The first trumpet has blood (Joel 2:30; 1:18-20; Job 1:16; 38:22-23). This is probably blood-colored water. Blood itself is 90% water.
3. The exemption of Revelation 7:2-3 has now been removed. The trees and the grass receive the first judgment blow. One-third is destroyed and man and beast suffer (Deut. 11:15; Ps. 78:47-48).

4. "Third part of the trees were burnt up"---one third of the forest land of the world.
5. "All green grass burnt up"---not a third of it, but all of it. This may include such grains as wheat, rice, and oats. With the loss of this vegetation will come soil erosion, floods, mudslides, and air pollution. Ecology will be all out of balance.

IV. THE SECOND TRUMPET---JUDGMENT ON THE WATERS OF COMMERCE AND TRANSPORTATION (8:8-9).

1. Under the First Trumpet the forest, fruit, and pastures were affected. Now the marine life is affected. Here is a bloody sea filled with sinking ships and dead, putrefying, stinking fish with white bellies upturned on the bosom of a scarlet sea.
2. This great burning mass had the appearance of a great mountain. This is not history fulfilled in the past, but a prophecy yet to be fulfilled.
3. This is probably a gaint meteorite or asteroid (Luke 21:11). This is God's judgment against the sea (Amos 7:4; Hosea 4:3) and a repeat of the first Egyptian plague (Ex. 7:19-21; Ps. 105:29).
4. The sea may be chemically changed to blood, or the blood from destroyed marine life may literally bring this to pass. One-third of the marine life dies under the second trumpet. This will have an effect on the world's food chains.
5. "Third part of the ship were destroyed"---naval vessels and merchant ships. The Mediterranean Sea is the permanent home of the U. S. Sixth Fleet, plus representative fleets from many other countries of the world.

V. THE THIRD TRUMPET---JUDGMENT ON THE FRESH WATER SUPPLY (8:10-11).

1. This is another meteorite which falls apart as it nears the earth, scattering its burning particles over the earth (Ex. 7:20).
2. The Greek word for "fountain" also means "well" (John 4:6,14). It refers to subterranean sources of water, recieved through springs and wells.
3. The nature and name of this star is one. It is bitter and it creates bitterness (Jer. 9:13-15; 23:15). This is the opposite of Exodus 15:23-25. Why do men believe everything that science may predict and reject the predictions of the Bible?
4. "Wormwood" is the deadly liquor ingredient known as absinthe. This word is used only once in N.T., but several times in the O. T., and it is once translated "hemlock." It is a bitter poison derived from a root (Deut. 29:18; Prov. 5:4), and it produces drunkenness (Lam. 3:15) and death. It is associated with a posion known as gall (Deut. 29:18; Lam. 3:19). This is the drink Christ refused on the cross (Matt. 27:34).

VI. THE FOURTH TRUMPET---JUDGMENT ON THE HEAVENLY BODIES (8:12-13).

1. These astronomical disturbance is the fulfillment of prophetic forecast (Isa. 5:30; Jer. 4:23; Ezek. 32:7-8; Joel 2:10,31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25). God made the stars for signs (Gen. 1:14-16) on the fourth day.
2. This will affect agriculture. How often I have heard farmers say: "Too much cloudy weather, not enough sunshine." This will have a chilling effect upon vegetation and fruit.
3. The sun here is not the emperor, the moon the church, or the stars some church bishop. This trumpet is like the ninth Egyptian plague (Ex. 10:21-22).
4. The angel flying through the sky (v. 13). Some read "eagle" instead of angel. This may be an angel with the head of an eagle (Rev. 4:7). Skeptics and infidels may see and hear this angel.
5. Eagles are mentioned in the tribulation (Matt. 24:28; Rev. 19:17). God made the fowls on the fifth day (Gen. 1:20-23). God could make an eagle speak if He could a donkey!

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Nine

I. THE FIFTH TRUMPET (9:1-2).

1. These last three are woe trumpets. The first four judgments were directed toward earth's ecology, but the last three are directed toward man himself.
2. "A star fell from heaven unto the earth"---the reference is not to a meteor as it has been generally before. It is a person as can be seen by "to him." Stars often represent angels in Bible symbolism (Job 38:7; Isa. 14:12; Rev. 1:20).
3. Some make this angel Satan, the Day Star who was cast out of Heaven (Ezek. 28:15; Luke 10:18). This is not the case as can be seen from Rev. 20:1-3. Christ possesses the keys (Rev. 1:18).
4. "Bottomless pit"---the prison-house of demons (Luke 8:28-30; Matt. 8:29). This place is mentioned a number of times in Rev. 9:1-2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3. The pit was generally in the center of the prison (Jer. 38:13).
5. This is a real place and real smoke comes out of it (v. 2). Symbols do not darken the sun and pollute the air. This smoke comes from boiling lava of the pit (Gen. 19:24-28).
6. Somewhere on earth there is an opening leading to the great shaft, leading down to the center of the earth (Job 38:17). Hades is said to have gates (Isa. 38:10; Matt. 16:18; Rev. 1:18).

II. FLYING SCORPIONS FROM THE PIT (9:3-6).

1. The hordes from Hades (v. 3; Joel 2:1-11).
 - (1) Are they demons? real locusts? symbols? what? Natural locusts have been used to punish men (Ex. 10:12-20; Joel 1:4-7). These are not natural locusts, for Hades is not a breeding place of locust larvae. They are locust-like creatures of a hellish species equipped with infernal powers. They may be special created locusts, or men may be permitted to see the real forms of demons.
 - (2) Spiritualizers say these are the Saracens or the clergy of the pope. But when did the sufferers from the Saracens seek death without finding it? When did the clergy of the pope spare those who had the mark of God and injured those who held to false religion?
 - (3) "Unto them was power given"---this was not their ordinary power, but something extraordinary (vv. 3,10; Joel 2:2). The power given was "as the scorpions of the earth have power." They sting by inflicting physical injury. If the scorpions of the earth have literal power, why not these?
2. Their first prohibition (v. 4).

- (1) Ordinary locusts do as a rule eat these things. These are supernatural creatures.
 - (2) Because of the destruction under the former trumpets, earth's vegetation was spared for a time as it reestablished its growth.
 - (3) The 144,000 are exempted from these locusts (Rev. 7:1-8). Here we see why God sealed the 144,000.
3. The second prohibition (vv. 5-6).
- (1) Five months is the time limit of ordinary locusts. After five months (150 days) they must return to their prison. In the past there was a month judgment (Num. 11:20).
 - (2) The torment comes from the excruciating scorpionlike sting. As in the case of Job, they only have authority to torment not kill (Job 2:6). Scorpion stings are among the most painful wounds a person can endure (Joel 2:6).
 - (3) Guns will misfire, knives slip from the hand, poison will lose their potency. Men may cripple themselves and injure themselves, but somehow they cannot kill themselves. The Society for the Extension of Human Life will go out of business in that day. Men dread the sting of death, but in this day the sting of death will be desirable. Men will then give more for death than for life (Job 2:4).
 - (4) Movies, books, and TV with its demonic themes, along with the occult, are conditioning men for belief in the demons and Satan. The Evil One may make converts from these things.

III. THE LOCUSTS DESCRIBED (9:7-11).

1. Their shape, heads, and faces (v. 7).
 - (1) They were shaped like horses prepared unto battle (Joel 2:4-5). Are they as big as a horse in size?
 - (2) Their faces had humanlike features. These locusts are not men or horses, but they resemble them.
 - (3) They fly like locusts, run like horses, and sting like scorpions (Joel 2:7-10).
2. Their hair and teeth (v. 8). Faces of men and hair of women (I Cor. 11:14-15). Think of some modern hair styles. They have the combined qualities of beasts and men.
3. Their breastplates and wings (v. 9; Joel 2:5,8).
4. Their tails (vv. 10,5; Joel 2:6). They have venom in their tails. Compare with Matthew 18:24 and Luke 11:12.
5. Their king (v. 11).
 - (1) Ordinary locusts have not king (Prov. 30:27).
 - (2) His name means "the destroyer." The king of demon is not Satan whose present domain is the air (Eph. 2:2; 6:12). Is he "beelzebub," the Philistine god of flies?

IV. THE SIXTH TRUMPET---SECOND WOE (9:12).

1. With this trumpet comes the announcement of two more woes
2. Each time the trumpet sounds, the judgment is more severe than the previous one.

V. THE FOUR WICKED ANGELS WHO ARE BOUND (9:13-14).

1. The voice from the divine altar before the throne (v. 13). These horns on the earthly altar were continually being touched with the blood of the finger of the priest who was burning the fat of the sacrifice on the altar (Lev. 4:17-18). A fire burnt inside the four horns (Lev. 5:12-13), showing sin must be judged by fire and redeemed by blood. Sometimes men clung to the horns of the altar seeking mercy (I Kings 1:50; 2:28).
2. The unloosed angels (v. 13).
 - (1) These are rebel angels who have been kept under restraint in the region of the Euphrates and are now let loose as instruments of wrath (Jer. 46:3-10).
 - (2) There are a number of fallen angels reserved unto judgment (II Pet. 2:6; Jude 6), and in these days God is calling out the reserves. Good angels are not bound.
 - (3) The "river Euphrates" is not a figure but a fact. It was one of the first four mentioned in the Bible (Gen. 2:14) and after referred to as a boundary line (Gen. 15:18; Ex. 23:31; Deut. 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4; I Sam. 8:3; I Kings 4:24-26). Near this river the first sin was committed, Cain killed Abel, and Nimrod built Babylon. The children of Israel were captives at this river (Ps. 137:1). Near this river will be Antichrist's commercial capital.
 - (4) Angels are called "princes" and are over particular districts (Dan. 10:13,20; Mark 5:10). God used an evil spirit to destroy Ahab (I Kings 22). Good angels are sometimes mentioned in connection with water (John 5:4).

VI. THE UNRESTRAINED HORSEMENT (9:15-19).

1. The time foreordained by God (v. 15).
 - (1) The last plague lasted five months; this one will last 13 months. This is literal time.
 - (2) The Greek requires "the particular hour and day" idea. They are reserved for that exact time. This shows that all is foreordained by God. Nothing is accidental and concealed from God.
 - (3) Maybe over a billion people will be killed. Food stuff and water was reduced one-third; now men are reduced one-third.
 - (4) There is a gradual intensification of punishment. The trees and grass are first smitten; the sea; then the rivers and fountains; then the luminaries; then men are tormented, but not killed; and lastly, they are slain.

2. Two million horsemen (v. 16).
 - (1) The greatest array ever amassed in human history.
 - (2) Some make them a literal army which comes to Palestine from the east (Rev. 16:12) and destroys one-third of the world's population when en route from the Orient to the Middle East. They are demon incarnations.
 - (3) Some make them an infernal calvary of nightmarish animals indwelt by evil spirits. They say their bodies are specially created by God for this judgment.
 - (4) These deadly horses are fire-breathing dragons and not the first on earth (Job 41:19-21).
3. These kille the third part of men (v. 18).
 - (1) Men will be consumed in the flames, suffocated by the smoke, poisoned by the sulphurous gases.
 - (2) After 13 months they are destroyed by powerful weapons, leaving the demons without bodies.
 - (3) Is this a picture of thermonuclear war? Is smoke radioactive fallout and debris? Is brimstone melted earth and building material?
4. The power of their tails and mouths (v. 19; Isa. 24:6; Jer. 8:15-16). Is this front and rear gunners on tanks and airplanes?

VII. THE UNREPENTANT MULTITUDE (9:20-21).

1. Those killed by the infernal calvary are evidently the unsaved who receive the mark of the beast. Christ is killing off the world's unregenerate population.
2. This is an awful picture of human depravity. These people are like Pharaoh. The wrath of God does not bring repentance. These people prefer demons to deity, stones to the Savior, and mammon to the Master!
3. The sins which keep men from repentance:
 - (1) Devil worship---open Satanists (I Tim. 4:1 II Tim. 3:13). No longer atheists and humanists. They believe by worshiping him they can become gods (Gen. 3:5).
 - (2) Idol worship---materialism. This is idols of the image of the beast (Rev. 13:14-15; 19:20). See also Deut. 31:29 and Acts 17:29. This is the worship of demons also (I Cor.. 10:20).
 - (3) Murder (Rev. 6:4). The devil is a murderer (John 8:44). Violence and anarchy are on earth.
 - (4) Sorceries---druggings. In the Greek it is Pharmakeia, the source of our words "pharmacy" and "pharmaceutical." Stupifying and hallucinating drugs have been associated with sorcery and witchcraft for ages. This makes people available for demon control by robbing them of their minds.

- (5) Fornication---spiritual and physical. The religious restraints on sexual freedom have been removed so that adultery, fornication, sodomy, lesbianism, and other forms of sexual perversions have become commonplace.
- (6) Thefts. Like Satan, men will be thieves. The increase of these sins points to the approaching tribulation.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Ten

I. THE MIGHTY ANGEL AND THE LITTLE BOOK (10:1-4).

1. The mighty angel (v. 1).

- (1) A parenthetical section starts here which continues until 11:4. This was true of chapter 7.
- (2) "Another mighty angel." Not Christ. There is no evidence that Christ comes down to earth in the middle of the tribulation. It would be great confusion to the Book to call Christ "another angel." Christ is never presented as an angel after His incarnation.
- (3) His description does greatly resemble that of Christ in chapter 1:7,13-16. Mighty angels are elsewhere mentioned (Rev. 5:2; 18:1-2).
- (4) "Came down from heaven"---the seat of authority and Divine rule. He came straight from Christ in Heaven and with His authority.

2. The little book (v. 2).

- (1) The book in chapter 5 was sealed; this one is open. The one in chapter 5 was not said to be little; this one is. This is not the seven-sealed book of chapter 5, for that book was in the right hand (5:7)
- (2) This is a book of future prophesyings (Dan. 12:4,9), or the title deed to the earth which Christ is ready to claim.
- (3) The standing on sea and land is a position of power over land and sea (Ps. 95:5).

3. The loud voice (v. 3). He has a lion-like voice and speaks in behalf of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Joel 3:16). A lion roars before he springs on his prey.

4. The seven thunders (v. 3).

- (1) Whether these are angels or symbols we are not told (Rev. 5:5; John 12:29). This may be seven pronouncements from the throne of God of Divine ownership.
- (2) There is a great mystery here.

5. The only command not to write in this book (v. 4).

- (1) God reveals much but not all (Deut. 29:29; Dan. 12:4,9).
- (2) As John was commanded to "seal up" these utterances, it is foolish to conjecture any further.

II. A PROCLAMATION OF THE END OF THE AGE (10:5-7).

1. The angel swears by God (vv. 5-6).

- (2) This angel is not a prospector but a prosecutor who has authority beyond question to claim an inheritance. The ruler of the world has long since been an outlaw, but He now serves notice for the ejection of the false lord of land and sea (John 12:31; 16:11). The usurper's time is short.
 - (3) "There should be time no longer." The Greek word KRONOS has two meanings, "time" and "delay." Time is not the exact meaning here as three and a half years are yet to come and also the millennium and the eternal age (Rev. 22:2). Note the word "month" here. The RSV has "delay."
 - (4) There will be no further delay. The sand in the glass of the ages is running out---the calendar is near completion---the times of the Gentiles will soon be fulfilled---the end is now to be consummated.
2. The seventh angel and the mystery of God (v. 7).
- (1) "In the days of the voice. . .begin to sound"---the seventh trumpet will echo for three and a half years---all the way to the end of the tribulation. This lingering of the trumpet can scarcely be the trumpet of I Cor. 15:51-52.
 - (2) The second woe has not run its course. The seventh angel is about to sound.
 - (3) "The mystery of God"---some truth not yet revealed about God Himself. Perhaps it is the reason why He has not already established His righteous kingdom on earth. Why has evil thrived so long?
 - (4) "Finished" (Dan. 12:7). The martyred saints in Heaven and the suffering saints on earth must wait for a time.
 - (5) "Declared to his servants the prophets"---O.T. prophets predicted the return of Christ and the kingdom of glory (Dan. 2:44; Zech. 14:9; Ps. 72:17). In that day all will know the Lord (Jer. 31:31; Isa. 11:9; Joel 2:28).

III. THE EATING OF THE LITTLE BOOK (10:8-11).

1. John commanded to eat the little book (v. 8).
 - (1) "The voice. . .spoke to me again"---the one in verse 4 (Rev. 1:10; 4:1).
 - (2) "Little book"---the one in the angel's hand. This may be the book of some future prophesy. Or, it could be the lot of Christ's inheritance which is to be accorded to John (Josh. 19:51; Dan. 12:9,13).
2. John obeys (vv. 9-10).
 - (1) He went from Heaven to earth with great speed it would seem. In this John is a type of glorified saints who possess great speed.
 - (2) Some say literally ate; others that he understood by study, its statements (Jer. 15:16-17; Ezek. 2:9-10; 3:1-4). The Bible is sweeter than honey (Ps. 19:10; 119:103).

- (3) It was sweet concerning Christ's return; bitter as to the judgment by which it must come.
 - (4) Not many digest God's Word. They most read and hear what other say about it.
3. John to prophesy some more (v. 11).
- (1) Ezekiel ate the book and spoke to Israel (Ezek. 3:1-4); John, too, is to prophesy after eating.
 - (2) "Before" is better rendered "of." There are still many people about which John must write in this book.
 - (3) Some take this verse to mean that John will be one of the two witnesses.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Eleven

I. THE MEASURING REED OF GOD (11:1-2).

1. John measures the temple (v. 1).

- (1) John is on earth to which he had come in order to take the little book out of the angel's hand.
- (2) "A reed"---a common plant in the Jordan Valley. It is light in weight and often used for a measuring stick.
- (3) "The temple of God"---the tribulation temple in Jerusalem (Ps. 71:65-72; 87:1-3; 132:13-15).
- (4) The Israeli government will make a seven-year covenant with Antichrist (Dan. 9:27; 12:11). This covenant will permit Israel to build the temple and once again institute the sacrificial system. This will be an insult to Christ who atoned for sins outside the city walls of Jerusalem. After three and a half years Antichrist will break the covenant (Matt. 24:15; II Thess. 2:4).
- (5) This is not the Millennial Temple (Ezek. 40-41) which is to be built by Christ (Zech. 6:13).
- (6) When John wrote this the temple had already been destroyed for about twenty-five years. In 1948 Israel was re-established as a nation, and in 1967 during the Six Day War she regained most of the city of Jerusalem. However, Mt. Moriah is now occupied by the "Dome of the Rock," the second most holy shrine in the Moslem world. The old temple sight is still under Moslem control, but there is talk of a new temple.
- (7) "Them that worship therein"---the shortcomings of the worshippers who do not measure up to God's standards. The measurement here has to do with spiritual standards rather than physical.

2. The holy city trodden under foot (v. 2).

- (1) The tabernacle had one court. Solomon's temple had two: priests and Gentiles. Herod's temple had four: priests, Israel, women, and Gentiles. The tribulation temple will have a court of the Gentiles.
- (2) The Gentiles control the city of Jerusalem during the last three and a half years of the tribulation (Luke 21:24).
- (3) This is the fourth temple in Jerusalem. The first was built by Solomon; the second by Zerubbabel, and a third by Herod. Each was destroyed by invading Gentile armies. The fourth will experience the same fate.
- (4) "Forty and two months" or 1260 days, or three and a half years. See further 11:3; 12:16; 13:2,5.

II. THE PROPHECY OF THE TWO WITNESSES (11:3-6).

1. The two witness in the tribulation (v. 3).

- (1) They are Enoch (Heb. 11:5; Jude 14-15) and Elijah (II Kings 2:9-12), the only two men who went to Heaven without dying. As a rule men die but once (Heb. 9:27). We are told that Elijah will come again (Mal. 4:5; Matt. 17:11). John the Baptist was not Elijah (John 1:21; Luke 1:17). Neither Enoch or Elijah were given glorified bodies (I Cor. 15:22-23).
- (2) If the church is in the tribulation there is no need for the two witnesses on earth. They are real men who preach daily for three and a half years to Israel and the Gentiles.
- (3) "Sackcloth"---they are prophets of doom (Isa. 37:1-2; Dan. 9:3).

2. The two olive trees and the two candlesticks (v. 4).

- (1) This looks back to Zechariah 4:1-6. It would seem from these words that the two witnesses had been standing before God from the days of Zechariah (Zech. 4:14).
- (2) Enoch and Elijah kept in close touch with God (Gen. 5:24; I Kings 17:1).
- (3) They are the two candlesticks. Enoch will witness to the Gentiles and Elijah to Israel. Zachariah saw only one candlestick.

3. They are invulnerable and have power to work miracles (v. 5). Elijah had such power (I Kings 18:37-38; II Kings 1:10,12).

4. They call forth plagues on the earth (v. 6).

- (1) Elijah had such power (I Kings 17:1 Jas. 5:16).
- (2) They will bring the plagues of the tribulation (Rev. 7:1; 8:7-9; 9:20).

III. THE DEATH OF THE TWO WITNESSES (11:7-10).

1. The Antichrist kills the two witnesses (v. 7).

- (1) "When they shall have finished their testimony"---all of God's children are immune to death until their ministry is finished (John 7:8; 8:20). Satan can do nothing without God's permission.
- (2) The "beast" is an expression used here for the first time. The record of the appearance of the Beast is left till the 13th chapter, but he is on the earth in the 11th. This is Antichrist (Dan. 7:3,11; 9:24-27; Rev. 13:1-10; 17:8).
- (3) Antichrist will wage war and kill the two witnesses. The beast is inspired by Satan, the murderer (John 8:44), and his work is always to destroy God's people (Dan. 7:21; 8:12,24; 11:31; Rev. 13:7; 17:14; 19:19).

2. The inhuman characteristics of people living in the tribulation period (v. 8).
 - (1) Their bodies are left unburied for all their enemies to see. This is contrary to all reasonable laws of humanity.
 - (2) Compare and contrast Luke 13:33 with Matthew 23:37-38.
 - (3) "The great city," not Babylon which is so many times meant in Revelation (14:8; 16:19; 18:10, 16, 18-19, 21), but Jerusalem where Christ was crucified and where the two witnesses have their ministry.
 - (4) "Spiritually called Sodom and Egypt"---Jerusalem, even with its rebuilt temple and renewed worship, will have the immorality of Sodom (Isa. 1:4; Jer. 23:14) and the worldliness and oppression of Egypt in it.
3. The news of their execution will be carried by satellite to television screens in homes and public places (v. 9).
 - (1) This would have not been possible until just a few years ago.
 - (2) Not since the death of Christ has such a tragedy been enacted in Jerusalem.
4. The world is merry over the murder of the two witnesses (v. 10).
 - (1) They that dwell upon the earth"---the non-elect whose hope is limited to this present life (Ps. 17:14; Luke 21:34-35; Rev. 3:10; 11:10; 13:8,14; 14:6; 17:8).
 - (2) The God-haters rejoice that the voice of these prophets is silenced and that the heavens cannot be shut and rain withheld---no more fire and plagues.
 - (3) There is a Christmaslike celebration because these prophets are dead (Ps. 79:1-2, 10-11). Sales boom again and gifts are exchanged freely. Joy to the world, the two prophets are dead! This will be a most godless time!
 - (4) Here is actual delight at the death of God's servants. Newspapers will have whole front pages of jubilation. Excursions are run to Jerusalem to see their unburied corpses. A Christmastime-of-Hell!

V. THE TWO WITNESSES ARE RESURRECTED AND RAPTURED TO HEAVEN (11:11-12).

1. The vindication of God's servants (v. 11).
 - (1) Their prophecies had lasted 3½ years (Rev. 11:3), so will the testimony of their silent bodies be seen for 3½ days.
 - (2) Like their Lord in suffering and shame, they are now made like Him in resurrection glory.
 - (3) "The Spirit of life"---the Holy Spirit shall resurrect the two witnesses (Ezek. 37:5,9-10,14; Rom. 8:11).

(4) "Great fear" or "exceeding terror." Revelry becomes hysteria (Matt. 28:4; Luke 21:26). Some may die of heart failure and stroke. The television cameras cover this event so that millions may witness it!

2. Their mid-tribulation rapture to Heaven (v. 12).

(1) This event must be distinguished from the pre-tribulation rapture of the church and the saints (Rev. 4:1) and the post-tribulation resurrection of the tribulation martyrs (Rev. 20:4).

(2) "Come hither"---the great resurrection call (John 5:28-29), just like John heard in Rev. 4:1.

(3) Like Christ at His ascension (Acts 1:9) and believers at the rapture (John 14:1-3; I Thess. 4:13-18) they go up to Heaven.

(4) "Their enemies beheld them"---nothing like this has ever happened before. This was not even true at the ascension of Christ. His friends only saw Him go to Heaven.

V. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE THIRD WOE (11:13-14).

1. A great earthquake sent from God upon Jerusalem (v. 13).

(1) This was true of the resurrection of Christ (Matt. 28:2). An earthquake shows God's power (Ps. 18:7; Jer. 4:24) and is one of His judgments (Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:11).

(2) The casualty list numbers 7,000 men. The Greek reads: "names of men seven thousand." This earthquake causes 10 percent of the city's buildings to collapse. This is a tithe to God long over due.

(3) In the days of Elijah 7,000 did not bow the knee to the image of Baal (Rom. 11:4). Now 7,000 are killed. They would not allow the slain witnesses to be buried; now they are buried alive in the ruin of their own houses.

(4) Fear acted on them externally to honor God formally, but only as One in Heaven. Their emotions are stirred, but their hearts are not changed. Their sudden conversion is not followed by an lasting fruits unto holiness (Matt. 8:29). You can scare people into religion, but not into Christ.

2. The final woe (v. 14).

(1) Two woes have gone before (Rev. 8:13; 9:12).

(2) The Third Woe is the last woe and the same with the Seventh Trumpet, which will include the vial judgment (Rev. 16) and the climax of the seven-year tribulation period.

VI. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET SOUNDS (11:15).

1. The seventh trumpet introduces the final series of judgments upon earth known as the seven vials. It includes the seven vials as the seventh seal included the seventh trumpets. The seals, the trumpets, and the vials are consecutive, not parallel.
2. The seventh trumpet extends to the end of the tribulation period. That this is true is seen from the words: "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound." Thus the seventh trumpet covers a long period of time like the one in Exodus 19:19.
3. There is no immediate judgment announced following either the seventh trumpet or the seventh seal (8:1). The results of the seventh trumpet is resumed at 16:1 when the vials are poured out, one succeeding the other.
4. This is not the last trump of I Corinthians 15:52, nor is it the trumpet in I Thessalonians 4:16-17. These two are the last trumpet for the church. The one in Revelation 11:15 is the last trumpet in the tribulation period. The record here says the "seventh angel sounded." That in fact does not infer it is the last angel and that there are no other angels to do any work in the tribulation period.
5. The trumpet of I Corinthians 15:52 and I Thessalonians 4:16-17 are sounded before the tribulation and are the "trump of God." The one in Revelation 11:15 is sounded in the middle of the seven-year tribulation period and is the trump of the seventh angel. There will be another trumpet sounded after the tribulation period to gather Israel (Isa. 11:11-12; 27:13; Zech. 9:14; Matt. 24:31). "Last" does not always mean that nothing else can follow (John 6:40; 11:24).
6. "There were great voices in heaven"---a great symphony of voices chanting the triumph of God. Earthly rule is now to pass into the hands of the God-man (Ezek. 21:26-27; Dan. 2:35,44; 4:3; 6:26; 7:13-14,26-27; Zech. 14:9).
7. The seventh trumpet does not bring in the kingdom, but it intimates its nearness. The anticipation of the kingdom is the cause of the rejoicing in Heaven. The kingdom will not be set up until the vials are poured out, a period of three and a half years.
8. "Lord" in this verse refers to God the Father. This is not the general rule but a notable exception that we have here.
9. The second "kingdoms" is best understood as "kingdom," meaning one undivided and universal kingdom of Christ which is now under consideration.
10. The world's throne belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. He will not assume it until the seventh trumpet sounds (Ps. 2:1-12). Presently another is usurping it. Christ's kingdom is in this

world. This is why we are to pray (Matt. 6:10).

11. This does not contradict John 18:36. Christ would not at the time He stood before Pilate assume His kingdom in haste. He would go to Heaven to be our High Priest, and then after a long time (Matt. 25:19) He will come to take His kingdom.
12. Why is the seventh trumpet a woe? the third woe? It is certainly not a woe to the world, or the animal creation, or the nation of Israel, or even the church. It is a woe to the prince of this world and the earth-dwellers who confess allegiance to him.
13. The duration of the reign of Christ is to last unto "the ages of the ages." It shall never cease. It extends to eternity. The rebellion at the end of the millennium nor the white throne judgment do not interrupt Christ's rule (Ps. 72:5,7, 17).
14. World power after world power has arisen, but there has been no real change. One tyrant has replaced another, not all equally evil, but all equally incompetent to govern according to the Divine idea. But the rejected King is to be the returning and reigning King!

VII. THE WORSHIP OF THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS IN HEAVEN (11:16-17).

1. The worship of the elders because of great joy (v. 16).
 - (1) At no other instance do the elders so prostrate themselves (5:8,14). Here they fell upon their faces.
 - (2) The "great voices" awaken an echoing chord in these representatives of the heavenly redeemed. They leave their thrones and fall down in worship.
 - (3) The occasion of this fresh worship. Satan is to be cast out as a world ruler and the government of Heaven is to come to earth!
2. The doxology of praise by the elders (v. 17).
 - (1) Thanks is given to Adonai-Elohim-Shaddai. They address God in His full revealed names. The kingdom is that of our Lord and His Christ, yet He takes it, not they.
 - (2) "Thy great power"---the fulness of Divine power, the might of the eternal God. "Hast reigned" is employed, so sure that it is spoken of as past. He has always had the power to do so. This is Christ as the Mediator. As God He does not need to take His power.

VIII. EVENTS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST (11:18).

1. "And the nations were angry."
 - (1) The hatred of fallen man against Divine control began with Cain, and ever since humanity has been a hotbed of rebellion (Ps. 2:1-12; 83; Joel 3:9-13; Zech. 14:2-4).
 - (2) Men of the world will tolerate a preacher if he lets them

alone. But surrender to the rule of Christ is intolerable to the nations of the world.

- (3) When Christ comes to take the world-kingdom they are angry! Angry to see the King! This is the welcome the "Christian nations" give to Christ. This verse lays the axe to the post-millennial heresy of a converted world.
2. "And thy wrath is come."
 - (1) The wrath of the nations has been; the wrath of God is come (Rev. 6:16-17; Ps. 2:12).
 - (2) God's wrath has been postponed so long that men deny altogether a God capable of anger and vengeance (Rom. 3:5-6; Acts 16:31).
 - (3) The wrath that has so long been proclaimed and so long been warned of is here. "The wrath to come" is actually come.
 3. "And the time of the dead that they should be judged." This looks forward to Revelation 20:11-14. These dead are not said to be "in Christ."
 4. "And that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets."
 - (1) A prophet is a fore-teller and a forth-teller, one who speaks for another (Ex. 4:15-16). The two witnesses in this chapter are prophets (11:3,10).
 - (2) This is a reference to the post-tribulation judgment of the prophets who witness during the tribulation. This may include the 144,000 Israelites who preach.
 - (3) This judgment may be held in connection with the judgment of the nations (Matt. 25:31-46) as the kingdom is being set up (II Tim. 4:1).
 - (4) There are crowns or rewards for faithful witnesses. In a kingdom there are varying degrees and stations.
 5. "And to the saints."
 - (1) This is the common appellation of the redeemed in both testaments---the general body of believers.
 - (2) Here it refers to the tribulation saints.
 6. "And them that fear thy name, small and great."
 - (1) The small is named before the great. How comforting!
 - (2) These were hidden ones in the tribulation whose moral separation from the world is of such feeble character that some doubted they were saints.
 7. "And shouldest destroy them that destroyed the earth."
 - (1) The Antichrist and his followers who would leave no flesh alive if permitted to continue (Ps. 37:9,22; Matt. 25:31, 41-46; II Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 13:10; 19:15,21).

- (2) The destroyers shall be destroyed. Man was given a stewardship over the earth (Gen. 1:28), but they have all but destroyed the earth. They have devastated its forests, polluted its air and water, overcultivated the land, overgrazed its pastures, and blighted it with urban slums!

IX. THE OPENING OF THE TEMPLE OF GOD IN HEAVEN (11:19).

1. This is not the temple in 11:1-2. This is the true temple in Heaven of which the earthly was only a replica (Isa. 6:1; Hab. 2:20; Heb. 8:2,5; 9:22-24). It has already been mentioned (3:12; 7:15) and will be again (15:5-6,8; 16:1,17).
2. Men have for centuries searched for the lost ark of the covenant, but in vain. It was not taken to Babylon (II Chron. 36:18; II Kings 25:13-20). It was not mentioned when the temple was restored (Ezra 1:1-11). It was not in the temple of Herod, nor is it in the tribulation or millennial temple (Jer. 3:16).
3. It is safe in the heavenly temple, for God would not allow it to be destroyed (I Sam. 4:4,11,22; I Chron. 15:28; 16:1). The ark is a symbol of God-covenant keeping. When God begins to deal with Israel the real ark appears in the opened temple on high. God is acting in judgment from His temple in Heaven to restore the kingdom to Israel.
4. There will be no temple in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:3,22).
5. A great storm and earthquake follow the opening of the temple in Heaven. Here we see God acting in judgment from His temple above. This is prophetic of the coming judgments to be upon the earth under the seven vials of wrath.
6. Since God recognizes the covenant with Israel there must be wrath against the oppressors of Israel.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Twelve

In chapters 12 to 14 the great actors of the tribulation time are introduced in another parenthetical section ending at 14:20. Chapter 12 introduces some events in the middle of the tribulation. Every verse, save one, begins with the word "and."

I. THE FIRST WONDER IN HEAVEN---THE SUN-CLOTHED WOMAN (12:1-2).

1. The description of the woman in Heaven (v. 1).

(1) "And a great sign."

- A. The word "wonder" should be translated "sign," for the Greek word is semeion, a sign, and not teras, wonder. It is used here for the first time in Revelation. It proves this book is to be taken literal, except when there is a clear indication to take it in a symbolic sense.
- B. The word for sign is used 77 times in the N.T. It generally means an action done to accredit a person or utterance (John 20:30; Matt. 24:24; Rev. 13:13-14). The sign John see shows the counsels of God concerning Christ and Israel as to their rule of the earth.
- C. The sun, moon, and stars were given for signs (Gen. 1:14). Signs are especially for Israel (Matt. 16:3; Luke 21:24-25).
- D. It is a "great" in the things its signifies. The adjective great is used 6 times in this chapter, which is one of great subjects.

(2) "In heaven." The sign is seen in Heaven where John is seeing the vision, but it concerns things both on earth and in Heaven.

(3) "A woman." Scholars debate her identity much.

- A. Roman Catholics say she is the virgin Mary, the literal mother of our Lord. But Mary did not give birth to Christ in Heaven, nor did she experience the things ascribed to the woman in this chapter.
- B. Most Protestant scholars say she is the church in the O.T. or in the N.T., or the Old and New Testament church in individual unity." Israel in the O.T. was not a church in the N.T. sense. The N.T. church did not produce Christ, but Christ produced the church (Matt. 16:18). The Bible knows nothing of some "individual unity." Rather, it maintains a clear-cut distinction between the O.T. people and the N.T. church.
- C. It is best to make the woman the nation of Israel for the following reasons:

- (1) The nation of Israel is represented in O.T. as a woman (Isa. 54:5-6; Jer. 3:6-10; 31:32; Ezek. 16:32; Hos. 2:14-16, 19-23; 3:1) and as a woman in travail (Micah 4:10-5:3; Isa. 9:6; 7:14; 66:7-9).
 - (2) She is connected with the sun, moon, and stars, reminding us of Joseph's dream (Gen. 37:9-11).
 - (3) Israel, not the church, gave birth to Christ (Rom. 9:4-5; Micah 5:2-3; Isa. 9:6; 7:14; Matt. 1; Heb. 7:14).
 - (4) The earthly history of Israel corresponds exactly with what other prophets tell us concerning Israel.
 - (5) The woman's period of trouble coincides with the last days of the Great Tribulation (Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:11; Rev. 12:6).
- (4) "Clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet."
- A. These are light-conveying objects: the moon is a reflector, the sun the source of light.
 - B. They are symbolic of Israel (Ps. 89:35-37; Jer. 33:20-21, 25-26) as God's light-bearer to mankind in O.T. (Isa. 43:10; 44:8; Rom. 3:2; 9:4), in the early days of the N.T. church (Matt. 5:14-16), in the tribulation to come (Dan. 12:1-3; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:1-8), and in the ages to come (Isa. 66:19).
 - C. In Revelation 2-3 we see the churches as God light-bearers to get out His message in this age.
- (5) "And upon her head a crown of twelve stars"---the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen. 37:9; Rev. 21:12), which testifies here to the restoration of all Israel. The church is represented by 7 candlesticks (Rev. 1:20).
2. The woman is in pain ready to deliver a child (v. 2).
- (1) The woman here is Israel and the child is Christ. Israel is the mother of Christ while the church is His bride.
 - (2) Woman brought sin into the world (Gen. 3:16) and she also brought the Savior (I Tim. 2:15).
 - (3) This is the seed of the woman promised in Genesis 3:15.
 - (4) The woman suffers pain within. The church suffered persecution without. This woman is not the church.
 - (5) We see here Israel's suffering in the O.T. and under the Roman yoke in the time of Christ. It foreshadowed her future sufferings under Antichrist.
 - (6) Was the birth of Christ a time of great suffering (Luke 2:10-20)? The answer is found in Isaiah 66:7-8 where Israel bring forth before she suffers the birth pains. Israel's travail is the Great Tribulation, but before this the Messiah was born (Micah 5:2-3). There is 2,000 years between the Messiah and the birth pains of the nation.

II. THE SECOND WONDER: THE GREAT RED DRAGON---SATAN (12:3-4).

1. The second sign: a great red dragon (v. 3).

- (1) The identity of the dragon is established beyond all doubt (Rev. 12:9; 20:2). Both Egypt (Isa. 51:9; Ezek. 29:3-4) and Babylon (Jer. 51:34), who oppressed Israel, were compared to a dragon. The O.T. prophets applied dragon to the oppressive nations on earth; the N.T. to the spiritual power behind the nation.
- (2) The dragon was a great reptile, known today as a dinosaur, often mentioned in the O.T. (Ps. 91:13; Isa. 34:13). It was a hydra-headed serpent and very fearsome. "A great red dragon"---showing the greatness of Satan's power.
- (3) It is red in color which denotes the murderous, blood-thirsty character of Satan (John 8:44; I Pet. 5:8). Insatiable cruelty seems to be his main feature. Red is the color of the second horse (Rev. 6:4).
- (4) The seven heads are seven kingdoms of the past (Rev. 17:10) and the ten horns are ten kingdoms of the end times (Rev. 17:12). Satan is the real person behind the ten kingdoms of the revived Roman Empire (Dan. 7:7-8,20,24; Rev. 13:1) over which Antichrist reigns (Rev. 13:2).
- (5) We see Satan with almost perfect wisdom (seven heads) and almost perfect governmental power (ten horns).
- (6) The seven heads of the dragon are not the seven-hilled city of Rome. The dragon and the beast are distinct, however closely related. The former is a spiritual power, the latter the historical world power.
- (7) His ten uncrowned horns point to the future limits of his empire under the ten kings (Rev. 12:3; 13:1). The dragon is the unseen force behind the empire; hence the crowns are on his head, not on his horns.

2. The dragon and his stars (v. 4).

- (1) His tail is the emblem of his soul-destroying influence---his lies (Isa. 9:15). He murders the body and ruins the soul. His power is in his head, and his influence in his tail.
- (2) These stars are not literal. The reference is to those angels which rebelled with Satan (Matt. 25:41). They are called stars by reason of their beauty and glory (Job 38:4-7; Rev. 1:20; 9:1-2; 18:1). Satan was originally a day-star (Isa. 14:12 Heb.).
- (3) Some say these are the apostate Jews who sign the covenant with Antichrist (Dan. 8:10). They believe the Devil's lies.
- (4) "Did cast them to the earth"---the sphere where fallen angels mostly work (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:16-17; Job 4:18;

Eph. 6:12; Luke 10:18).

- (5) "Dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born" ---the circumstances surrounding the birth of Christ in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16-18). Herod, a ruler in the Roman Empire and an Edomite, was carrying out Satan's desires. The woman cannot be the church for the church was non-existent at the birth of Christ.
- (6) It was not the woman that was the special object of Satan's hatred. It was her Seed which he wanted to destroy (Gen. 3:15; 22:18)
- (7) All Satan's activities are carried on under the double motive of ambition to rule and hatred toward Christ whom God has chosen to take the kingdom Satan has usurped.

III. THE MAN CHILD---CHRIST (12:5-6).

1. The Messiah is born to Israel (v. 5).

- (1) "A man child" or more literally from the Greek, "a son, a male," or "a son who is a male." This is the son of David who is to be the firm, strong ruler of the nations of earth.
- (2) The Messiah is to have universal dominion---"rule all nations." "All nations" leaves none outside of His rule (Ps. 2:1-9; Dan. 7:27; Rev. 19:15).
- (3) Christ like a shepherd with a rod of iron will rule. His hands grasp the reigns of universal government, crushing to atoms every opposing power, shivering scepters, and crashing crowns and kingdoms till kings and people bow before His sovereignty. The saints will share in this rule (Rev. 2:26-27).
- (4) "Rule" means "to sheperdize." Christ is to govern, discipline and control all the nations of earth as a shepherd does his flock. This is really Psalm 23:1-6.
- (5) "Her child was caught up to God"---the ascension of Christ 40 days after His resurrection (Acts 1:9-10; Luke 24:51-52; Mark 16:19).
- (6) "To his throne"---God's the Father's throne (Rev. 3:21; Heb. 12:2; Acts 7:56; I Peter 3:22). There is no mention of Christ's life and death here. Some 33 years are omitted without a word.
- (7) There is a tremendous time lapse between verse 5 and 6. The Christian dispensation of almost 2,000 years is entirely omitted. The same is true of the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24-27. These passages concern Israel, not the Gentiles.

2. The flight of the woman---Israel (v. 6).

- (1) "The wilderness"---the wilderness south of Palestine where Israel passed through on the way of Canaan, probably the Sinai. Isaiah says into Moab and Edom. Sela is the same as modern Petra (Isa. 16:1-5; Ps. 108:10-13; Hos. 2:14-15).
- (2) The woman flees from Antichrist because of the abomination of desolation (Matt. 24:15-22; Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1-2) and because of Satan's being cast out to earth (Rev. 12:13).
- (3) The reference is to the last half of the 7-year tribulation, for during the first 3½ years Israel will dwell safely (Ezek. 38:11) and carry on worship services (Dan. 9:27).
- (4) "A place prepared of God"---probably the ancient city of Petra (Isa. 26:20-21). The church has a place prepared in the Father's house (John 14:1-3).
- (5) "That they should be feed her there"---like Israel (Ex. 16:11-21) and Elijah (I Kings 19:4-8). This may explain some of the words in Matthew 25:34-36.
- (6) The 1260 days in the wilderness is the last half of the 7-years (Dan. 7:25; 8:13-14; 9:27; 12:7,11-12; Rev. 11:2-3; 13:5-6).

IV. THE WAR IN HEAVEN (12:7-9).

1. Michael and his angels fight against the Devil and his angels (v. 7).
 - (1) "War in heaven"---the second heaven or the starry heaven where Satan's kingdom is presently located (Eph. 2:2; 6:12; Matt. 12:26).
 - (2) Michael takes the initiative. He opens war against Satan and his angels (Matt. 25:41). Michael is presently the guardian of Israel (Dan. 12:1; Jude 9). This battle probably begins at the rapture (I Thess. 4:16) and when Michael stands up for Israel (Dan. 12:1).
 - (3) The tribulation will be a time of war on earth and in Heaven. A war among the angels is not a new teaching (Dan. 10:12-13,20).
 - (4) "Michael" means "Who is like God." The first bait that Satan offered Eve was: "You shall be as God." See II Thess. 2:4 and Isa. 14:14.
2. The heavens are cleansed (v. 8).
 - (1) Satan and his angels are forever banished from the heavens and confined to the earth (Job 25:2-3; Isa. 24:21-23). Now the heaven are not clean in His sight (Job 15:15; 25:5). The heavens belong to the Lord (Ps. 115:16), and Satan will soon be expelled (Luke 10:17-18).

- (2) The first giant step toward the eventual establishment of the kingdom of Christ will be the banishment of Satan from Heaven (Col. 1:20).
 - (3) The weapons and tactics of this warfare are hard for humans to understand. It is a spiritual battle more than a physical battle. There is no taking of life, no killing, no blood shed, and no slaughter. It is a war of mind with mind, of malignant and hellish intellect inflamed with desperate hate and anger against the intellect, reason, and right of Heaven.
 - (4) Satan is completely and instantaneously banished from Heaven and confined to the earth. Satan and his associates will never again regain a heavenly position.
 - (5) This occurs on the eve of the Great Tribulation and is really the procuring cause of it.
 - (6) "Prevailed not"---every accusation is answered. Every charge is proved false. Satan cannot deceive the elect angels of Heaven. There is no flaw in the everlasting covenant of grace.
3. The names and work of Satan (v. 9).
- (1) The names of the Prince of Darkness (Rev. 20:2).
 - A. "The great dragon" who is red because he is responsible for much of the bloodshed in man's history. Dragon suggest the violent nature of Satan in connection with man and the earth.
 - B. "That old serpent"---a reference to Satan in Eden with Eve (Gen. 3). This name suggests his dectieful nature---his poisonous deceit as God sees it.
 - C. "The Devil"---Greek DIABOLOS meaning "slanderer" or "accuser." He is the accuser of the brethren.
 - D. "Satan"---the word means "adversary." Here is seen his violent nature, for he is the adversary of God, the elect angels and man.
 - (2) His work.
 - A. He decieves the whole habitable world, except God's elect (Mark 13:22).
 - B. All man-originated, man-centered, and man-honoring systems are nothing but the Devil's delusions. It matters not whether it is materialism, Confucianism, Buddhism, heathenism, Catholicism, socialism, feminism, Platonism, Marxism, evolutionism, or humanism. These are all based on a denial of God's Word as supreme.
 - C. After this casting out of Satan, his sphere will be the earth and sea.

D. Satan's judgment is fourfold: (1) cast out as the covering cherub, Ezek. 28:14-16; Luke 10:37-38; (2) cast out of the atmospheric heaven, Rev. 12:8-9; (3) cast into the bottomless pit for 1,000 years, Rev. 20:1-3; (4) cast into the lake of fire, Rev. 20:10.

V. SATAN'S WRATH AND THE SAINTS' VICTORY (12:10-12).

1. The cry of victory from the multitude in Heaven (v. 10).

- (1) For ages Satan has had the privilege of accusing the redeemed before the throne of God (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Zech. 3:1-2; Luke 22:31-32). Thank God for I John 2:1-2.
- (2) This shout is by all the saints in Heaven. It is the saints alive on earth that are accused by Satan. Will Satan accuse us of our sins at the Judgment Seat of Christ also? It is going on at this time.
- (3) Satan's accusations have never prevailed against one saint. Nothing can be laid to the charge of one of God's elect.
- (4) Satan no longer has personal access to God. The power of the kingdom has been vindicated in Heaven, and things are announced there as having come, although they have not actually taken place on earth at this time.
- (5) "Salvation"---the enemy has been overthrown and creation is about to be delivered from the agony of sin and Satan.
- (6) "Strength"---the irresistible might which shall crush all opposing satanic and human authority.
- (7) "Kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ"---the coming of God's kingdom and the reign of Christ. This embraces the heavens and the earth.

2. How the saints overcome the Devil (v. 11). Three elements of victory are seen here:

- (1) The ground of it: the blood of the Lamb.
 - A. Here is seen the infinite value of the blood of Christ. Any gospel void of redeeming blood is a loveless, hopeless, false gospel.
 - B. The blood only has power to overcome Satan. It is too much for him to handle.
 - C. Without the atoning blood for our sins the charges of Satan would be irrefutable.
- (2) The outward course of the victors---the word of their testimony.
 - A. The tribulation saints are a witnessing people (Rev. 6:9; 20:4; Dan. 12:3; Matt. 24:13).

B. All God's people in any age are to be witnesses, the tribulation notwithstanding (Isa. 43:10; Ps. 107:2; Acts 1:8; John 15:27; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:32).

C. We overcome the accuser by our testimony (Rom. 10:9; Matt. 10:32-33).

- (3) The inward settled attitude of the victors---they loved not their lives unto death. This is true of the tribulation martyrs (Rev. 6:9; 13:15; 17:6; 20:4) and of God's elect in every age (Luke 14:26; Rev. 2:10).
3. Woe to the earth and sea because Satan has but a short time (v. 12).
- (1) Here the dwellers of Heaven are contrasted with the inhabitants of earth and sea. The inhabitants of the sea are fishermen, navy personnel, houseboat dwellers, and other boat people. Both the boat people and the land dwellers are the objects of Satan's wrathful purposes.
 - (2) This verse is the middle verse of chapters 4-19 which chiefly concern the tribulation period.
 - (3) The heavens are said elsewhere to rejoice (Ps. 96:11; Isa. 49:13; Rev. 18:20).
 - (4) Knowing that he has but a short time (1260 days), Satan throws off all disguise and seeks only to make good his claim to earth's dominion. His title of "the prince of the power of the air" is lost to him for ever.
 - (5) Those who rejoice here are the whole company of redeemed and angels (Rev. 13:6).

VI. THE PERSECUTION OF ISRAEL IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION (12:13-17).

1. Satan's final anti-Semitic crusade (v. 13; cf. v. 6).
 - (1) Satan hates Israel because they are God's elect nation and because that nation produced Christ, who is to overthrow his kingdom.
 - (2) This is the reason Antichrist persecutes Israel (Dan. 7:25; 12:7). Anti-Semitism as a whole will reach its peak against Jewish believers during the last three and half years (Matt. 24:9-10, 15-22; Ps. 83:1-4).
2. Israel is granted rapid motion and guaranteed protection (v. 14).
 - (1) This is a miraculous act of God like in Israel's past (Ex. 19:4; Deut. 32:11-12; Isa. 40:29-31). In earlier reference the wings are attributed to Jehovah; here they are given to the woman.
 - (2) Some see in this a massive airlift. The eagle is the national symbol of the USA.
 - (3) "The wilderness" (v. 6; Ezek. 20:33-37; Hos. 2:14-23).

- (4) She is nourished 1260 days (v. 6). A "time" is prophecy means a year (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 13:7).
- (5) "The face of the serpent"---Satan cannot reach or destroy the woman in the wilderness.
3. A mighty army is sent to attack Israel (v. 15).
- (1) This may not be a literal river, seeing it comes from the symbolic mouth of the symbolic serpent. Probably it is an army sent by Antichrist (Ex. 14:5-9; Jer. 46:7-8; 47:23; Isa. 8:7).
- (2) It could be literal water from a huge dam some place. Water was involved in Israel's flight from Egypt (Ex. 14:21-30).
4. These forces are swallowd up by miraculous cataclysms (v. 15; cf. 15:12; Num. 16:32-33).
- (1) The destruction of Antichrist's army or flood (Ex. 14:5-9; Isa. 59:19; Ps. 124:1-6).
- (2) Forty years prepared Israel for Canaan, three and a half years will prepare them to receive Christ and the kingdom.
5. The persecution of the remnant of Israel (v. 17).
- (1) Verse 14 points to Jews in Judea while the remnant of this verse is Israel elsewhere in the world. There are still many Israelites in other nations at this time. Many who come back to Palestine will have been scattered at this time.
- (2) They keep the commandments of God and believe Jesus is coming in His kingdom. While this is referring to the remnant of Israel (Isa. 11:11,16; Joel 2:32; Zeph. 2:9; Zech. 8:6, 12; Rom. 11:5), it is common to all believers at any time.
- (3) Much Scriptures are given to Israel's persecution (Lev. 26:40-45; Deut. 30:1-5; Isa. 11:10-16; 27:6-13; Jer. 23:3-8; 30:3-11; 31:7-11; 32:37-41; Ezek. 34:11-16; 36:22-28; Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:15-22).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Thirteen

I. THE RISE AND REIGN OF ANTICHRIST (Rev. 13:1-10).

1. The marine beast out of the sea (v. 1).

- (1) "I stood"---John. Some read "he stood," meaning the dragon. The RV is wrong here. In 12:17 it says that the dragon "went away to make war" and then inconsistently says "he stood."
- (2) John is seen here standing on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, observing a third sign, a hydra-headed marine beast. Daniel was by the river Ulai when he beheld the rise of the Persian and Grecian empires (Dan. 8).
- (3) "A beast." THERION in the Greek, meaning "a wild beast, a beast of prey" (Rev. 6:8). This is the Antichrist (I John 2:18), the head of the revived Roman Empire (Prov. 28:15). He is called a beast because that is what he is in God's sight (Dan. 7:2-3,7-8; 8:23-25; II Thess. 2:3-10; Rev. 17:3,7).
- (4) "Sands of the sea. . .rise up out of the sea"---the great mass of humanity (Dan. 7:3,17; Rev. 17:15; 20:8). The sands speak of the countless masses of mankind, while the sea speaks of the revolutionary forces at work among them (Isa. 57:20). There may be almost collapse of all governmental authority by this time (Rev. 12:12).
- (5) "Seven heads." Compare with the description of the dragon (12:3) and other mentions of him (17:3,9,12). The dragon has the crowns on his heads; Antichrist on his horns. In 17:10-12 the heads are seven successive rulers, but here it is the completeness of government in the hands of the beast in his latter-day history.
- (6) "Ten horns"---the crown kings of the ten nations in the land area of the old Roman Empire who unite under the rule of Antichrist (Dan. 7:23-25; Rev. 17:12-13).
- (7) There is to arise ten distinct kingdoms in Europe and then Antichrist (Dan. 7:24). Already Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, England, Ireland, Denmark, and Greece are united in the European Common Market.
- (8) "Upon his horns ten crowns"---this shows these ten kings rule in separate kingdoms before they unite under Antichrist.
- (9) "Upon his heads the names of blasphemy." All the heads are alike in this---a bold, open defiance of God. Christianity has now been abandoned and public, open blasphemy of God is the sad results.

- (10) These are not on the heads of the dragon, but the beast, who is the public witness for the Devil. Like God, Satan works through his son, Antichrist.
- (11) Some debate whether the beast is a person or the revived Roman Empire. It may be either or both in some cases. This can be determined only by the context. There can be no kingdom without a king.
- (12) The Rapture of the saints occurs before the revelation of the man of sin (II Thess. 2:3). Presently, the Holy Spirit by His presence on earth in the New Testament Church restrains the revelation of the man of sin (II Thess. 2:6-8; Ps. 76:10).

2. The composite beast (v. 2).

- (1) The beast has a leopard's body, a bear's feet, and a lion's mouth. These three animals are symbols from Dan. 7:3-6. The lion was Babylon, the bear Medo-Persia, and the leopard Greece. The revived Roman Empire will have the power of the lion, the crushing weight of a bear, and the swiftness of the leopard.
- (2) The body of the beast (the larger part) is like a leopard, showing that the main characteristics of the revived Roman Empire will be Grecian. There is a struggle between the leopard (Jer. 5:6; Hos. 13:7-8) and the lamb until the Lamb reigns. The leopard is full of spots; the lamb is without spot or blemish.
- (3) In Daniel 7 we see the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the terrible beast, but here the beast, the leopard, the bear and the lion.
- (4) Satan gives the Antichrist his power, his throne (Greek text), and great authority (II Thess. 2:9-12). This is what God the Father gave Christ in a sense (Matt. 28:18). Modernism and postmillennialism say that Satan has no power, throne, or authority. They are wrong (Ps. 94:20; Dan. 8:24; Rev. 2:13; 16:10).
- (5) Christ refused the sovereignty of the world from Satan (Luke 4:4,8), but here is one who accepts it.
- (6) This will probably occur when Satan is cast out of Heaven and when the beast ascends out of the abyss (Rev. 17:8).

3. The death and resurrection of the beast (v. 3).

- (1) One of the heads is said to be dead, not the whole beast. Some make the deadly wound to be the loss of the imperial power of Rome, and the healing its restoration. Others say it is the rebuilding of the city of Babylon. I reject both idea myself.
- (2) The seven heads are seven successive rulers in the revived Roman Empire (Rev. 17:10-12). These may have been Julius

Caesar, Tiberious, Caligala, Claudius, Nero, and Domitian who was ruling when John wrote. Antichrist is the seventh.

- (3) The last emperor of the revived Roman Empire, the Antichrist, is to receive a deadly wound by a sword (Rev. 13:12,14). The Greek word for "slain" is the same as that of chapter 5:6: "a Lamb as it had been slain" (RV).
 - (4) This is Satan's imitation of the death and resurrection of Christ. By resurrection Christ left the realm of death forever. Antichrist will be killed again (Dan. 7:11). The beast will go into the abyss---leave the body. He will be brought back from the realm of death by Satanic power and by the permission of God.
 - (5) Antichrist will seem to the world to be a man who has conquered death---just like Jesus Christ did (Heb. 2:12). Showing his death-scarred body, he will compel the world to worship him as the victor over death!
4. Satan the object of human worship (v. 4; cf. 8).
- (1) Through the medium of the resurrected Antichrist, Satan becomes the object of world worship. The deification of Satan is accomplished and the desire of his rebellious heart is at last achieved (Isa. 14:13-14; Matt. 4:10).
 - (2) Many systems are leading men in this direction (II Cor. 4:4). Multitudes of Christendom worship the vicar of Jesus Christ, the vicegerent of God upon earth, infallible, the sole possessor of the keys of Heaven (pope). Communism, humanism, socialism, evolutionism, the New Age Movement are all preparing the way of Antichrist. These all make man God and worthy of worship. The revival of spiritism, astrology, witchcraft, eastern mysticism, and Satan worship are setting the stage for the final Antichrist.
5. The wild beast boasts and blasphemes (v. 5).
- (1) The mouth of the beast, like the raving of a lion (v. 2), begins to roar out great things against God and His saints.
 - (2) "There was given unto him." Behind the beast lies the hidden yet omnipotent power of Jehovah. Satan has no power in himself. All power is from God (John 19:11; Rom. 13:1).
 - (3) The beast exists before the power is given, showing that the Antichrist and his kingdom exist before this time. For forty-two months Satan takes possession of the world dictator and his kingdom.

- (4) His speaking "great things" clearly identifies him with the little horn (Dan. 7:8,11,20,25).
- (5) This is the same 42 months when the Gentiles defile Jerusalem and the temple (Rev. 11:2) and God's people are protected (Rev. 12:6,14).
6. The wild beast blasphemes God, His name, His tabernacle, and the dwellers of Heaven (v. 6; cf. I John 2:2).
- (1) The Devil no longer has access to Heaven, but he now blasphemes Heaven through his representative, the beast (Dan. 11:36).
- (2) "Them that dwell in Heaven"--- the saints caught out at the rapture. At this time the citizens of Heaven (Phil. 3:20) will have become the dwellers of Heaven. The dwellers of Heaven are in contrast to the earth dwellers (Rev. 13:8,14).
7. The Antichrist achieves a one-world government (v. 7).
- (1) The Antichrist shall murder many of the tribulation saints (Dan. 7:21; Rev. 11:7; 12:17; 20:4). Rights will be trampled. Testimony will be stilled by the quick hand of martyrdom.
- (2) Countless world rulers of the past have dreamed of conquering the entire world---Nimrod to Napoleon. The League of Nations and the United Nations are attempts at this. The Communists, the Illuminati, and the international bankers have this as their cherished goal.
- (3) For a time Antichrist will rule the entire world (Dan. 7:23). He will first rule 10 nations in Europe, and finally the world. This is Satan's counterfeit of Christ's millennial reign.
8. The worship of the creature instead of the Creator (v. 8; cf. Rom. 1:25).
- (1) "All that dwell upon the earth"---all except the elect will worship Satan. Here Satan has provided a visible god.
- (2) A better translation of this verse from the Greek would read: "And all the inhabitants of the earth will worship him, whose names are not written from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered." Note Rev. 17:8.
- (3) "Lamb's book of life"---the book in which the names of the elect are recorded. This book belongs to Christ because He redeemed them by His blood and gave them eternal life. Their names were written there by the sovereign grace of God from the foundation of the world. There can be no erasure (Rev. 3:5; 20:12; 21:27). See also Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3.

(4) Other passages date our blessings much further back (Eph. 1:4-5; II Tim. 1:9; Matt. 25:34).

8. The exhortation to hear (vv. 9-10).

(1) The call to hear supposes an exercise of spiritual understanding distinct from the natural hearing common to man (Isa. 55:3). This expression was often employed by Christ (Matt. 11:15; 13:9,43; Luke 8:8).

(2) The omission of "unto the churches" (2-3) supports the pretribulation rapture of the church.

(3) Captivity and death is the sad lot of those who do not worship the beast. But no suffering can rob them of their eternal portion founded on the death of the Lamb of God.

(4) Some will oppose the Antichrist by weapons of war (Zech. 14:1-2). If any one tries to take the beast into captivity he will go into captivity. If he tries to oppose him with the sword by the sword he will die.

(5) There is also stated here the law of Divine retribution (Jer. 15:2; 43:11; Zech. 11:9; Matt. 7:2). Those who make captives of the saints shall be made captivities by a returning King. Those who kill the saints with the sword shall die by the sword (Dan. 7:11; Rev. 19:15,21).

(6) It is the promise of triumph of Christ's kingdom which will sustain the saints in their sufferings. Here is patient endurance.

II. THE MUNDANE BEAST (13:11-18).

1. His description (v. 11).

(1) It is only another beast; so that whatever divergencies there may be between these two monsters, they have one thing in common, they are both wild beasts. The Greek word translated "another" (allo) means "another of the same kind."

(2) This beast is designated later "the false prophet" (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). The first beast is a tool of Satan, while the second is an instrument of the first. Both are human beings. Christ warned of the False Prophet (Matt. 24:24).

(3) The Antichrist is the head of the political government of the earth. The False Prophet is the head of the one-world church. He could be the pope of Rome, or the head of the World Council of Churches. Both beast seem to rise up in the Mediterranean Sea area.

(4) "Came up out of the earth"---a creature of earth rather than Heaven. The Antichrist came up out of the sea.

- (5) "Two horns"---as always, a symbol of power. These two uncrowned horns point to the religious power which the False Prophet will use to persecute the saints. Christ has seven horns (Rev. 5:6), all power while the second beast has limited power.
 - (6) "Like a lamb." He will try to imitate the Lamb of God. The False Prophet comes like a lamb, but God calls him a "beast" (Matt. 7:15). There is no way to make a false prophet into a true prophet.
 - (7) "Spake like the dragon"---he is motivated by the power of Satan. He will deceive men by acting like a lamb when in truth he speaks the words of Satan.
2. His delegated power by which he direct worship (v. 12).
- (1) This is the Devil's imitation of the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:14). The second beast's power comes directly from the Devil and not mediately through the first beast.
 - (2) Devil worship is the ultimate before the end of this age. The first beast exercises world authority (Rev. 13:7), and the False Prophet has the same power. This means worldwide worship of a man.
 - (3) Here state and church are united, and this union will culminate in the worst period of persecution in the history of the world.
 - (4) Pointing to the resurrection of the Antichrist (Rev. 13:3), the False Prophet will cause every church and temple the world over to acknowledge the first beast as divine and deserving of worship.
 - (5) "Before him" is elsewhere translated "in his presence" (I Cor. 1:29) or "in his sight" (Rom. 3:20). The second beast exercises his authority in the presence of the first beast.
3. He deceives by bringing fire down from Heaven (v. 13; cf. Matt. 24:24; II Thess. 2:9-11).
- (1) "Wonders" in the Greek (poieo) means "signs." This is an imitation of the Holy Spirit, for signs and wonders were performed after His coming (Acts 2:43; 4:16,22; 5:12).
 - (2) The fire from Heaven is an attempt to prove Antichrist is god as Elijah brought fire from Heaven to prove that Jehovah was God (I Kings 18:38-39; II Kings 1:10,12; cf. Job 1:16; Rev. 11:5).
4. He deceives the earth dwellers by miracles (v. 14).
- (1) Centuries ago Israel was warned about such things (Deut. 13:1-3).
 - (2) "Them that dwell on the earth"---not God's elect (Matt.

- (3) "By means of those miracles"---Satan can work miracles (Ex. 7:11,22; 8:7,18). Miracle working is no proof of even salvation (Matt. 7:21-23).
 - (4) This image of the beast is a real image (Rev. 14:9,11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). It will probably be like the great image of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:31; 3:1-7). Christ called this image "the abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15). When it is set up in the tribulation temple, it will end Jewish worship (Dan. 9:27; II Thess. 2:4).
 - (5) "Which had the wound by the sword, and did live." "Wounded to death" (Rev. 13:3,12) is the exact equivalent in the Greek of "as it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6), and so "did live," which is said of Antichrist, are the exact equivalent of those spoken of Christ---"and is alive" (Rev. 2:8). Like Christ, Antichrist will die a violent death and then live again.
 - (6) Men through the ages have always been awed by the supernatural. Every tribal witch doctor and false religious teacher who uses demonic power to deceive men have set the stage for the coming of the False Prophet.
 - (7) Millions today worship Darwin, Marx, Hitler, Starlin, Hirohito, Mao, Einstein, or Elvis Presley. The erect great statues to their honor and go to see their tombs and birthplaces, paying them homage. This is to end in an idolatrous system of humanism which will climax in the worship of the Antichrist!
5. The image of the god of this world (v. 15).
- (1) This is a hard text. The word for "life" is pneuma which means "spirit." Out of 385 occurrences in the New Testament, this is the only place where it is translated life.
 - (2) Various interpretation have been offered---
 - A. Satan gives the appearance of life to the image as it is God's prerogative alone to give life.
 - B. It is a mere robot with a computer voice, or some form of religious ventriloquism. This would be no marvel.
 - C. It is "breathe" in the Greek text, and it means no more than breathe is given. God in truth gives both.
 - D. It is best to let the word mean "spirit." This makes it mean that a demon will take possession of the body of this image. This is the great wonder.
 - (3) This image is doubtless the idol that will be set up in the tribulation temple (Ps. 73:19; Dan. 9:27; 12:11; Matt. 24:15).
 - (4) This is Satan's imitation of Genesis 2:7.

- (5) It is death not to worship the image of the beast (Rev. 20:4), but the worship of such an image is forbidden (Ex. 20:3-5). The penalty for worshipping is spiritual death (Rev. 14:9-12).
6. The false prophet controls the commercial world (vv. 16-17).
- (1) Note the six classes of people enumerated here, going from the lowest to the highest.
 - (2) This is the most stupendous boycott of all time as it will affect all classes of people. There is no change or exchange apart from his permission.
 - (3) Commerce is more and more governing the world and Christendom. This is a gigantic trade-union (Matt. 13:30).
 - (4) No one will buy what is for sale, labor not wanted, stores empty of customers, farm product rot in the barn. No one will sell him anything to meet his needs. Like the food rationing of World War II.
 - (5) Three claims upon commerce are here stated---
 - A. He that had the mark,
 - B. Or the name of the beast,
 - C. Of the number of his name (Does this mean military, governmental, and civilian?).
 - (6) Does the name in the forehead denote the intellectual people and the hand the working people?
 - (7) This will introduce a spy system that will amaze the world.
 - (8) Money will be useless. The financial world shall experience chaos. The monetary solidarity of the world will be imperialed and the credit of nations will crash.
 - (9) Israel will be fed in the wilderness during this time (Ps. 23; Rev. 12:6,14). Others will die from starvation or the guillotine (Rev. 20:4).
 - (10) Here is universal branding like a tattoo which cannot be removed. This is Satan's imitation of God's sealing (Ezek. 9:4; Rev. 7:3; 14:1; 22:4). Those who receive the brand of Hell cannot repent and be saved (Rev. 9:20; 16:1-11).
 - (11) It denotes an active slave of the beast, as slaves were branded with the name or the special mark of their owners (Gal. 6:17).
 - (12) The name of the beast is not given. It is foolish to speculate by going beyond what is written. The beast has not yet appeared on the stage of human history.
7. The calculation of his name numerically (v. 18).
- (1) I shall not attempt to translate the numbers of the beast into the name of any man.

- (2) The triple six is the number of a man, each digit falling short of the perfect number seven. There is one six here for each member of the Satanic trinity.
- (3) The beast is not a kingdom, but a man with a name, and this name has a number.
- (4) This is the fullest, highest development of man under direct Satanic control. It is the combination of civil, religious, and political power satanically inspired.
- (5) By employment of the Greek, Hebrew, and Latin alphabets various people have been identified as the beast. Nero, Domitian, various popes, Luther, Calvin, the Jesuits, Napoleon, Balaam, Caesar, Rome, the Roman Empire, Joseph Smith, Henry Kissinger, Lyndon B. Johnson, etc.
- (6) Some the pious Jews of the future may understand more about this than we do now (Dan. 11:33; 12:10; Matt. 24:15).
- (7) The image set up by Nebuchadnezzar was sixty cubits high and six cubits broad---66 (Dan. 3:1).
- (8) The number may have something to do with gold (I Kings 10:14; Dan. 11:43). Nebuchadnezzar's image was of gold.
- (9) The word "count" is in the imperative. It signifies to count by the use of figures. The Greek word for "number" arithmos from which we get our word arithmetic. The Letters of the Greek alphabet have a numerical value. alpha (1), beta (2), iota (10), rho (100), etc.
- (10) I+V+X+L+C+D of the six Roman numerals make 666. The Anti-christ is a Roman (Dan. 9:26).
- (11) ~~X~~Ξ The first and last letters are the same as those which begin and end the Greek words for Christ in the actual spelling of the number 666. The middle letter looks like a serpent. Here is the serpentine character of the Anti-christ.

II. THE ANGEL WITH THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL (14:6-7).

1. The first angel of herald (v. 6).

- (1) "Another angel" does not connect with the seventh angel (11:15) nor the host under Michael (12). It looks back to 8:13. The R.V. wrongly read "eagle" for "angel" here. This is a literal angel, not some symbol.
- (2) "Everlasting gospel"---there is no definite article in the Greek. Hence read "everlasting gospel" or "a everlasting gospel."
- (3) Is this a new and a different gospel than what is preached today? Is it design to convert sinners?
 - A. If it is a new gospel, this angel is under the curse of God (Gal. 1:8). Did John not know what the gospel was?
 - B. If it is a new gospel, why is it called "everlasting" gospel? How can something new be everlasting? It cannot be.
 - C. It is the same old gospel that has always been preached by prophets and preachers. It has a special stress upon God's judgment on evil---the ageless good news. It concern the soon setting up of the kingdom of God.
 - D. It is good news to those who are living under the reign of Antichrist in these persecuting and bloody times.
 - E. It is preached to those who have settled on earth (3:10; 6:10; 11:10). No mention is made of its results.
 - F. This is the only place in the Bible that an angel is said to preach the gospel (Acts 10:3-6). Ordinarily, this work is confined to saved and called men.

2. The content of his message (v. 7).

- (1) The gospel may at times include a message of judgment upon those who reject it (Mark 16:15-16; Jonah 3:4). This may connect with Matthew 24:14. Mercy must not be rejected.
- (2) The ever-abiding truth is that men should worship the Creator rather than the creature. God is everlastingly merciful and the only hope of His creatures.
- (3) While there is no word of grace, blood, forgiveness, repentance, or redemption seen in this message, it is possible that it may include such. It must if it is the gospel.
- (4) The church is no longer here to preach. The two witnesses and the 144,000 evangelists are gone from the earth. Gospel preachers are few at this time. Hence an angel is sent by God.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Fourteen

I. THE LAMB AND THE 144,000 ON MOUNT ZION (14:1-5).

1. The identity of the 144,000 in this verse (v. 1).

- (1) The Lamb is Christ that was mentioned in Revelation 5:6.
- (2) Mount Zion here is the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-23; Gal. 4:26). In every case where Sion occurs in the New Testament (Matt. 21:5; John 12:15; Rom. 9:33; 11:26; I Pet. 2:6) it is without the article and without the qualifying word "mount." Mount Zion is always the heavenly Jerusalem in the New Testament.
- (3) Some make the 144,000 to represent all the elect of all ages. Others choose characters of the church age. I believe that they are the same company in 7:1-8. When a new group is introduced the sacred writer uses the word "another" (6:4; 7:2; 8:3; 10:1; 12:3; 13:11; 14:6,8,15,17; 15:1; 16:7; 18:1,4; 20:12).
- (4) The scene is Heaven. The 144,000 are with the Lamb who is in Heaven at this time; they are before the throne of God which is also in Heaven (5:6; 6:17; 7:9,11,14-17; 15:2; 20:12). They hear and learn the song sounding in Heaven.
- (5) These are distinct from the living creatures, the harpers, and the elders. As the elders include the church, this company is separate from the church.
- (6) How the 144,000 go from earth to Heaven we are not told. Some think they are raptured when the two witnesses go up in the middle of the week. Others say that they die a martyr's death, having finished their testimony.
- (7) We know some Israelites will come safely through the tribulation period (Isa. 66:8; Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Zech. 12:10; 13:8; Matt. 24:13; 25:31-46; Rev. 12:6,14).
- (8) "Having their Father's name written in their foreheads" (Rev. 7:3; 9:4). Satan imitates this in 13:16. All the saints are seen sealed in 22:4.

2. The harpers and the singers (vv. 2-3).

- (1) These harpers are distinct from 144,000 since the 144,000 learn the song from them. These harpers are the tribulation saints (Jew and Gentile) who die in the early part of the tribulation (Rev. 6:9-11; 7:13-17).
- (2) Compare with 5:8-9 and 15:2-3.
- (3) Harps are mentioned elsewhere (5:8; 15:2).

- (4) "A new song" in contrast to the old song (Rev. 5:8-9) as sung by the elders. This is a hymn of victory over the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet never sung before because such a conflict has never been fought before.
 - (5) "No man could learn that song, but the 144,000"---this show the harpers and 144,000 are a separate company. The elder cannot learn this song. Compare with Exodus 15:1-22.
 - (6) "Redeemed from the earth"---bought or purchased is the meaning of "redeemed" here. This is a limited redemption which implies some are not so redeemed.
3. The description of the 144,000 Israelites (vv. 4-5).
- (1) The threefold repetition of "these" expresses the high honor of which they are worthy. They stood the test of the evil days.
 - (2) "Not defiled with women...virgins." Sexual impurity is the great sin of the tribulation (Rev. 9:21; 17:2; 19:2). They have not experienced sexual intercourse. They are all males who are too busy serving God to have wives and children (I Cor. 7:1,7-8,25-26,32; Matt. 19:12). Sexual intercourse in marriage is not defiling (Heb. 13:4; Ruth 3:11).
 - (3) They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They are obedient to Christ even unto death---His personal attendants---the bodyguard, so to speak. They are not backsliders. There is no on-again and off-again periods of obedience.
 - (4) "Redeemed from among men"---implying others were not so redeemed by sovereign grace. "Bought from the earth" (v.3) shows the place they lived and "from among men" the race from which they were redeemed.
 - (5) "The firstfruits unto God and the Lamb"---the firstfruits of Israel in the tribulation and the guarantee of the harvest of the nation of Israel at the end of the tribulation (Dan. 12:1; Zech. 12:9-10; 13:1; Isa. 66:8; Rom. 11:26; Jas. 1:1,18). The firstfruit is a small portion of the harvest to follow (Lev. 23).
 - (6) "Mouth was found no guile"---these are like Christ (Isa. 53:9; I Pet. 2:22) and other spiritual Christians (Ps. 32:; John 1:47).
 - (7) "Without fault"---not due to a perfectly sinless life, the blood of the Lamb (7:14). The days of Antichrist are days of falsehood. If the 144,000 are raptured and glorified when the two witnesses went up these words are true in a much greater sense. Otherwise, they would speak of disembodied saints before God.

- (5) When universal idolatry prevails, a mighty angel will proclaim the gospel in the mid Heaven. Satan and his angels have been cast out of Heaven, so there should be no opposition. The angels calls upon men to worship God instead of the beast and his image.
- (6) The gospel in its broadest sense includes creation, the cross, and the second coming. All these things are good news.
- (7) Either there will be a universal language at this time, or the people who speak different languages will hear it in their own tongue.

III. THE ANGEL WHO ANNOUNCES THE FALL OF BABYLON (14:8).

1. This is the second herald angel. This is a preliminary and preparatory announcement, for the fall of Babylon is seen in chapters 17 and 18. Note also 16:19-19.
2. This is the first time Babylon is mentioned in Revelation. Babylon will be rebuilt and become the commerial center of the world.
3. This may be a general state about the fall of religious Babylon (17:1-5,15-18) and commercial Babylon (Jer. 51; Rev. 18:2).
4. Babylong is designated "that great city" seven times (14:8; 17:18; 18:10,16,18,19,21). and three times "Babylon the great" (16:19; 17:5; 18:2).
5. Babylon from its beginning has been a center of idolatry and its system has spread to all nations.
6. Note "wine," "wrath," and "fornication" in this verse---three distinct subjects. Note Jer. 51:7; 50:38; Jer. 25:15.
7. This is true of religious Babylon (17:2) and political Babylon (18:3). "Fallen, fallen," indicates a double destruction of a system and a city.

IV. THE ANGEL WHO ANNOUNCES THE DOOM OF THE BEAST WORSHIPPERS (14:9-11).

1. The persons included (v. 9).
 - (1) Any man who worships the beast or receives his mark. These are the incorrigibles of the tribulation period. These have chosen Satan's Christ.
 - (2) In this time the alternative to the worship of the beast is death.
 - (3) "Angel followed them." These angels follow each other in short order so that one has barely finished before the other begins.
2. The punishment inflicted (vv. 10-11).

- (1) The intoxication---"Drink the wine of the wrath of God" (Ps. 75:7-8; Isa. 51:17; Jer. 25:15). The nations have drunk out of the harlot's cup (14:8), now in retributive justice they shall drink out of the Lord's cup of wrath.
- (2) The indignation---"poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation." Wine in John's day was sometime mixed with water. God's wrath is undiluted; it has not one drop of compassion, mercy, or grace in it. "His indignation" means "boiling indignation"---the hottest place in Hell.
- (3) The tormentation---"tormented with fire and brimstone."
 - A. Satan tries to discredit this teaching. Modern intellectuals and cultists laugh at this teaching.
 - B. This is real, physical, material fire that causes torment (Ps. 11:6; 140:9-10; Isa. 33:14; 66:24; Ezek. 20:47-48; Dan. 7:11; Matt. 3:12; 5:22; 13:42,50; Mark 9:43-49; Jude 7).
 - C. Eternal torment is the portion of the beast worshippers (14:11), the great whore (19:2), and the devil, the beast, and the false prophet (20:10).
 - D. The unsaved are resurrected and must have physical bodies (Matt. 10:28; Dan. 12:2; John 5:29; Mark 9:43-49), or they may be given nonflammable bodies. The fire may preserved rather than burn the bodies (Mark 9:49).
- (4) The humiliation---"in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb."
 - A. The angels have witnessed men worshipping the beast; now they witness God's vengeance. Angels will be employed in the execution of this decree (Matt. 13:41-42,49-50; II Thess. 1:7-8; Rev. 20:1-3).
 - B. There is a horror in seeing the face of the Lamb that they have despised and rejected (Rev. 6:16).
- (5) The duration---"the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."
 - A. The final Hell is a place of fire, smoke, and torment. Where there is smoke there must be fire!
 - B. The destiny of the image worshippers is fixed and unalterable. They denied Christ before men; now He denies them before the angels (Luke 12:8-9).
 - C. The smoke ascends from the torment. The verb is in the present tense; there is no break and no cessation in the ascending of the smoke and consequently not of the torment. There can be no torment where there is no conscious living beings.

- D. "For ever and ever" is "unto the ages of ages," the strongest expression of eternity of which the Greek is capable.
- E. Hell is eternal torment (Mark 3:29; 9:43; Matt. 25:41).
- F. "For ever and ever" in Revelation is used to express the existence of God (4:9-10; 5:14; 10:6; 15:7), the glory of the Lamb (5:13), the reign of believers (22:5), the doom of the devil (20:10) and the torment of the wicked (14:11).

(6) The continuation---"no rest day nor night."

- A. This is the idea of continual suffering---ceaseless agony ---no alleviation---no letup in the severity of the pain.
- B. The righteous have rest (Matt. 11:28; Rev. 14:13; Heb. 4:9). The wicked have no rest here or hereafter.
- C. Better to be killed by the beast than to be tormented with beast!

V. THE DEATH REST OF THE TRIBULATION MARTYRS (14:12-13).

1. The marks of God's patient elect remnant (v. 12).

- (1) There will be some saints on the earth all the way to the end of the tribulation (Isa. 26:9; Matt. 24:13). These will be the sheep nations in Matthew 25:31-46 and the nations which come to Jerusalem to worship (Isa. 2:3; Zech. 8:22). God is never left without a witness!
- (2) The Greek word for "patience" is the same as that for endure. When the beast mounts his global program of humanistic world rule and suppression some saints will endure this time. Nerved with a wholesome fear that nullifies the fear of man, they will stand fast.
- (3) The trials of the tribulation will produce patient endurance in the saints as it did in Job (Rom. 5:3; Jas. 1:3; 5:11).
- (4) These saints will keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and they will refuse to worship the beast or take his mark.
- (5) "Keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Here works and faith are properly linked together. Those who have true saving faith love His commandments (I John 5:3-5).
- (6) Faith and patient endurance are the constituent principles of the kingdom of Christ (Rev. 3:10). Faith is belief in the Divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ. Endurance causes us to never yield this truth for fear of persecution and suffering. Here is perseverance of the saints!

2. Death is better than life under the reign and rage of the beast (v. 13).

- (1) What a verse! Heaven speaks! The Spirit confirms it. The apostle records it!

- (2) "I heard a voice." This is the fifth of the seven voices from Heaven (10:4,8; 11:12; 14:2,13; 18:4; 21:3).
- (3) "From heaven" and "Yea, saith the Spirit." The language implies that the Holy Spirit no longer has His residence in the church on earth, for the church has been removed from earth to Heaven. Contrast with chapters 2-3. No sound reason can be given for the omission of the phrase, "unto the churches," were she still on earth at this time, for at no other time would she need the Comforter more than now!
- (4) "Write." Twelve times John is commanded to write (1:11,19; 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14; 14:3,12; 19:9; 21:5). This command is always associated with matters of great importance. Write not merely as all other parts of Scripture is recorded on the sacred page. Write the consolatory truth that the afflicted and mourning may dry up their tears.
- (5) "Blessed are the dead."
- A. This is the second of the seven beatitudes of Revelation (1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14).
 - B. The death of the righteous is always blessed (Eccl. 7:1; Phil. 1:21).
 - C. These martyrs of the tribulation will be blessed by rest and rewards, blessed by soon having a part in the marriage supper (19:9) and the first resurrection (20:4-6).
 - D. These dying as martyrs are blessed in contrast to those dying with the mark of the beast upon them.
- (6) "From henceforth" or from now on. From the time the beast begins his rage against the saints (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:7). This is from the middle of the tribulation to the end.
- (7) "They shall rest from their labors."
- A. Labors often mean the trials and troubles of mortal life (Jer. 20:18; Eccl. 1:8; Gen. 3:19).
 - B. Rest is a state of cessation, of quiet, of ease, or refreshment from all toils and distresses. Death is such a rest (Job 3:11-18; Isa. 57:2).
 - C. Death is a rest from all grief and sorrow of mind, from the warfare with Satan, from the struggles with this sinful body, etc.
 - D. Rest in these awful times will come only through dying. In this day there will be tortures such as only ages of Satanic malignity can make possible.
 - E. This rest is in contrast to the beast worshippers who

have no rest in life (16:2) or death (14:11).

- (8) "Their works do follow them"---into the kingdom age where they will be rewarded. Their works were produced by faith and love for Christ. Our investments of faithful service to Jesus Christ will earn eternal dividends. It pays to serve Jesus; it pays every day!

VI. THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH (14:14-16).

1. The sign of the Son of man (v. 14; Matt. 24:30).

- (1) This is a foreview of what is to come (16:12-16; 19:11-20).
- (2) "I saw, and behold"---an expression employed in the introduction of subjects of unusual interest. This is the tenth such occurrence of the expression.
- (3) "A white cloud." A cloud symbolizes the Divine presence (10:1; Matt. 17:5; Ezek. 10:4). "White" suggests the purity of Christ who sits upon it.
- (4) The Son of man in the parables of Matthew 13 is the Sower (Matt. 13:37-43); here He is the Reaper. In Revelation Christ is the Harvester.
- (5) "The Son of man." Under this title Christ judges the wicked (Matt. 24:30; 25:31; 26:64; Mark 8:38; John 5:27). Here He is seen coming to assume His kingdom (Dan. 7:13-17; Ps. 8:6).
- (6) "On his head a golden crown"---He is sitting as God's appointed King (Ps. 21:3; Rev. 19:12).
- (7) "A sharp sickle"---the sickle of a reaper who reaps and gathers ripe grain (Mark 4:26-29). He is appearing at the time of the harvest as a reaper. "Sharp" denotes severity of judgment (2:12; 19:15).
- (8) In Revelation Christ is said to have stars (1:16), a sealed book (5:6-7), and a sickle (14:14).

2. The fourth angel---the first harvest angel---who comes out of the temple (v. 15).

- (1) "Another" as distinct from those already mentioned (vv. 6,8-9). "Out of the temple"---this judgment comes from the very presence of God, the righteous Judge.
- (2) The throne judgments are seen from 4:5-11:18 and the temple judgments from 11:19-16:17.
- (3) "Loud voice"---this is the fourteenth mention of the 21 occasions of loud voices. This is really God's message to Christ, who has been all along expecting such a message (Heb. 10:12-13; Ps. 2:7-9).
- (4) "Thrust in thy sickle, and reap." The angel commands the Son of man because He has been commissioned by God to do

so (8:3; 10:1-4). Christ superintends this, for the angels actually do the reaping (Matt. 13:39).

- (5) "The harvest of the earth"---not the church. This is the harvest of Matthew 13:39-43 and Joel 3:13-17. This is the separation of unbelievers from believers at the end of the tribulation.
- (6) "Ripe" means either "withered" (Matt. 21:19-20; Mark 3:1,3; Luke 8:6; John 15:6) or "dried up" (Mark 11:20; Rev. 16:12). The thought is the inhabitants of the earth are ready for judgment.

3. The harvest is reaped by the Son of man (v. 16).

- (1) This harvest is over before the other begins in the vision. These reaped are not said to be cast into the winepress of God's wrath. There is no actual execution of judgment in the harvest---mostly a gathering. The judgment is seen in the vintage.
- (2) The harvest here may have reference to the gathering of the nations for Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16). This is only one phase of destruction, for after the grain harvest comes the grape harvest.

VII. THE VINTAGE OF THE EARTH (14:17-20).

1. The fifth angel---the second harvester angel---who also comes out of the temple in Heaven (v. 17). This angel seems to judge the armies of Antichrist. The sharp sickle denotes severity of judgment as before stated.
2. The sixth angel---the third harvester angel---who comes from the altar (v. 18).
 - (1) "From the altar"---altar of burnt offerings. The place where the prayers of the saints are offered (8:3-4). This judgment is in response to the prayers of the saints (6:9-11).
 - (2) "Power over fire"---probably the angel of 16:8.
 - (3) "Gather the clusters of the vine. . . grapes are fully ripe."
 - A. Israel was a vine (Ps. 80:8), but after centuries of cultivation and care she only produced wild grapes (Isa. 5:2-4; Jer. 2:21). Israel has now been replaced by the true Vine (John 15).
 - B. This vine is more than Judaism. It is the whole earth who is in league with Antichrist, a world about to be cast into the fire (John 15:6; Matt. 13:40-42; 25:46).
 - C. Study Deut. 31-32 here, especially 32:32-33.
 - D. The picture is of grape in their prime almost bursting with juice (Joel 3:12-14). This is Christ and His saints coming in judgment (II Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 19).

3. The fifth angel reaps the vintage (v. 19). This is a reference to Rev. 19:15 and Joel 3:13.
4. The winepress was trodden outside Jerusalem (v. 20).
 - (1) What a winepress and what wrath! It is trodden without the city where so long the Gentiles have trod down Israel (Luke 21:24). This is also where Christ was crucified (Heb. 13:12), and where He will shed the blood of His enemies.
 - (2) The vinevat represent the valley of Jehoshaphat. The juice is the blood of the slain and may include animals (19:17-18). The treader is Christ (Isa. 63:1-6).
 - (3) Christ is to trample the embattled nations of this whole earth, millions upon millions, from Bozarah to Megiddo (Jer. 25:30-33; Isa. 34:1-7). Rivers of human blood as deep as the bridels of the horses (19:11,14).
 - (4) "A thousand and six hundred furlongs." A furlong is about 600 feet. This is 960,000 feet or something like 200 miles. From the point where the Valley of Armageddon slopes down to the Valley of Jordan southward down through the Dead Sea to the port of Elath on the Gulf of Aqabah measures about 200 miles. It will cover most of the land of Israel from north to south!

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Fifteen

In the Book of Revelation the chronological order of events is set forth in chapters 6, 8-9, and 16. The other chapters (7, 10-15) give the stage setting of these events.

Chapters 15 and 16 bring to consummation the chronologically ordered events leading up to the second coming of Christ described in chapter 19.

I. THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN ANGELS WITH THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES (15:1-2).

1. The sign in Heaven of the seven angels (v. 1).

- (1) This is the third sign. Two others were before this (12:1,3). "Sign" (Greek semeion) is better translated "wonder" or "miracle" (Rev. 13:13-14). The sign is "in heaven" but is concerns events to take place on earth.
- (2) A sign means a symbol of revealed truth or prophetic event (John 12:32-33; 18:32; 21:19; Matt. 12:38-40). It does not mean these plagues are unreal things, but the exact opposite.
- (3) "Great and marvellous"---occurs again in verse 3 and no other place in the N.T. "Great" because they finish the wrath of God in the Great Tribulation. "Marvellous" in that they produce wonder and amazement in the hearts of those who see them and because of their far-reaching significance.
- (4) "Seven angels"---there are three numbered groups of angels in Revelation: four (7:1), seven (8:2; 16:1) and twelve (21:12).
- (5) "Having the seven last plagues:" These are the last plagues before the coming of Christ in judgment. When Christ comes He will personally inflict judgment. The angels do not actually receive the vials until verse 7.
- (6) The word "plagues" conveys the idea of judiciously inflicted pain (13:3,12,14; Luke 12:47). The seals and the trumpets are also plagues (9:18,20; 11:6).
- (7) "For in them is filled up"---the cup of God's wrath is full, and it must now be poured out.
- (8) "The wrath of God"---an expression found six times in this book (14:10,19; 15:1,7; 16:1; 19:15).

2. The sea of glass in Heaven before the throne of God (v. 2).

- (1) "A sea of glass"---already mentioned (4:6). In 4:6 it was unoccupied, now it is occupied. It reminds one of the molten sea in the earthly temple (I Kings 7:23; II Kings 25:13; II Chron. 4:2; Jer. 52:17), the Red Sea (Ex. 15), and other scriptures (Ex. 24:10; Ezek. 1:22).

- (2) The sea and lavers (II Chron. 4:6) in the earthly temple were used in connection with washings. There is no need for cleansing of the heavenly priests.
- (3) It looked glassy but was not glass. Like glass which is settled, unruffled, peace.
- (4) "Mingled with fire." Two things may be seen in this. First, the judgments on earth are against Antichrist and his followers come from God who is a consuming fire. Second, it may refer to the fiery trials endured by the saints in the tribulation.
- (5) "Them that had gotten the victory"---this is, over the beast, the image, the mark, and the number of his name. These are the tribulation days non-conformists who died for their faith (I Cor. 15:55-57; Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10).
- (6) They stand on the sea of glass (the elders sit) because stood for Christ and against Antichrist on earth. This is in a sense a repeat of the Israelites standing on the shore of the Red Sea after the destruction of Pharaoh (Ex. 15).
- (7) "Having harps of God" (5:8; 14:2). Real instruments of God's making used solely for the praise of God.
- (8) In Revelation there are church age martyrs (2:10), martyrs who die during the first three and a half years (6:9-11; 7:9-17; 11:7; 12:11) and martyrs who die during the last three and a half years (13:1-10,18; 14:1-2; 15:2).

II. THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE SONG OF THE LAMB (15:3-4).

1. The song in the night of the Great Tribulation (v. 3).

- (1) There are two songs here, for song is repeated in each case and there is the definite article connected by the conjunction "and." The song of Moses is probably sung only by the martyred Israelites, and the other by the Gentile martyrs.
- (2) "Song of Moses." There is only one song called the song of Moses (Deut. 31:19-22). It is found in Deuteronomy 31:21-32:43. This is not the song in Exodus 15:1-19 as some assert. The song in Deuteronomy 32:43 has to do with Israel and her land.
- (3) "The song of the Lamb"---the words of this song are found in the rest of the verse and verse 4.

2. The words of the song of the Lamb (vv. 3b-4).

- (1) "Great and marvellous are thy works"---these tribulation saints know this to be very true. There is something great and marvellous in all the works of God.
- (2) "Just and true are thy ways"---all God's acts are righteous acts.

- (3) "Thou King of saints" (Dan. 7:27; Rev. 19:7-16; 20:4). Or, some say, "King of nations" (Jer. 10:7). God is going to manifest His sovereignty over the nations and be glorified in His saints.
- (4) God is to be feared and glorified (14:7; Ps. 30:4; 97:12). Contrast with 13:4 here.
- (5) "Thou only art holy"---no other being is as holy as the Lord.
- (6) "All nations shall come and worship before thee"---this is millennial worship (Ps. 2:8-9; 24:1-10; 50:1-6; 66:1-4; 72:8-11; 86:9; 145:17; 149:1-9; Isa. 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 66:18-23; Dan. 7:14; Zeph. 2:11; Zech. 14:9,16-17).
- (7) "Thy judgments are made manifest" (Isa. 26:9). The kingdom will come not by missionary effort, social betterment, the ballot box, or peace conferences. It will come by Divine judgments and the return of Christ!

III. THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY OPENED IN HEAVEN (15:5-6).

1. The temple in Heaven (v. 5).

- (1) The O.T. reveals a temple in Heaven (Ps. 11:4; Hab. 2:20). The earthly tabernacle was a copy of the things in Heaven (Heb. 8:2; 9:23). This temple was mentioned in Rev. 11:19.
- (2) "The temple"---Greek naos meaning the sacred enclosure consisting of the holy place and the most holy place, known as the sanctuary. The imagery accords with the tabernacle in the wilderness rather than with either of the temples of later construction.
- (3) "The tabernacle of the testimony." This probably is a reference to the ark which contained the Ten Commandments (Ex. 25:22; 31:18; 32:15; 38:21; Num. 1:50,53; 17:7-8; 18:2; Ps. 78:5; Acts 7:44). Heaven is the home of the ark of God's covenant (Jer. 52:12-23).
- (4) "Was opened"---the veil is lifted. The heavenly temple is an opened temple (Heb. 10:19-22). The temple here is not opened for a wider door of liberty for God's people to worship Him. It is opened for judgment on earth.
- (5) The judgments of God in the tribulation proceed from His law.

2. The seven angels who are to administer God's wrath (v. 6).

- (1) These were mentioned in verse 1. Holy priests and holy angels only can enter the Holy Place.
- (2) "Came out of the temple"---inside the inner room of the Divine residence.
- (3) "Clothed in pure and white linen." This reminds us of the clothing of Christ (Dan. 10:5-7; Rev. 1:13-14) and of the

saints (Rev. 3:5,18; 19:8,14). These judgments are being executed in behalf of Christ and His saints.

- (4) The clothing of the saints is bussinos in the Greek and of the angels it is linon from which we get our English word "linen." Some manuscripts have lithos (stone) instead of linon. This is a copyists error. "Linen" is correct.
- (5) The clothing of the angels suggest their judgment comes from the holiness of God.
- (6) "Girded with golden girdles"---like Christ (Rev. 1:13). These righteous judgments on the earth bring glory to God.

IV. THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH GIVEN TO THE SEVEN ANGELS (15:7-8).

1. One of the four beasts give the seven angels the artillery of Heaven (v. 7).
 - (1) "Four beasts"---the four living creatures or the four cherubims who guard God's throne (Luke 1:19). They are the executors of the judicial judgment of God (6:1-8; 8:2).
 - (2) The word "vial" would be better translated "bowl" or "cup." The reference is to a broad shallow bowl used for pouring out the drink offering before the Lord. These bowls are not full of grace, but the wrath of God.
 - (3) Men who will not drink the cup of salvation must drink the cup of God's wrath.
 - (4) "For ever and ever"---the ages of the ages. This is the eleventh occurrence of the term. God's wrath is for ever and ever (14:11).
2. The temple is darkened with the smoke from the glory of God (v. 8).
 - (1) This scene compares with other scriptures (Ex. 40:34-35; Num. 16:19,42-46; I Kings 8:10-11). Access to the sanctuary is made impossible by the smoke until the judgments of the plagues are fulfilled.
 - (2) The smoke is not that of incense but of fire, the symbol of divine consuming judgment (Isa. 6:4; Ex. 19:18). God's glory is moved into intense action.
 - (3) Intercession cannot arrest the coming storm of Divine judgment (Ps. 18:8; I John 5:16).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Sixteen

I. THE COMMAND TO POUR OUT THE VIALS (16:1).

1. Here the angels are given their final marching orders to attack the earth. The "great voice" is that of the great God in His sanctuary. No longer will His wrath be restrained (Ps. 79:12).
2. A cherub gives the bowls to the angels, but God Himself gives the order to pour them upon the earth. The ministers of wrath cannot act without God's command.
3. Following these last seven judgments is the return of Christ.
4. The word "great" occurs 11 times in this chapter: great voice (vv. 1,17); great heat (v. 9); great river (v. 12); great day (v. 14); great earthquake (v. 18); great city (v. 19); great Babylon (v. 19); great hail (v. 21); great plague (v. 21).
5. The great Governor of the universe is never at a loss for means whereby to punish the guilty inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.
6. "Pour out," not sprinkle. Each vessel overflows and is to be poured out without measure till all are emptied (Zech. 3:8; Ps. 69:24; Jer. 10:25).

II. THE FIRST BOWL OF WRATH---BOILS ON THE BEAST WORSHIPPERS WHO LIVE ON THE EARTH (16:2).

1. These last seven plagues are as literal as were the plagues in Egypt in the days of Moses. There is no need to try to limit Divine power. These plagues are progressive; punishing the beast worshippers and culminating in the personal judgment of the beast and the false prophet.
2. This bowl is poured upon the earth. It is like the boils inflicted on the Egyptians under the sixth plague (Ex. 9:9-11). The same word is used in the Septuagint for "boil" that is translated "sore" in this text.
3. This is a loathsome ulcer of some kind, eating into the skin, seemingly malignant and unresponsive to medical treatment. It may be something like Job (Job 2:7-8), Miriam (Num. 12:10), and Lazarus (Luke 16:20,22) had.
4. Compare with the first trumpet (8:7). This plague is upon the beast worshippers, not the remnant of believers living then. The death-dealing edict has not been completely carried out.
5. This plague occurs during the time of reign of Antichrist---the last half of the seven years (13:12-14). These plague happen in quick succession near the end. The sores of the first bowl are still upon men in the darkness of the fifth bowl (16:10-11).

6. The government of God over men involves the infliction of physical disease (Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:15,27,35; Ex. 15:26). Sometimes these diseases are due to sin (Deut. 28:21,60) and at other times they are not (John 9:1,3). Sometimes Satan brings these diseases (Job 1; Luke 13:16; II Cor. 12:7-9).
7. When new diseases baffle science, men take no thought of God.
8. It is while men are showing their beast-like character and worshipping the beast when these sore come upon them.

III. THE SECOND BOWL OF WRATH---THE SEA TURNED TO BLOOD (16:3).

1. Compare with the second trumpet (8:8-9). This plague and the next compares to the first plague in Egypt (Ex. 7:20-21; Ps. 105:29; Isa. 50:21).
2. This catastrophe predicts for the earth a sight almost unbelievable (Gen. 1:21). This may be only the Mediterranean Sea, or it may mean all the seas of the world which may up two-thirds of the globe.
3. All marine life is wiped out! Billions of sea creatures comes floating to the surface in horrible, rotting witness of the wickedness of men! What a frightful stench! What fearful possibilities of disease!
4. Few men will survive these awful days (Isa. 24:1-13; 13:12; 17:6). We are promised exemption from this time by the blood of redemption.
5. Under the second trumpet only a third of the sea became as blood, now the entire sea becomes blood.

IV. THE THIRD BOWL OF WRATH---BLOOD IN THE RIVERS AND FOUNTAINS (16:4-7).

1. The vial and the visitation (v. 4).
 - (1) Compare with the third trumpet (8:10-11). This destroys human water supplies.
 - (2) If Christ could turn water to wine, then He can turn water to blood.
2. The voice of the angel in justification (vv. 5-6).
 - (1) "Angel of the waters"---a holy angel who has jurisdiction over the water supply of the earth. Note angels of the wind (7:1-3) and fire (14:18).
 - (2) "Thou art righteous, O Lord"---God's judgment is always a righteous judgment (Rom. 2:2; Rev. 15:3). It is the holiness of God that brings judgment. God does not condone sin; He condemn sin.
 - (3) "Which art, and wast, and shalt be"---denotes the eternal, independent existence of God.
 - (4) Blood for blood (v. 6). They shed blood, now they sup

blood. They shed the blood of the two witnesses and the saints. Men reap what they sow (Isa. 49:26; Ex. 21:22-25; Gal. 6:7).

- (5) During the last of the tribulation period, there will be the worse bloodletting since the medieval inquisitions. God will avenge His martyred saints (Deut. 32:40-43).
3. The voice from the altar in vindication (v. 7).
 - (1) This is doubtless an allusion to the prayers of the martyrs (6:9-10).
 - (2) This unknown and unnamed being is probably an angel who represents the martyrs. Or, it may be the combined voice of the slain.

V. THE FOURTH BOWL OF WRATH---SCORCHING HEAT FROM THE SUN (16:8-9).

1. Compare with the fourth trumpet (8:12). The judgment here is upon the sun.
2. The sun's intensity is increased. This is a global heat wave. Many will die through heart attack and heat stroke during this period.
3. "Power was given unto him"---the sun, not the angel. God gave the sun power to scorch men with fire.
4. Jesus Christ foretold this time (Luke 21:25) and so did others (Isa. 24:6; Deut. 32:24; Mal. 4:1).
5. The state of the righteous is otherwise (7:16; 21:23).
6. The beast worshippers knew that God had power over these plagues, but these God-haters did not repent. Pain to the body brings no repentance or remorse. The fires of Hell do not purify any one, nor will a foretaste of Hell make spiritually dead sinner repent. It is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance (Rom. 2:4).
7. "Men" in verse 9 literally is "the men," meaning probably the beast worshippers. Note verse 2 of this chapter again.

VI. THE FIFTH BOWL OF WRATH---DARKNESS UPON THE SEAT OF THE BEAST (16:10-11).

1. Compare with the fifth trumpet (9:1-2) and the ninth Egyptian plague (Ex. 10:21-23).
2. "Seat of the beast" is in the Greek "the throne of the beast" (II Thess. 2:4). This is the first beast, the Antichrist (13:1-10). This will cover the capital city of Antichrist and his kingdom with darkness.
3. The seat of the beast will be the rebuilt city of Babylon, the center of all commerce, religion, evil, and government.
4. Others speak of this same time (Joel 2:1-2,31; Amos 5:18; Nah. 1:6,8; Zeph. 1:15; Mark 13:24). "His kingdom" makes this worldwide, for Antichrist rules the world at this time (13:7).

5. "They gnawed their tongues for pain" (Luke 16:19-31). "The sores" of the first vial remain, showing these vials are poured out in close succession.
6. Sin grows as its goes (Gen. 4:3-9; Ps. 1:1; 19:12-13).
7. This darkness may allow the armies of the East to march to Palestine in secret.
8. "Blasphemed the God of heaven." They charged God with their sufferings, for men always places the blame on God for their own sins. The dragon cannot efface their consciousness of God even when he is worshipped!
9. "Repented not." Only fools hope for repentance beyond the grave. Man rejects God, not because of philosophical doubts or unexplained answers to questions, but because of hardness of heart and love for sin!

VII. THE SIXTH BOWL OF WRATH---THE RIVER EUPHRATES DRIED UP (16:12-16).

1. The drying up of the River Euphrates (v. 12).
 - (1) This is the literal river first mentioned in Eden (Gen. 2:14), and which is the eastern border of the land God gave to Abraham (Gen. 15:18; Ex. 6:8). It is 1,800 miles long and as wide as 3,600 feet and very deep.
 - (2) It has been viewed for centuries as the boundary line between east and west. The Roman Empire had its eastern bound here.
 - (3) Kipling sang: "Oh East is East and West is West, and never of the twain shall meet. . .Till earth and sky stand presently at God's great judgment seat."
 - (4) It is to be literally dried up (Isa. 11:15; Zech. 10:11). This will be the water supply of the new Babylon. This will leave the capital of Antichrist without a water supply.
 - (5) "Kings of the east" or literally "kings of the sunrising." This is nations east of the Euphrates River---Japan, China, Afghanistan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Viet Nam (Dan. 11:44; Joel 2:1-10,20).
 - (6) This river is dried up to invite men to cross and speed their way to Armageddon. This is a massive oriental confederacy.
 - (7) The way for the great oriental invasion has already been paved by a road recently constructed from China through the Himalays of Kashmir to Pakistan.
2. Demon spirits come from the infernal trinity (v. 13).
 - (1) "Three unclean spirits"---these are demons as verse 14 tells us. Demons are always call "unclean spirits" in

the Bible (Matt. 10:1; 12:45; Mark 1:27; 3:11; Luke 7:21; 8:2; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12-13; I Tim. 4:1). They will spread lies and deception over the whole world (I John 4:1-3).

- (2) "Like frogs"---they come forth out of the quagmires of the world to do their work in the world's evening shadows to creep and croak in the ears of the nations to bring them to the final conflict.
- (3) This is the antetype of the plague of the frogs sent on Egypt (Ex. 8:1-6). Jannes and Jambres blinded Pharaoh by bringing up frogs (Ex. 8:7).
- (4) "Dragon...beast...false prophet"---observe that these are distinct persons (Rev. 19:20). They make up the Satanic trinity or Hell's trinity.
- (5) Demonic spirits appear in Revelation as horses (9:7) and as infernal cavalry (9:17).

3. Demons gather the nations to the final war (v. 14).

- (1) "Spirits of devils, working miracles"---else where the Antichrist and False Prophet are said to do this (Matt. 24:24; II Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13-15). This verse reveals that demons will aid these kings by occultic miracles.
- (2) The world is always looking for a miracle-working man. Some professed Christians must see to believe rather than believe to see.
- (3) "Kings of the earth and of the whole world"---all nations will be in this decisive battle of the ages (Zech. 14:2; Joel 3:2). It will be between all the kings of the earth and Christ and His saints (Rev. 19:11-21).
- (4) "The battle of that great day"---what we call the battle of Armageddon. The word translated for "battle" is polemos which means "war." The details of this war are seen in other Scriptures (Zech. 14:1-21; Rev. 16:12; 19:11-21).
- (5) "Of God Almighty"---the eighth of the nine occurrences of the word "Almighty" in this book.

4. The command to watch for His coming (v. 15).

- (1) These words are not addressed to the demon-led men enroute to Armageddon. They are addressed to Christian believers.
- (2) "I come as a thief"---a sudden, unexpected coming of Christ. Similar words are found in other Scriptures (Matt. 24:42-44; Luke 12:35-40; I Thess. 5:2-4; II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3), and they always refer to the imminent coming of Christ and the need for readiness and watchfulness. His coming to judge the earth will not be as a thief, for know that He is coming (Rev. 1:7) and will be ready to do battle with Him and His saints.

- A. Some make this the life and testimony of the saints (Rev. 19:8; I John 2:28). He who keeps his testimony avoids spiritual nudity at the Lord's coming.
- B. It may be best to take this literally. Here is a warning against nudity, a thing becoming more and more acceptable in our day even in religious circles. Some will keep their garments! Praise God!

VIII. THE SEVENTH BOWL OF WRATH---THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE (16:17-21).

1. The announcement of the consumation of the Great Tribulation (v. 17).
 - (1) "Vial into the air." This is perplexing since the prince of the power of the air has been cast down (12:9).
 - (2) In these days of space-mindedness men seek to take possession of the air. In former times it was the land and the sea. Today those who have the greatest supply of planes, missiles, and satellites win the war.
 - (3) The expression "like a cloud to cover the land" (Ezek. 38:9,16) is probably an allusion to air travel.
 - (4) The pouring of this bowl upon the atmosphere will have a devastating effect upon air planes and space ships (Matt. 24:29-30).
 - (5) "A great voice from the throne"---the voice of God Himself.
 - (6) "It is done"---the fulfillment of 10:7. The purpose of sending judgments upon sinful men during the seven-year tribulation period is finished. Note Rev. 21:5-6. This statement: "It is done," marks the end of the times of the Gentiles.
 - (7) Men would not have the Savior's "It is finished" (John 19:30); so they must have the awful "It is done" from the Judge.
2. The greatest global earthquake known in history (v. 18).
 - (1) Compare with this just before the seals, trumpets, and bowls of wrath (4:5; 8:5; 11:19). The lightning and the thunders announce the storm which is breaking upon the heads of men ripe for judgment.
 - (2) Through the ages there have been many earthquakes (Amos 1:1; Matt. 27:51; Acts 16:26). This final earthquake is without precedent or parallel.
 - (3) The old prophets foretold this time (Ezek. 38:19-20; Isa. 24:17-21; Hag. 2:6-7; Joel 3:16; Heb. 12:28). The earth literally convulses as the times of the Gentiles comes to an end.
 - (4) Some say this is an fullscale nuclear exchange.

3. The fall of the cities of the world (v. 19).
 - (1) "The great city"---two have been mentioned---Jerusalem (11:8) and Babylon (14:8). This is Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-5) because it is distinguish from the cities of the nations, which would not be the case if Babylon was meant.
 - (2) "Three parts"---Jerusalem is divided into three parts (11:8,13), although not destroyed (I Chron. 23:25; Ps. 125:1).
 - (3) "The cities of the nations fell"---this points to Rome, London, Moscow, Peking, Cairo, Johannesburg, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Mexico City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Washtington, etc.
 - (4) "Great Babylon came in remembrance"---the details of this are in chapters 17 and 18. God never forgets. The sins of Babylon have had a stupefying effect on its inhabitants. Now she shall drink the cup of God's wrath.
 - (5) "Fierceness"---a poor translation. It should read "anger of wrath." This phrase occurs some 39 times in the Old Testament. The long-suffering of God is exhausted and wrath pour itself out in anger.
4. The coastlines and continents change and the mountains shift (v. 20).
 - (1) Compare with 6:14. In 6:14 the mountains were moved; now they flee. The maps of physical georgraphy bear false witness, for the mountains and islands are no longer where indicated.
 - (2) This will prepare the earth for the millennial age soon to come (Ps. 46:6-9; Isa. 40:4-5; Zech. 14:10).
 - (3) The gentle rolling topagraphy of the world as originally created will be changed. No more inaccessible, uninhabitable mountain ranges or deserts and ice caps---a restoration of the antediluvian environment.
5. Great hail stones falling from the sky (v. 21).
 - (1) Compare with the seventh Egyptian plague (Ex. 9:22-26) and the seventh trumpet (11:19).
 - (2) This may be great hail (Job 38:22-23; Josh. 10:11).
 - (3) The Greek chalaza means simply something which falls (8:7; 11:19). "Stone" (Gr. lithinos) is used of rock material.
 - (4) This is probably tremendous volcanic explosions scattering great 100-pound boulders. This plague is "exceeding great."
 - (5) This bonbardment may fall on the massed millions ready to battle Christ and the saints (14:19).
 - (6) "Men blasphemed God" (vv. 9,11). With the end of the world in sight sinners do not cry for mercy and forgiveness.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Seventeen

- I. THE INVITATION TO VIEW THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT WHORE (17:1-2).
1. John's attention is directed to religious Babylon (v. 1).
 - (1) "One of the seven angels which had the seven vials"---John seems to be taken back to a time before the seven vials are poured out to describe something at an earlier time. Or, this may not be the case, according to some.
 - (2) Before we see the glory of the bride we must see the judgment of the whore. Before we see the vision of the New Jerusalem, we must behold the destruction of Babylon. Judgment must come to an end before blessing begins.
 - (3) "Come hither" in 17:1 is pre-millennial; in 21:9 it is post-millennial. It is one of the seven angels who shows John both the whore and bride.
 - (4) "The judgment"---of religious Babylon, the world church. This may occur in the middle of the seven years, or near the end of the seven years as the context here favors (16:17-19).
 - (5) "The great whore"---the apostate church of the tribulation which consists of the followers of all false religions, controlled by the Roman Catholic Church (17:18). In the seventh century the church of Rome was united with the city of Rome by the junction of the temporal and spiritual powers in the person of the Roman Pontiff.
 - A. The contrast between the whore and the bride proves one is the opposite of the other (Rev. 17:1,3; 21:9-10). One has "fine linen," the attire of a bride (19:8); the other has "purple and scarlet," the dress of a rich harlot (17:4). Both are called cities (17:18; Gal. 4:26). One is burned with fire (17:16); the other has no fire (21:23). Kings commit fornication with the whore (17:2), but they bring their glory and honor into the New Jerusalem (21:26).
 - B. If the bride be the true church connected to the holy city, the New Jerusalem, then the harlot is the false church, connected with the corrupt city, Rome.
 - C. "Whore" describes an unfaithful church, and similar terms are used in Revelation to describe corrupt doctrine and practice (2:14,20,22). Rome is guilty of many departures from truth and purity (Jas. 4:4).
 - D. Harlot or whore is used in connection with unfaithfulness on the part of professed worshippers of the true God (Ezek. 16, 23; the whole book of Hosea).

- (6) "Sitteth upon many waters"---nations over which the apostate church has ruled in centuries past and present (17:15).
- A. This is a world-wide religious system. This cannot be confined to the geographical limits of the ancient Roman Empire. This is the revived Roman Empire of the tribulation period which includes the whole world (13:7).
 - B. The religious capital of the one-world church is Rome; the political capital is literal Babylon; the military capital is Palestine (Dan. 11:45).
 - C. This woman is a unified church. No longer are there any denominational distinctions. The universal church (both visible and invisible) leads to this. The Pope is waiting with open arms to welcome his wandering children back home! The rapture will remove the true churches and permit the unification of Christendom!
 - D. The whore is not only Satan's counterfeit of the true church, but it is the concentrated expression of every antichristian movement and sect in existence, consolidated and controlled by Satan.

2. She has beguiled the kings of the earth (v. 2).

- (1) Compare with Rev. 14:8, Jer. 51:7, and Isa. 47:5.
- (2) The kings have yielded civil power to this corrupt, blood-thirsty, covetous religious system---the crusades and the times of the Middle Ages prove this. She has brought them under her influence---made them her votaries and allies.
- (3) Put-on religion is spiritual adultery (Mark 8:38) and so is idolatry (Ezek. 23:37; Jer. 3:14; Isa. 54:1). The true church is to keep herself pure from the world by the path of separation. She must not make alliances with the world.
- (4) She first makes the masses of Christian apostates drunk. They give themselves up to the short-lived joys of the harlot's cup of wine. Real Christianity has a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1).

II. THE WOMAN IN CONTROL OF THE BEAST (17:3-4).

1. John is carried into the wilderness (v. 3).

- (1) Compare with 1:10 and 21:10. Either by Holy Spirit, or by a state of spiritual ecstasy.
- (2) "Into the wilderness." The article is absent in the Greek, signifying that the reference is not to that wilderness mentioned in 12:6,14. This is the wilderness of the world. A terrible dry and thirsty place for a true bride, but the harlot-church finds her home in it! It suits her! She is a worldly church.

- (3) "A woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast"---the world church controls the state, as a rider controls a beast by riding upon it. This is the complete subjection of the civil power (13:7). She sits on the beast and the nations!
 - (4) "A scarlet coloured beast"---the Antichrist (13:1-10; Dan. 7).
 - (5) "Full of the names of blasphemy"--- in 13:1 the seven heads have the names of blasphemy; here the beast has these names. The executive of the empire is given over to many and varied expressions of blasphemy.
 - (6) "Seven heads and ten horns"---see 13:1; 17:7; 12:3. In 13:1 the heads are completeness of administrative power; here they represent successive forms of government or kings (17:9-13). In chapter 17 neither the heads or horns are crowned! Does this signify the near fall of the kingdom of Antichrist?
2. The woman's clothing and cup (v. 4).
- (1) This is not a godly woman (I Tim. 2:9; I Pet. 3:3-5). The more a woman loses her sense of inward values, the more she seeks to atone for this loss by adorning the outward man (Isa. 3:18-26).
 - (2) Purple and scarlets are worn by the popes and cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church. When the pope is installed into office five articles of attire are scarlet. His throne is scarlet, and he is often borne by twelve people clad in scarlet clothing.
 - (3) "Decked with gold and precious stones"---the symbols of Roman Catholic pride and power because of her great material wealth. She has billion of dollars in cathedrals, paintings, sculptures and treasures of art, schools and hospitals, monasteries, and the priceless treasures of the Vatican.
 - (4) Rome flaunts her wealth before a world that can appreciate nothing else. She attracts the natural heart and imagination of man, dazzling and bewildering him.
 - (5) "A golden cup in her hand"---the Catholic Church is holding this golden cup through the press, TV, and radio. She wants all to see her charitable acts, outward piety, grand architectures, and gorgeous furnishings.
 - (6) The casual observer sees only the golden cup; the wise man sees the contents. She holds out to men her wine cup of doctrines gratifying to man's carnal heart---her indulgences, her absolutions on easy terms, her assured promises of salvation, her compromises with sin, her ac-

commodations of all the perverted cravings of the human. There is the filth of her enforced celibacy and her auricular confession.

- (7) The scarlet beast was full of the names of blasphemy. The scarlet whore's cup is full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Abominations refer to idolatry (II Kings 23:13; Isa. 44:19; Ezek. 16:36) and fornication to gross corruption (Rev. 2:21; 9:21).
- (8) That Christendom is to become the very hotbed and cesspool of all that is religiously filthy and vile is a marvel. Satan will fill it with his presence and power just as the Spirit filled the church on Pentecost. There is coming a worldwide revival of Roman Catholicism!

III. THE NAME OF THE WOMAN (17:5).

1. She has long written her name as "The True Church." But another finger---the same that wrote on the walls of Babylon once before---has written in this verse her true name.
2. "Mystery." There is a mystery or secret to her name. This is not literal Babylon, but mystical Babylon.
 - (1) There is a mystery about the true church (Eph. 3:1-21; 5:32) as well as the false church. The same is true of Christ (I Tim. 3:16) and Antichrist (II Thess. 2:7). The true church is subject to Christ; this one to no one.
 - (2) She has always shrouded herself in the mystery of baptismal regeneration, transubstantiation, holy water, lights on the altar, the mystery plays, and rites and ceremonies mumbled in Latin.
3. "Babylon the great."
 - (1) Literal Babylon was built by Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10). In this city was invented the Babylonian religious cult of Devil worship. Before a member could be initiated he had to confess to a priest and be baptized to be saved. This mystical brotherhood was ruled by a high priest whose Word was law.
 - (2) The worship of Mary and Christ as a baby goes back to Babylon to Semiramis and her son, Tammuz (Ezek. 8:7-14). The title "Queen of Heaven" given to Mary is not Christian (Jer. 44:17-19,25). This was the title of Semiramis, the mother goddess of Babylon.
 - (3) Easter and Lent observances with 40 days of fasting were practiced for the benefit of Tammuz 500 years before Christ. Easter means "Ishtar," one of the titles of the Queen of Heaven.
 - (4) The rosary and the sign of the cross are of pagan origin. Prayers for the dead, prayer beads, purgatory, etc., are as well.

(5) In A.D. 378 the head of the Babylonian religious order became the Ruler of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus Satan united Babylon and Rome in one system. Then the Babylonian rites begin to enter the church.

4. "Mother of harlots."

- (1) She has numerous offsprings. She is the source of each and every religious system which courts the world. She is responsible for every sort of false religious system used by Satan to turn men away from God.
- (2) She has turned out a multitude of corrupt daughter-churches, calling herself "The Mistress and Mother of all churches." This is the Protestant churches who withdrew from her at the time of the Protestant Reformation.
- (3) Baptists are not Protestants as we are older than the Catholic Church. Baptists are the true churches of Jesus Christ on earth today, if they are true to the Bible.
- (4) Many modern Protestant churches have outstripped their mother in that they have denied the faith more than she has.

5. "Abominations of the earth."

- (1) The Catholic Church, influenced by Babylonian Mysticism, has introduced all the false doctrines such as denial of church independency, religious bosses, salvation by church membership, etc.
- (2) All heresy held by Protestants they borrowed from the Catholics. What little truth they believe they stole from the Baptists. Heaven will not be made up of Baptists only, but all will be there on the merits of the truth preached by the Baptists.

IV. THE INTOLERANCE OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON (17:6).

1. What Rome cannot subvert by infiltration and false doctrine, she seeks to destroy by persecution. The blood which the woman is said to shed is seen in the city (18:24).
2. Here is a woman drunk on the blood of the saints. So great has the shedding of blood possessed her, she has lost self-control and is like one in whom reason has been dethroned through strong drink. Note verse 2 again here.
3. "The blood of the saints" may mean Old Testament saints and "the blood of the witnesses of Jesus" the New Testament saints. It is the same bloody system which originated in Babylon which has persecuted all the saints in both Testaments. This system put a purple robe on Christ and crucified Him!
4. The blame for the bloody persecution is laid upon the whore, not the beast. The civil powers have only been a tool in her hands.

5. Here is presented the tortures of the Inquisition and the fires of Smithfield. If this woman is not the Roman Catholic Church, then all history is but a myth, all testimony is but a fable. Her daughters have stained their hands in the blood of some of the purest and noblest of God's children.
6. Some 50,000,000 Anabaptists died at her hands during the Dark Ages. Rome has never publicly acknowledged her sin in putting these to death. Color Roman Catholicism blood red!
7. In the Catholic-dominated countries today, Spain and Columbia, Protestants and Baptists are treated as heretics, their churches burned, and their religious freedom denied.
8. Catherine de Medici, mother of the King, an ardent Romanist and willing tool of the Pope, gave the order on the night of August 24, 1572, to slaughter 70,000 Huguenots. There was great rejoicing in Rome. The Pope and his College of Cardinals went to the Church of San Marco, and ordered the Te Deum to be sung in thanksgiving. The Pope struck a medal in commemoration of the Massacre and sent a Cardinal to Paris to bear the King and Queen-Mother the congratulations of the Pope and Cardinals.
9. She will commit even more brutal and devilish actions during the tribulation. John stood in awe or amazement at her. A woman, the symbol of gentleness and sympathy, a murderer!

V. THE IDENTITY OF THE WOMAN AND THE BEAST (17:7-8).

1. The angel speaks to John in a gentle rebuke (v. 7).
 - (1) Did he wonder at her clothing? her abominations and filthiness? the stupidity of the kings of the earth to be enticed by the whore? her being drunk with the blood of the saints? Probably the latter of these.
 - (2) This gentle rebuke suggest we should be more concerned with great world events. These heard the coming of our Lord and His kingdom.
 - (3) The angel will explain the mystery of the woman and the beast. This is done in an inverted order. First the beast (vv. 8-14) and then the woman (vv. 15-18).
2. The four phases of the history of the beast (v. 8).
 - (1) Good scholars are divided on the meaning of this passage. Some make it the Roman Empire; some others Babylon; still some others Judas.
 - (2) I think it is best to let the beast be the final Antichrist ---the meaning it generally has in this book (11:7; 13:1-4; 11-12,14-15,17-18; 14:9,11; 15:2; 16:2,10,13; 17:3,7).
 - (3) Note the four phases of his existence:

- A. "The beast thou sawest was"---the Antichrist during the first three and half years of the tribulation.
 - B. "And is not"---Antichrist is killed (13:3,12).
 - C. "Shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" (11:7). The prison house of the demons produces this monster of iniquity. Does a demon take over the body of the dead Antichrist? Does this not account for the Satanic origin of the beast (11:7; 12:3-4). The false church in this chapter is prevailed against by Hell (Matt. 16:18), showing she is not the true church!
 - D. "And go into perdition" (19:20; 20:10; Dan. 7:11). The Antichrist is called "the son of perdition" (II Thess. 2:3).
- (4) John wondered upon the ascension of the beast from the pit and the world wondered when the deadly wound is healed (13:3). The healing of the beast and the ascending are the same occasion.
 - (5) John could not have said the Roman Empire in his day "is not." He is speaking of the Antichrist which was killed and then came to life.
 - (6) The only ones who will not "wonder" after the beast are the elect of God (II Thess. 2:1-13).

VI. THE SEVEN HEADS OF THE BEAST (17:9-11).

1. The mark of wisdom: To believe and accept as final every interpretation God has given (v. 9).
 - (1) Some seek to reinterpret God's own interpretations.
 - (2) Prophecy is for wise ones (Dan. 11:33; 12:3,10).
 - (3) God only knows the future (Isa. 41:21-23). True wisdom takes its stand at the threshold of prophetic inquiry and asks, "What is written in the Book?"
 - (4) The symbol of seven heads has a double meaning as we are about to see.
 - (5) Here is the geographical location of the woman who rides the beast. This is the seven hill city of Rome---the See of the Papacy ("See" from sedes, "seat"). Literal Babylon is not on seven hills, nor is Jerusalem!
 - (6) Some reasons for making this Rome, Italy, the seat of Roman Catholicism:
 - A. As many as a dozen old Latin (Roman) authors speak of Rome as the city of seven hills. The Roman poets do the same.
 - B. Roman coins (still preserved) bear the imprint of Rome as a woman on seven hills.

C. Victorinus, the first commentator on Revelation, in his notes on the present verse, says: "That is, the city of Rome."

- (7) Some says the word is "mountains," not hills. True, but this does not obliterate the correspondence. Mountains and hills are quite parallel terms in Scripture. The Romans, who may be supposed to know their own language best, call them "montes," or "mountains."
- (8) Some refer the mountains to seven kingdoms as mountains some times means kingdoms (Ps. 30:7; Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35). They say these kingdoms are Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Rome, and Rome revived or revised.

2. The seven kings (v. 10).

- (1) "There" does not occur in the original. The error is not in the text but in the translation.
- (2) The seven heads have a double symbolic sense: a geographical (the seven hills of Rome) and a political (seven literal kings of Rome).
- (3) Rome only had one king at a time. Hence the kings ruled successively, not simultaneously.
- (4) Some erroneously make these seven successive forms of government: kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, and the imperial form. Other make them seven kingdoms, but John said "kings."
- (5) "Five are fallen" by an unnatural death (Jud. 3:25; II Sam. 1:19,25; 3:38). This was true of many of the Caesars.
- (6) "One is"---Domitian who is the sixth.
- (7) "The other is yet to come." Greek reads: "And whenever he cometh" indicates that the time of the seventh is indefinite and uncertain. This refers to the final Antichrist who makes war with the Lamb.
- (8) "He must continue a short space"---42 months or 3½ years (Rev. 13:5). This statement identifies him with the Antichrist.

3. The eighth is of the seven (v. 11).

- (1) The Greek is emphatic---he himself is also an eighth. The Greek for "eighth" (ogdoos) is masculine, showing conclusively that an individual is intended and not a kingdom.
- (2) The seventh king whose deadly wound is healed is considered to be the eighth king. The eighth has the body of the seventh. A new character is seen in the beast during the last half of the seven years.
- (3) The eighth is out of the seven. He is related to these

as they are all kings of Rome, or maybe the eighth is a composite of the other seven who have gone before. He will be the last Gentile world ruler.

- (4) "Goeth into perdition" (Rev. 17:8; 19:20; 20:10; Dan. 7:11).
- (5) Judas is not the Antichrist. Judas was never an emperor of Rome. Nor am I convinced that the eighth is Nero as some teach.

VII. THE TEN HORNS OF THE BEAST (17:12-14).

1. The ten horns are the ten kings of the revived Roman Empire (v. 12).
 - (1) The ten kings shall be contemporaneous in contradiction to the seven heads which are successive. This is ten kings in the land area of the old Roman Empire who rule in separate countries and yet form a confederacy in the revival of the empire (Dan. 2:40-44; 7:8,23-24).
 - (2) "Which have received no kingdom as yet"---had not come to power in John's day. The ten-king stage of Rome is future.
 - (3) "One hour" may be literal and describe the length of time of their final destruction by Christ and the saints. Or, it may not (Matt. 26:40; Gal. 2:5; Rev. 11:2-3; 13:5; 18:16-19). This brevity is for the elect's sake (Matt. 24:22).
2. The ten kings give their power to Antichrist (v. 13).
 - (1) This is for military strategy. The forces of evil will pool their power. The ten kings are subordinate to the Antichrist and their reign is measured by his (Dan. 7:8,24).
 - (2) They willingly place themselves in absolute subjection to the beast---dependent allies.
3. The war with the Lamb (v. 14).
 - (1) This conflict is fully described in 19:19-21. The war is anticipated here.
 - (2) "These" means the beast and the ten kings (19:19). This is a foreview of Armageddon. These gather for retaliation for the sore judgments and to dethrone and destroy Christ and to enthrone the beast in His stead.
 - (3) The Lamb is Christ (5:9-14; 6:1; 7:9-10; 15:2-3).
 - (4) "Lord of lords, and King of kings" occurs again in a reverse order (19:16). The repetition of this term is an indication that the two passages relate to the same event.
 - (5) "They that are with him"---the heavenly armies, consisting

redeemed saints (Rev. 19:14; Jude 14; Zech. 14:5).

- (6) Angels have a war in Heaven (Rev. 12:7); we have one on earth--the place where we are to reign (Rev. 5:10; 19:11, 14; Ps. 149:6-9; John 18:36). Saints alone form the conquering army of the Lamb.
- (7) "Called" in time (II Thess. 2:13-14), "chosen" in eternity (Eph. 1:4), proved "faithful" in all and every relation to life (Matt. 25:21-23; Rev. 2:10).

VIII. AN EXPLANATION OF THE WATERS (17:15).

1. This explains verse 1 of this chapter. This is the first time the word "waters" is interpreted as being a symbol. The previous use of the word is to be taken in its literal sense.
2. The woman is said to sit upon many waters (17:1), showing her worldwide influence over the nations. She is said to sit upon the back of the beast (17:3), revealing her power over the Antichrist. She is said to sit upon seven mountains (17:9), disclosing her geographical location.
3. This reveals the one-world church rules over the nations through Antichrist.
4. Waters symbolize the ungodly nations of the world in other Scriptures (Isa. 57:20; Dan. 7:3).

IX. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GREAT WHORE (17:16-17).

1. The Antichrist and the ten kings destroy the scarlet whore (v. 16).
 - (1) Some scholars say the manuscript evidence favors the reading, "and the beast," instead of "upon the beast." The context would support the reading "and," seeing the kings are given authority with the beast (vv. 12-13,17). They could not use their power without his consent it would seem.
 - (2) The "whore" once again is religious Babylon, or the Roman Catholic Church who controls the one-world church.
 - (3) The ten kings, their federal head, and all the empire join in violent hatred of the harlot. All were united in supporting her claim and pretensions for political reasons, and now they are equally agreed on her destruction. They hate the system which has so long enslaved them.
 - (4) "Shall make her desolate"---take away her political power so the world government can be supreme. This probably will happen in the middle of the seven years. They will despoil her of her great wealth---cut off her tax monies.
 - (5) "Naked"---stripped her of her scarlet robe, so she appears before all in her true character as a shameless and abandoned woman (Ezek. 23:29; Rev. 3:18). Her moral nakedness and shame will be apparent to all.

- (6) "Eat her flesh"---the abundance of her wealth is devoured by her late admirers, now her bitter enemies (cf. Ps. 27:2; Micah 3:2-3; Jas. 5:3).
 - (7) "Burn her with fire"---burn her churches and temples. This is utter social and political ruin.
 - (8) The world's glory and mighty is but a passing dream. All not founded on God withers, fades, and perishes. Her ruin is complete and final.
2. The enemies of the whore carry out the purpose of God (v. 17).
- (1) God uses wicked men to fulfill His purpose (Ex. 9:16; Dan. 4:17; Isa. 44:28; Ezra 1:1; 7:27). Note Ps. 76:10.
 - (2) God has decreed the destruction of the worst religious system on the face of the earth. Antichrist and the ten kings of Europe are the instruments in do this.
 - (3) The foreordination of God extends to the evil acts of men ---"God hath put it in their hearts." Note "their hearts" and "his will."
 - (4) What is attributed to the kings in verse 13 of our chapter is traced to the source in verse 17. God works unseen in all political changes of the nations.
 - (5) The rulers of the nations are agents in the hands of the sovereign Lord. Instead of thwarting God's purpose, they unconsciously fulfill it. The ecclesiastical and secular powers are under the direct control of God.
 - (6) "Until the words of God shall be fulfilled" or "the words of God are finished"---the final destruction of the world powers at Armageddon.

X. ROME, THE SEAT OF THE WOMAN'S AUTHORITY (17:18).

- 1. The woman was to sit where the emperor reigned in John's day. This is without question Rome, Italy.
- 2. Compare with 17:9. The Romish system is identified with the city of Rome itself here. This is the interpretation of the symbol of the whore and her seat of power.
- 3. The woman first is seen on the beast (17:3), then upon the seven heads of the beast (17:9).
- 4. Literal Rome is the religious and political center of the world in the first part of the tribulation period---the woman rides, or controls, the Antichrist who governs the world. The political center for the last part of the tribulation is literal Babylon.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Eighteen

I. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FALL OF COMMERCIAL BABYLON BY AN ANGEL (18:1-3).

1. The glorious angel comes from Heaven (v. 1).
 - (1) "After these things"---a later revelation than given in chapter 17. The writer now takes up where he left off at the pouring out of the seventh vial (16). The tribulation ends in chapter 16. Chapters 17,18, and 19 give details of events in the tribulation period.
 - (2) "Another angel"---a literal angel and not the appearance of Christ in angelic form as some hold. "Another" in addition to the one in 17:1---maybe the one in 14:8. It would be derogatory to the deity of Christ to speak of Him as another angel, when the one previously mentioned is a mere creature.
2. The angel who announces Babylon's doom (v. 2).
 - (1) "He cried mightily with a strong voice"---he has light energy and sound energy (Ps. 102:20).
 - (2) This is literal Babylon which is to be rebuilt. This city rose in Genesis, not it falls in Revelation. Rome has never been, and from its very position never could be, a great commercial city.
 - (3) Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51 describe the destruction of Babylon being in the day of the Lord (Isa. 13:6,9). They speak of the same destruction as does John. The ruin of Babylon have been used to build six cities, contrary to Jeremiah 51:26. Among these are Hillah and Bagdad. The prophets speak of Babylon's destruction being sudden (Isa. 13:19; Jer. 51:26). It was sixteen centuries before old Babylon was in almost ruin.
 - (4) Babylon to date has never ceased to be inhabited. Hillah, which has a present population of 85,000, is within the walls of old Babylon, and the Arabs still wanders through it, contrary to the prophets (Isa. 13:20; Jer. 51:37,43).
 - (5) The Iraqi government plans to rebuild Babylon as a tourist attraction. She set aside \$30,000,000 to meet the cost of resurrecting the city on May 29, 1971. They are building homes and moving workers to bring old Babylon out of her dusty grave.
 - (6) "The habitation of devils"---dwelling place of demons (Isa. 13:21-22). "The "satyrs" mentioned by Isaiah are from the same Hebrew word for demons (Lev. 17:7; II Chron. 11:15).
 - (7) "Hold" is literally a watch-place, where they assemble for the last desperate resistance against God. The City of

Babylon is the seat of humanism and demonism.

(7) "A cage of every unclean and hateful bird"---see Isaiah 14:23; 34:11-15.

3. The reason for her fall: the corruption of the nation (v. 3).

(1) "All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication"---Commerical Babylon has had an evil political relationship with all nations. This will be through both her religious (17:2) and political systems (18:3). This is political harlotry.

(2) "Merchants of the earth waxed rich"---the wealth collected through the influence of the apostate church is taken over by the political system. The entire political system prospers through Satanic influence (Matt. 4:8). Babylon will at this time be the seat of international bankers, corporation directors, and mercantile barons (Zech. 5:5-11; Jas. 5:1-3; I Tim. 6:10).

II. THE CALL FOR GOD'S PEOPLE TO SEPARATE FROM BABYLON TO ESCAPE HER JUDGMENT (18:4-5).

1. The call to separation from Babylon (v. 4).

(1) Some of God's people will be living in Babylon at the time when it is about to be destroyed. This call will doubtless be given prior to the pouring out of the last seven plagues (15:1) and about the time the angel preaches the everlasting gospel (14:7-8). It is significant that after the last plague Babylon is mentioned (16:19).

(2) Why are true believers in such a place at such a time? The appeal of salary and prestige will entice many capable business and professional men who are true believers. They will be like Lot was in Sodom.

(3) How can there be children of God in Babylon, seeing the church is raptured before the tribulation? There are not church age saints, but tribulation saints---people saved after the rapture takes place (Rev. 7:1-14).

(4) The fact that God has some people in Babylon proves that not all saved people are in true churches. Some are in the whore and her daughters. Thus not all people are in true churches as claimed by the universal, invisible church people.

(5) The call to come out is applicable at all times and is never out of season wherever Babylon in principle is found (II Cor. 6:17; Isa. 52:11), but here it is literal Babylon of the tribulation time (Isa. 48:20; Jer. 51:6,45).

(6) Only by separation from Babylon can one be delivered from her sins and her plagues (16:17-21).

2. A graphic description of the enormity of her sins (v. 5).

- (1) "Her sins have reached to heaven"---piled one on another as brick in a building---an allusion to Genesis 11:4-9. The king of Babylon dreamed himself to be a tree reaching up to Heaven (Dan. 4:20). Her judgment is like her sins (Jer. 51:9).
- (2) This description of her sins surpasses that of any other recorded in Scripture (Gen. 18:20-21; Jonah 1:2).
- (3) "God hath remembered"---see 16:19 and compare.

III. THE INDICTMENT AGAINST COMMERCIAL BABYLON (18:6-8).

1. Retributive justice is double in severity (v. 6).

- (1) This seems to be a prayer of imprecation, exhorting the Lord to punish Babylon. Whether the prayer comes from believers in Babylon or from John is not clear.
- (2) "Reward her even as she rewarded you"---the law of Divine retribution (Ex. 21:22-25; II Tim. 4:14; Rev. 13:10). The judgment here is against commercial Babylon (Ps. 137:8-9; Jer. 50:15,29; 51:24,49).
- (3) "Double according to her works"---the normal law of retribution is doubled in recognition of the enormity of her sins and pride. There is such a thing as double punishment (Ex. 22:4-9; Isa. 40:2; Jer. 16:18; 17:18; Zech. 9:12).
- (4) Her double punishment is hinted at in verse 2: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." Note "the cup which she hath filled to her double."
- (5) This is the sixth reference to her cup of wickedness (14:8; 17:2, 4, 6; 18:3, 6). God has a cup of wrath (14:10; 16:19; 18:6).

2. Another instance of the law of retaliation (v. 7).

- (1) This is God's response to the prayer which has gone before.
- (2) "She hath glorified herself" in that "she saith in her heart, I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."
- (3) For self-florification there will be sorrow---for luxurious living torment. The pride and luxury will suddenly change to pain and mourning---suffering accompanied by mental anguish and grief.
- (4) "I sit as a queen"---see Isaiah 47:1, 5, 7-9). Pride goes before destruction (Prov. 16:18; I Cor. 10:12).
- (5) "I . . . am no widow" alludes to Isaiah 47:8. She is a widow because the Lord has forsaken her. She claims this because her lovers are the kings of the earth (18:3).

3. The Divine response to this imprecatory prayer (v. 8).

- (1) She boasted she would be a lady forever, but then the seven last plagues come.
- (2) "One day"---judgment comes sudden (Dan. 5:1,3-5,30; Luke 12:19-20).
- (3) "Death, and mourning, and famine" seem to be given in the reverse order of their experience.
- (4) "Burned with fire"---the city is burned at this point. This is why the lamentations follow. The source of this fire is not revealed, but it may be a supernatural fire from Heaven (Gen. 19:23-25; Jude 7; Jer. 51:25,58).
- (5) This fire is a judgment of God---"strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Babylon is strong, but God is stronger!

IV. THE MOURNING OF THE KINGS (18:9-10).

1. All the kings see the smoke of her burning (v. 9).
 - (1) The holocaust that consumes Babylon is quickly known throughout the world. The beast will not be in Babylon at this time, but in Palestine (Dan. 11:45).
 - (2) These kings had enjoyed the great prosperity which the Babylonian system had brought for a brief time. They see it on TV in utter dismay as Babylon burns.
 - (3) They weep because the political capital of the world as well as its financial and commercial center is gone!
 - (4) The terms "bewail" and "lament" describe uncontrollable sobbing and beating the breast in anguish in the Greek.
2. They stand afar off lest they be drawn into the vortex of her doom (v. 10).
 - (1) Some of these kings may see this great pillar of smoke from their armies in Armageddon (Joel 2:30).
 - (2) "Alas" is *ouai* in the Greek, and it is elsewhere translated "woe" (Rev. 8:13).

V. THE MOURNING MERCHANTS (18:11-16).

1. The merchants weep over the loss of their trade with the city (v. 11).
 - (1) Babylon is to be the center of vast commercial interests---the world's storehouse of goods.
 - (2) These merchants are heads of banking, shipping, construction, communications, and giants of commerce. They are the ones who flee from the Lamb (Rev. 6:15-16).
 - (3) The word for "merchant" (Greek, *emporos*) means "wholesalers" and is used 18 times in this Book.
 - (4) These weep over Babylon when they should be weeping over

their sins. They do not even weep over their colleagues who will die in the fire, but only over their own financial losses. Their commercial empire is gone!

2. The list of their deicacies---28 in number (4 sevens) with 14 each in the two verses (vv. 12-13).
 - (1) Costly ornaments---"gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls." These are items of timeless value, especially in time of inflation.
 - (2) Costly clothes---"fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet."
 - (3) Costly furnishings---"all thyine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble."
 - (4) Costly perfumes---"cinnomon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense."
 - (5) Costly foods---"wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep." Note "oil" in Rev. 6:6. Intoxicating beverages will be big business in the tribulation. Here is also livestock and agricultural commodities.
 - (6) Costly conveyances---"horses, and chariots." This vocabulary is appropriate to the first century as well as this modern world. "Chariot" (Greek, rheda) means a four-wheeled wagon for traveling, not a two-wheeled war chariot.
 - (7) Costly chattal---"slaves and souls of men."
 - A. This may mean that slavery will be revived in the tribulation. It exists today in African and Asian countries.
 - B. The Greek word for "slaves" is soma, meaning "body." This is probably the "white slave trade"---the international traffic in forced prostitution of both men and women. These vice barons destroy both the bodies and souls of men and women---how tragic!
 - C. Truly Babylon is the mother of harlots, both spiritual and physical (Rev. 9:21).
3. The things men and women lust after (v. 14).
 - (1) The inhabitants of Babylon are deprived of the god of materialism (Matt. 6:19-21; Ps. 49:10; Prov. 23:5; Luke 12:16-21; I Tim. 6:8-10).
 - (2) How men have squandered fortune on costly food and wines, on lavish homes and furnishings, on personal adornment, on cars, yackts, and airplanes, etc.
 - (3) The entire Babylonian complex of world commerce and idolatrous humanism is gone for ever. The source of indulgence and enjoyment are dried up.

- (4) "Thou shalt find them no more"---no successors or usurpers can take over their wealth. No one could perpetuate this basic system because everything perished in the sudden blow from Divine wrath!
4. The merchants weep because their wealth derived from trade with the city is ended (vv. 15-16).
- (1) Wall Streets and the bankers of Zurich will panic. The Rockefellers, Kennedys, and Rothschilds will see their supranational corporate empires collapse before their very eyes (Deut. 8:13-14).
- (2) "Clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls"---not how the city of Babylon and Rome are much alike (17:4).
- (3) Compare "in one hour is thy judgment come" (18:10) with "in one hour so great riches is come to nought" here.
- (4) James spoke of this time (Jas. 5:7-9).

VI. THE MOURNING SHIPMASTERS (18:17-19).

1. The captians of ships, the officers of shipping, and long-shoremen cay out (v. 17). Ships here may include airships such as airplanes.
2. They see the awful mushroom of smoke from the city (vv. 18-19).
- (1) Her torment is their fear (v. 18).
- (2) They cast dust on their heads (v. 19; Lam. 2:10; Job 2:12).
- A. This may be symbolic of their fear that the earth will soon cover their dead bodies and they will go back to the dust.

VII. THE COMMAND TO REJOICE OVER THE FALL OF BABYLON (18:20).

1. This is the glorified saints mentioned in 19:1.
2. The church is seen here in heaven among those who rejoice (Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; I Cor. 12:28-29).
3. The term "saints" may apply only to tribulation saints (13:10; 14:12).
4. "God hath avenged you on her"---has judged your case against her (Rev. 6:10-11). Babylon killed you, now I have killed her (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19).
5. While worldly men weep, the heavens and God's people rejoice.

VIII. THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON (18:21-24).

1. The mighty angel and the millstone (v. 21).
- (1) "Mighty angel"---needed for this occasion (10:1).
- (2) This will probably happen some weeks after the burning of Babylon. Its ruins will have become the habitation of wild animals and demons (Isa. 13:20-22; Jer. 50:39).

- (3) A stone sinks into the sea never to be seen again, so Babylon will be thrown down into everlasting oblivion.
 - (4) In Jeremiah 51:61-64 the stone is cast into the Euphrates River, but here into the sea.
 - (5) The angel casts the stone in the Persian Gulf into which the Euphrates empties. The Mesopotamian plain will drop down, as a great chasm opens in the deep crust. The waters of the Persian Gulf will fill the whole chasm. Babylon will sink into the sea (Jer. 51:41-42) and the river (Jer. 51:63-64).
 - (6) This may happen at the earthquake at the second coming of Christ (Zech. 14:3-5).
 - (7) This is the stone kingdom of Daniel (2:35; 44-45). Note Matthew 21:44 and 18:6.
2. A mirthless and musicless city (v. 22).
 - (1) Here is a picture of the former life of Babylon. It was a place of loud and sensual music---skilled artisans---fine flour from a millstone (v. 13).
 - (2) See Isaiah 24:7-10.
 3. A lonely and lightless city (v. 23).
 - (1) Note "no mores" here. No more sale of profitable merchandise (v. 11), dainty and goodly things (v. 14), Babylon (v. 14), music and fine crafts (v. 22) and lights and social affairs (v. 23).
 - (2) The last days of the tribulation will be days of darkness in Babylon (Rev. 16:1), and then they go into eternal darkness (Jude 13).
 - (3) Note Jeremiah 25:10,32-33.
 - (4) "Sorceries" is pharmaakeia in the Greek, and it means "drugs" or "potions."
 4. The bloody system is judged (v. 24; 17:6).
 - (1) Note not all blood is there, but some is. Not all the saints die in either Rome or Babylon.
 - (2) We now turn from the ruin of Babylon to the revelation of the New Jerusalem---from the city of man to the city of God.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Nineteen

I. THE FOUR ALLELUIAS IN HEAVEN (19:1-6).

1. The Alleluia over the judgment upon religious Babylon (v. 1).

- (1) "After these things"---the destruction of mystical Babylon and the restored city of Babylon (18:20). The first alleluia though is over the judgment of the great whore.
- (2) "A great voice of much people in Heaven"---the Gentile tribulation saints mentioned in 7:9. The Greek words for "much people" (ochlos polus) are the same as for "great multitude" in 7:9.
- (3) "Alleluia"---the spelling accords with the Greek form Allelouia and occurs four times in our AV (19:1,3,4,6). It means "Praise ye the Lord" (Praise-ye-jah). It occurs 24 times in the Old Testament and is translated "praise ye the Lord" (Ps. 104:35; 111:1; 112:1; 113:1; 146:1; 150:1). It is used in connection with judgments in the process of setting the Messiah's kingdom on earth.
- (4) The first two times alleluia is used, it is a rejoicing over past events; the next two over future events.
- (5) "Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power"---God has already been praised for creation (4:11) and for redemption (5:12-13).

2. The two sins of the great whore (v. 2).

- (1) "For true"---faithful according to promise---"and righteous"---righteous in rendering just judgments (16:7). All God's dealings with His creatures are characterized by truth and righteousness.
- (2) "For he hath judged the great whore"---executed the penalty which she deserved for her sins..
- (3) Her two great sins which brought God's vengeance: corrupting the earth with her fornication and her shedding the blood of God's saints. These are the crying sins of the Church at Rome and the coming one-world church.
- (4) "He. . .hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" ---a response to the appeal of 18:20 and the answer to the prayer of the souls under the altar (6:10). We see in 6:10 the earth dwellers were responsible for the death of the souls but from 19:2 it was the whore who shed the blood.

3. The second alleluia over the destruction of the city of Babylon (v. 2; 18:20).

- (1) The smoke ascends from the torment (14:11).

- (2) Here we see the finality and perpetuity of God's judgment (Isa. 34:10; Mark 9:44,46,48; Heb. 10:27; Jude 7).
4. The saints and the angels worship God (v. 4).
- (1) As seen earlier, the elders are the 12 sons of Jacob and the 12 apostles of the church, the elders of Israel and the church. They represent the raptured saints of the Old and New Testament dispensations. The four cherubim represent all the angels who are under them.
 - (2) "Worshipped God" (4:4-11; 5:14). To worship means to bow down to the will of God in faith and to acknowledge that what He does is true and right.
 - (3) Many times it is hard for the discouraged believer to trust God under hard and bitter circumstances. The time for hallelujah is yet future for the believer.
 - (4) Here the beast and elders are mentioned for the last time. There were mentioned 8 times before this in our Book.
5. The voice from the throne of God (v. 5).
- (1) Compare with 11:12; 16:1,7; 18:4.
 - (2) Who utters this praise to God? Some say Christ, but He stands by the throne (5:7). It may be the 144,000 Israelites who have suffered martyrdom during the tribulation period. Or, it could be just a mighty angel.
 - (3) "Praise our God, all ye his servants"---this embraces redeemed ones and the angels of God who are also servants. All are ready to praise God. This is an occasion for every servant to praise the Lord.
6. The fourth alleluia of praise (v. 6).
- (1) "Great multitude" is the same as "much people" in verse 1 and 7:9. But here it may include the 144,000 Israelites (14:2; 15:2) and the angels as well. From what follows it does not include the bride.
 - (2) The Lord's voice is like many waters (1:15; 14:2) and mighty thundering (14:2), now the praise of the redeemed displays the same majestic quality.
 - (3) "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (11:15; 12:10; 21:22). Everything is viewed as subject to the Lord God omnipotent. His scepter is over all. The light of His glory floods the utmost bounds of the universe. Hallelujah!
 - (4) They are rejoicing over the marriage of the Lamb and the coming kingdom of Christ. What a shout! What a theme!
 - (5) Today earth is silent and does not share such joy yet, but when the kingdom of Heaven comes to earth the hills and dales shall echo and re-echo the same shout of joy: Hallelujah!

II. THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB (19:7-10).

1. The consummation of the joys of Christ as a man (v. 7).

- (1) "Let us be glad and rejoice"---this is all the Old Testament, New Testament, and tribulation saints. All except the bride.
- (2) The much people in Heaven are speaking in the second person as they refer to the marriage and the bride. "His wife," "made herself ready," "to her," and "that she should be." The bride is something apart from them (Heb. 12:28).
- (3) This grand event is not so much the consummation of the hopes of the bride as it is the consummation of the plan of God for His Son---"marriage of the Lamb." Christ had to become humanity to have the same nature as the bride.
- (4) "The marriage of the Lamb is come"---"marriage" is the same as that translated in verse 9 "marriage supper" in the Greek. The church is already the "wife" of the Lamb. This means the Bridegroom has already come for His bride prior to the coming in Revelation 19:11-16.
- (5) "His wife"---the New Testament church.
 - A. Espousal, being a solemn pledge, secures at once the title "wife" (Luke 2:5; Matt. 1:18-20). Christ was the husband of the Corinthian church.
 - B. Wife is not all the saved: (1) Great multitude speaks of the bride in second person; (2) There are guests; (3) Some saved people are not in the bride (John 3:29; Rev. 22:17); (4) New Jerusalem is future home of the bride (Rev. 21:24; 22:14; John 14:1-3).
 - C. Some say this is Israel, the wife of God, in the Old Testament. The bride has made herself ready by passing through the great tribulation. Israel is both divorced (Jer. 3:8) and a widow (Lam. 1:1; Isa. 54:4). God will take her back as a cast off wife (Isa. 62:4-5; Hos. 2). In Israel a priest could not marry a divorced woman (Lev. 21:10,13-14). The scene is heavenly.
 - D. The church is the wife of Christ (John 3:29; II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-33).
- (6) "Made herself ready"---by good works which will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:9-10; 3:13-15). The Bridegroom does not dress the bride. The bride prepares herself for the marriage and puts on her own attire.

2. The righteous acts of the saints (v. 8).

- (1) "And to her was granted"---the preparation for this marriage is an absolute bestowal of Divine grace (Phil. 1:11;

Eph. 2:10). This is not salvation since those who constitute the bride were saved long before while on earth. This is rewards---a widow's mite, a cup of cold water, etc. ---which God granted her at the judgment seat of Christ.

- (2) "The righteousness of saints." The word righteousness is plural in the Greek (dikaionomata), meaning the righteous acts or deeds of the saints. This is not imputed righteousness, for it is never called "the righteousness of saints" (Rom. 3:21-22; 10:3; II Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9).
- (3) This is rewarded righteousness (Ps. 58:11; Matt. 10:41; I John 2:10,29). There is a robe of salvation (Isa. 61:10; Rev. 6:11; 7:14) and a robe of sanctification (Rev. 3:4-5,18; 16:15). Two things are required to be in the bride: baptism (Matt. 3:15) and faithfulness to the church (Heb. 3:6).
- (4) If this is the imputed righteousness of Christ, then the bride put it on herself and makes herself ready---this is free willism. Since the garments are not granted until after the judgment seat of Christ, then no one is saved until after the judgment---more Arminian foolishness.

3. The guests at the wedding (v. 9).

- (1) This is a singular, high, and never to be repeated honor to be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. But it is a greater honor still to be the bride.
- (2) These are the guests of Christ and the church (Matt. 22:10; 25:1-13; Ps. 45:13-15). This is all who are not members of the New Testament church. Some saved people may not even be guests (Matt. 25:10).
- (3) The bride and the guests are clearly distinguished. The bride has a more immediate relation to the Lamb. The guests are blessed by God (Luke 14:15), her blessing is expressed in the words "bride" and "wife." The promise to sup with Christ (Rev. 3:20) was made to the church, and it is evident that the wife is the church.
- (4) These are the friends of the Bridegroom (John 3:29), the ones who have just before expressed joy and gladness (v. 7). The guests are Old Testament saints, New Testament saints not in the church, the Gentile tribulation martyrs, the 144,000 Israelites, and others.
- (5) "Unto the marriage supper"---the supper will probably be on earth in connection with the second coming of Christ (Matt. 26:29; Ps. 22:26-27; Isa. 25:6). The marriage will doubtless be in Heaven.
- (6) "These are the true sayings of God"---a statement re-

inforcing the sovereign character of this Divine revelation. Many pulpits of every denomination and the professor's chair's of almost every college or theological seminary in the land deny this!

4. John and the angel (v. 10).

- (1) "I fell at his feet"---John fell at the angel's feet already mentioned (1:1; 22:8-9). He seems to assume the messenger is superhuman and worthy of worship.
- (2) "I am thy fellow servant"---angels as well as redeemed men are God's servants. Both bear testimony to Jesus. "Servant" in the Greek is "bondman," meaning that both men and angels are bound to everlasting service to God.
- (3) "Worship God"---only God is to be worshipped. No created thing or being---not even the greatest man or the most exalted angel is ever to be worshipped (Heb. 1:6; Col. 2:18). This would be idolatry!
- (4) "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"---all prophecy points to, centers in, and revolves around Jesus. It is designed to unfold Christ and His glory to be revealed when He returns. How poverty-stricken is any Christian theology which minimizes the second coming of Jesus.
- (5) The "testimony of Jesus" is used often in this book (1:2; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4). It seems to have a reference to the humanity of Christ and His second coming to set up the kingdom (22:20). The tribulation saints are killed for this testimony (20:4). Antichrist seeks to destroy those who maintain this testimony (12:17; I John 4:1-3; 2:2).

III. THE COMING OF THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OR LORDS (19:11-16).

1. The white horse rider---Jesus Christ (v. 11).

- (1) "I saw heaven opened"---a door was opened in Heaven to receive the saints (4:1); here it opens so the saints may accompany the Lord in triumph.
- (2) We are about to read one of the most graphic pictures of the second coming of Christ found anywhere in the Bible. The One who said, "I will come," has now come. Here Christ comes following the pattern of a Roman triumphal procession. This event is often mentioned in Scripture (Zech. 14:3-5; Matt. 24:27-31; II Thess. 1:7-10; I Tim. 6:14-15; Rev. 1:7).
- (3) "A white horse."
 - A. A white horse was used for war (Prov. 21:31). The ass He rode into Jerusalem on was a symbol of peace. Note horses in Heaven (II Kings 2:11; 6:14-17).

- B. This is not the rider of chapter 6:2. The one here has five names indicating His deity; the other is unnamed. The one in 6:2 has no crown in his own right, but a crown (stephanos) is given him. The one here has many crowns (diadema). The one in 6:2 rides on earth; this one from Heaven. The one in 6:2 has not other riders; this one has an army.
- (4) "Faithful and true"---descriptive terms previously applied to Christ (1:5; 3:14). Christ is very faithful and true.
- (5) "And in righteousness he doth judge"---Christ is a righteous Judge (Gen. 18:25; Ps. 67:4; 72:2,4; Isa. 11:4-5; Acts 17:31; Jude 13-14). He is coming back to judge the nations on earth (Matt. 25:31-46).
- (6) "And make war."
- A. Christ will end war by declaring war on all war-mongers. This is a war to end all wars (Ps. 46:9; Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3; cf. Ex. 15:3).
- B. This is the day of God's wrath at the end of His long-suffering. For centuries of human sin God has waited (Ps. 2:5-8; Rev. 16:14).
- C. God's holy hatred toward sin is unloosed (Isa. 2:12-21; 8:6-10; 24; 30:27-30; 34; 63:1-6; Ezek. 32:5-10; Amos 5:18-20; Obad. 15-16; Micah 5:15; Nah. 1:2,5-6; Zeph. 1:7,14-17; Hag. 2:6; Zech. 14:1-5,16; Mal. 4:1).
- D. The bodies of men will be crushed (Isa. 34:5; 63:1-6) like grapes in the winepress (Rev. 14:14-20; Ps. 56:10-11). What a dreadful day this will be!
2. The King's appearance and attire (v. 12).
- (1) "Eyes were as a flame of fire"---this conquering Commander is the Son of man (1:14; 2:18). Here is seen the Divine omniscience which observes all and searches out every hidden evil.
- (2) "On his head were many crowns"---expressive of His royal majesty and sovereignty (Matt. 24:30; 28:18). These are not the crowns which the elders cast at His feet (Rev. 4:10). The Greek word in 4:10 is stephanos; here the crowns are kingly crowns (diadema). These are the crowns which have been usurped by the kings of the earth (12:3; 13:1; 17:9-12). Christ is the rightful King (Ezek. 21:26-27). The dragon has 7 diadems, the beast 10, Christ "many."
- (3) "A name written that no man knew." John saw this name written across these diadems, but he could not decipher it. The Son in the fulness of the Divine nature can alone be known by the Father (Matt. 11:27). God is unknowable and unpronounceable. This may be the name above every name (Eph. 1:21; Phil. 2:9), not the name of Jesus, but the

"name given Jesus" (Phil. 2:10, literal meaning). This may be the same name He will write upon the overcomer (2:17; 3:12).

- (4) What a contrast between the first and second coming of Christ. The first time He rode an ass (Matt. 21:5) and came in humiliation. The second time He comes on a white steed in open manifestation. As He rode the ass, so shall He ride the white horse.
 - (5) Contrast John's vision of Christ in 1:13-16 with the one here. In chapter 1 He is in Heaven; here He comes from Heaven. In the first He is concealed; second revealed. Contrast the effect upon John (1:17; 19:10).
3. His blood-sprinkled garments of vengeance (v. 13).
- (1) "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood." This is not the blood of Calvary which was given to the Father, but it is the blood of His enemies (Isa. 63:1-6; Rev. 14:20). The treading down has taken place (19:15). He who was the slain Lamb comes now to slay His enemies.
 - (2) "His name is called the Word of God"---applied by John to Christ (John 1:1-3,14; I John 1:1; 5:7), and it speaks of His creatorship and incarnation. This is the One who made the heavens (Ps. 33:6), formed the ages (Heb. 11:3), and keeps the heavens and earth in store (II Pet. 3:7).
4. The armies of Heaven follow Christ (v. 14).
- (1) "The armies which were in heaven"---redeemed and glorified saints (Zech. 14:5; John 18:36; Col. 3:4; I Thess. 3:13; Rev. 17:14). Heaven has armies (Dan. 4:35). The "Lord of hosts" means "Lord of armies."
 - (2) Angels will no doubt follow in this train (Joel 3:11; Matt. 16:27; 25:31; II Thess. 1:7).
 - (3) "Followed him upon white horses"---His victory is their victory, His triumph their triumph. They have fought the good fight of faith and maintained the rights of God in the midst of opposition (II Tim. 2:12). What a scene of militant militarism!
 - (4) "Clothed in fine linen, white and clean"---the attire of the bride (19:8) and the saints (4:4; 7:9). Here the armies of Heaven are not angels but redeemed human beings. Their robes are not dipped in the blood of their enemies.
5. Christ comes in judicial actions (v. 15).
- (1) "A sharp sword"---a long, sharp instrument of war with which Christ will smite the nations and establish absolute rule (Ps. 45:3-6; Isa. 11:4; Ezek. 38:21; II Thess. 2:8; Rev. 1:16). By His commandment these terrible judgments shall be afflicted. His power is irresistible (John 18:5-6).

- (2) "Smite the nations"---the Gentile nations. "Gentile" and "nations" are translations of the same Greek word (ethnos). The Jewish nation has been smitten during the time of Jacob's trouble.
 - (3) "He shall rule them." The Greek is emphatic: "He himself shall rule." The Greek for "rule them" means literally to "shepherdize." Christ shall rule the nations on earth (Ps. 110:2; Isa. 24:23; Dan. 2:44; 7:14,27; Mic. 4:7; 5:2; Zech. 6:13; Obad. 21; Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 14:11). The saints shall share in this rule (Isa. 32:1; Rev. 20:4-6).
 - (4) "A rod of iron"---a dictatorship of love, but a dictatorship nonetheless (Ps. 2:8-9; Rev. 12:5). The saints share this (Rev. 2:26-27).
 - (5) "And he treadeth"---Greek "He himself treads" (Isa. 63:2-6; Rev. 14:19-20; Dan. 2:44; Matt. 21:44).
 - (6) "Winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"---The winepress was the trough in which the grapes are trodden. The vat was the reservoir into which the juice flowed. The reference here is to God's anger and wrath (Isa. 34:8; 61:2; 66:14; 63:4; Deut. 32:41-43; Rev. 6:17; 17:14; 19:21).
 - (7) The battle is the Lord's (Isa. 63:5), and it will be consummated by the spoken Word of the Lord. The righteous shall share in this victory (Ps. 58:10; 68:23; Mal. 4:3).
6. Two more wonderful titles of Christ (v. 16).
- (1) Six names are ascribed to the white horse rider: Faithful, True, the Name no man knew, the Word of God, King of kings, and Lord of lords.
 - (2) The last two are seen in other scriptures (I Tim. 6:15; Rev. 1:5; 17:14).
 - (3) Centuries ago they cast lots for His vesture (John 19:24). Now His vesture, dripped with the blood of His enemies, is inscribed with the testimony that He is King of all earthly kings.
 - (4) How all earthly royalty and power collapses and withers at this sight! He is King of time, King of space, King creation, King of the nations, etc.

IV. THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOD (19:17-18).

1. The clarion call for the carrion birds (v. 17).

- (1) Not in the sunlight as some have supposed, but actually in the sun is this angel as the Bible says. He is in control of the sun (Joel 2:31; Rev. 16:8-9). The energy from the sun maintains the physical and biological process taking place on the earth.

- (2) "Cried with a loud voice" (cf. 6:10; 7:2,10; 10:3; 14:15; 18:2). This denotes importance and urgency.
- (3) "To all the fowls"---hawks, ravens, crows, vultures, etc. The flying creatures come at His command. They are the scavengers of the battlefield (Ezek. 39:17).
- (4) The supper for the birds will be eaten after the battle, the birds are summoned in the vision before the battle.
- (5) "Come and gather yourselves"---like the invitation in Ezekiel 39:17 which refers to the same occasion. Here the fowls gather to eat the fools (Matt. 28:27-28; Zeph. 1:7). Earlier the armies of earth had gathered (Joel 3:2,11; Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 12:3; 14:2; Rev. 16:16).
- (6) "The supper of the great God." What a contrast between the supper of God where the fowls feast on the carcasses of slain men at Armageddon and the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9)! One is all joy; the other all judgment!
- (7) It is worst than foolish to spiritualize this battlefield into some indefinite region of never-ending conflict between the church and her enemies. The literal meaning is best, for buzzards are not needed except to eat real dead bodies of men.

2. The great men of the earth become food for the birds (v. 18).

V. THE TOTAL OVERTHROW OF THE BEAST AND HIS ARMIES (19:19-21).

1. The enemies of the King of kings (v. 19).

- (1) "The beast"---the Antichrist (Rev. 11:7; 13:1-10).
- (2) "The kings of the earth"---the ten kings (Rev. 17:12-14) and all earthly kings (Zeph. 14:2; Rev. 16:16). The kings who wail the destruction of Babylon.
- (3) "Their armies"---the armies of the beast and of the kings of the earth.
- (4) "Gathered together"---Satan is behind this (Rev. 16:13-16). No such army has ever been gathered on earth prior to this time.
- (5) The purpose of their gathering is to make war against Christ and the armies of Heaven (Joel 3:14; Isa. 34:1-2).
- (6) Behold the incurable insanity of sin, which wars away in spite of defeat after defeat.

2. The doom of the beast and false prophet (v. 20).

- (1) "The beast"---the Antichrist of verse 19.
- (2) "The false prophet" of chapter 13:11-17.

- (3) Hitherto the Divine judgments have all been inflicted by secondary causes, but now Christ for the first time appears in person to overwhelm His enemies. The struggle between good and evil is now fought out in the open. There is no longer any disguise of the combatants---Heaven and Hell are in open warfare now!
 - (4) These two hellish leaders are arrested. They are subjected to instant judgment without trial.
 - (5) "Alive" signifies existence in a human body (Mark 9:43-48). They are still in these bodies after a 1,000 years (Rev. 20:10).
 - (6) "Lake of fire"---mentioned here for the first time (20:10, 14-15; 21:8). This is Gehenna of the New Testament (Matt. 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; Jas. 3:6). This is proved by comparing Matthew 25:41 with Revelation 20:10.
 - (7) The beast and the false prophet are the first occupants of the lake of fire. Satan is put there at the close of the millennium (Rev. 20:10), and then all the unsaved go there (Rev. 20:15).
3. The armies of Antichrist are slain (v. 21).
- (1) Christ destroy these by the brightness of His coming (II Thess. 2:8) and with the sword of His mouth.
 - (2) This is the war to end all wars (Ps. 9:17; 110:5-6; Jer. 25:29-33; Zeph. 1:17-18; 3:8; Zech. 12:3-4,9-10; 13:1,9; Isa. 66:16).
 - (3) "All the fowls were filled with their flesh"---the word "flesh" occurs five times in this passage. See again Ezekiel 39:17-20 and compare.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Twelve

I. THE CHAINING OF STAAN (20:1-3).

1. The angel comes to seize the real culprit of all ages (v. 1).
 - (1) Before the reign of the Prince of Peace commences the great disturber of peace is removed from the scene. This follows immediately after the destruction of the armies of Antichrist.
 - (2) Since thye beast and false prophet have been cast into the lake of fire, it is now time to imprison the great enemy of God and man. Judgment overtakes him as it did them.
 - (3) "An angel"---I would assume Michael who has already whipped the devil (12:7-9). Notice that he performs a sixfold function.
 - (4) "Come down from heaven"---note 10:1 and 18:1. Since Satan was banished from the heavens (12:9), he has been on earth destroying and ruining everything on earth. The angel must come down from Heaven to sieze Satan who is on earth.
 - (5) "Having the key"---authority to open and shut the pit. In 1:18 Christ has this authority, but here the angel has been given this authority.
 - (6) "The bottomless pit"---generally the prison house of demons. Evidently, the pit, since the exodus of the demons from it (9:1-11), has remained open and empty. It would seems Satan and the demons are now imprisoned (Isa. 24: 21-22; Luke 8:31).
 - (7) "A great chain"---the word "chain" is halysis in the Greek, and it occurs in other places (Mark 5:3; Acts 12:7; 28:20; II Tim. 1:16). As a general rule it refers to a literal chain. Here is is such a chain as can confine a fallen spirit in prison. Other angels are bound (Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4; Rev. 9:14).
 - (8) Some argue a spirit cannot be bound with a literal chain. But spirit beings are real beings; therefore, real chains can bind them. A symbol cannot bind a ral being such as Satan.
 - (9) Some make this passage to mean Satan is now bound by the preaching of the gospel, but if so it must be a very long chain because he still is decieving people (Acts 8:9; 13: 8-10; II Cor. 11:3; Eph. 6:11-13; I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 3: 13). Peter did not believe Satan was bound (I Pet. 5:8).
2. Four names of the Prince of Darkness (v. 2).

- (1) They occur in the order in which they are found in 12:9. There he is termed "the great dragon."
 - A. "The dragon"---who gave his power and throne to the beast.
 - B. The old serpent"---the ancient deciever of angels and men.
 - C. The Devil"---the slanderer, the accuser of the brethren before God.
 - D. "Satan"---the great adversary of God, His Son, and all His people.
 - (3) "And bound him"---Satan is not only restricted but rendered inactive. This binding takes place at the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the Millennium. The binding of Satan must not take place at the beginning of the church age, but after the second coming of Christ.
 - (4) "A thousand years"---the numerical term is to be understood literally. The 21 other numbers in this book are also to be taken in their literal sense. They are 1,2,3,3½, 4,5, 6,7,10,12,24, 42, 144, 1,260, 7,000, 12,000, 1000,000,000, and 200,000,000.
 - (4) A thousand years is limited, but long enough to accomplish the ends in view. The earth will be blessed to be relieved from the awful tyranny of the Devil. This accounts for the tranquility of the 1,000-year reign.
3. Satan is sealed in the bottomless pit (v. 3).
- (1) Let us stand in awe of all these things and faint not at believing them.
 - (2) "Set a seal upon him"---sealed up the door of the abyss over his head. This seal is more certain than the one put on Christ's tomb.
 - (3) "That he should deceive the nations no more"---the career of Satan has been one of cruel, heartless deception (12:9). The purpose of the binding is not that he should be prevented from deceiving Christians, but the nations. The sin which men commit is the millennium cannot be blamed on Satan. It will come from the depraved heart of men in their natural state.
 - (4) "After that he must be loosed a little season"---the people born in the millennium must be tested. The human race will be given a final choice after Christ's reign for 1,000 years. Will they have Christ to rule over them? or will they chose the great enemy?

- II. THE JUDGESHIP OF THE RAPTURED SAINTS AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE TRIBULATION SAINTS (20:4).
1. "And I saw thrones."
 - (1) John had earlier saw thrones (4:4). "Seats" is thronos which properly translated "thrones." The reference is to the enthroned elders (4:4-8; 5:8-10; 11:16; 19:4), representing the saint of the Old and Testament times up to the rapture.
 - (2) Daniel saw thrones (Dan. 7:9). "Were cast down" should be translated "set up."
 - (3) Thrones are promised to the saints (Matt. 19:28; Luke 11:29-30).
 2. "And they sat on them."
 - (1) The only possible antecedent of the pronoun "they" is the armies of Heaven in 19:14.
 - (2) Some would translate: "I saw thrones and persons sat upon them."
 3. "And judgment was given unto them."
 - (1) The power to judge is promised to the saints (Rev. 1:6; 2:26-27; I Cor. 6:2; Matt. 19:28; 24:46-47; Luke 19:17,19; Ps. 149:5-9).
 - (2) This is the saints who come from Heaven with Christ who came to "judge and make war" (19:11).
 - (3) This is not angels (Heb. 2:5).
 4. "And I saw the souls of them that was beheaded."
 - (1) John first saw throne sitters who had authority to act as judges. This was the first company. Second he saw the tribulation martyrs. This was a second company.
 - (2) This is the martyred tribulation saints---Jews and Gentiles (Rev. 6:9; 7:9-17; 13:15-17).
 - (3) John first sees them disembodied because they have been beheaded. They are coming to be united with their bodies. The semiofficial toleration of Christianity by the nations will end at the rapture.
 - (4) The martyrs are called "souls" in Revelation (6:9; 12:11; 20:4).
 5. "Witness of Jesus, and for the word of God" (1:2,9; 6:9; 12:17). Does this mean the Book of Revelation, or their faith in it?
 6. "And which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands."
 - (1) Beast worship begin in the middle of the week (13:12-16).

- (2) Since the beast has power for only 42 months, these must die during this time (Rev. 13:5). This is not the martyrs of all ages as some say.

7. "And they lived."

- (1) This is not said of those already sitting on thrones. They were resurrected at the rapture. There is no translation of living saints mentioned at the end of the tribulation, only a resurrection of the martyred saints. Those alive and saved when Christ returns to earth enter into the kingdom in literal bodies as "sheep nations" (Matt. 25:31-46).
- (2) This is not a spiritual resurrection as amillennialists teach.
 - A. Souls do not die, and hence cannot be resurrected. Physical death is never applied to the soul. You do not kill a soul by beheading it.
 - B. The new birth is never called the birth of the soul, but the birth of the spirit (John 3:6). Soul and spirit are not synonymous terms (I Thess. 5:23).
 - C. This meaning cannot be reconciled with verse 5. Those who live after the 1,000 years are to live in the same sense as the first. In whatever sense one portion lives, the other lives, and in whatever sense some are dead, the rest are dead.
- (3) John did not say, "I saw souls reigning," but it was beheaded people who lived and reigned. Beheaded people can only live in a physical sense.
- (4) How could we possibly conceive that people who died for the faith of Christ were not already born again?
- (5) The meaning is that they came to live again (John 11:25; 14:25); they lived as complete men---no longer without their heads.

8. "And reigned with Christ."

- (1) The tribulation saints will reign in the kingdom with the church and Israel. If the martyred tribulation saints are to reign with Christ, they must have a resurrection prior to the reign.
- (2) "With Christ" is death to postmillennialism. They say the saints will reign 1,000 "without" Christ.

9. "A thousand years."

- (1) A millennium, or a thousand years. This is a literal thousand years. The doctrine of the millennium is not based upon "one single and solitary passage of Scripture." The term "a thousand years" is mentioned six times in Revelation 20. How many times does God have to say something for men to believe it?

- (2) The reign of the two groups is contemporaneous with the binding of Satan. The reign of Christ is of equal duration with the binding of Satan (Rev. 20:1-3).
- (3) The reign of the saints is often mentioned in Scripture (Dan. 7:22; Rom. 5:17; I Cor. 4:8; II Tim. 2:10-12; Rev. 1:9-10; 5:9-10).
- (4) The reign is "with him." What would crowns or thrones be apart from Him? Why mind the fellowship of His suffering, we are soon to reign with Him?

III. THE FIRST RESURRECTION (20:5-6).

1. The unsaved are not raised until after the 1,000 years are finished (v. 5).
 - (1) There are two resurrections. The first resurrection embodies all who are raised before the millennium begins. The second embraces all who are not raised until after the 1,000 years are finished.
 - (2) "The rest of the dead"---the wicked dead who are raised at the end of the 1,000 years (Rev. 20:11-16).
 - (3) This makes it clear that the living again in verse 4 speaks of a bodily resurrection. At the end of the millennium Hades delivers up these spirits so that they live again in the body (v. 13). Their souls never ceased to have conscious existence (Luke 16:23; 20:38), so the phrase "live again" would be quite meaningless except in terms of the body.
 - (4) The Bible teaches two resurrections which differ so radically as for one to be "of life" and the other "of judgment" (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). When the righteous and the wicked are mentioned together, the righteous are always mentioned first. The first resurrection is the better resurrection (Heb. 11:35; Luke 14:14; Phil. 3:11).
 - (5) The resurrection of the righteous is a resurrection "from among the dead" (Greek text) or with some the dead left behind (Luke 20:35-36; Phil. 3:11). The resurrection of Christ was such (I Cor. 15:20). The unsaved are not raised at this time, for those in Jesus only are in this resurrection (Acts 4:2; I Thess. 4:16).
 - (6) If there was only a general resurrection it could never be a question of some "obtaining" or being "worthy" of it.
 - (7) "The first resurrection"---this completes a three phase first resurrection, foreshadowed by the three phases of the Jewish harvest. Christ, the firstfruits (Matt. 27:52-53; I Cor. 15:20); the saints at the rapture, the harvest (I Thess. 4:11-18); and the tribulation martyrs (Rev. 20:4), the gleanings.
2. The blessedness of being in the first resurrection (v. 6).

- (1) "Blessed" is the fifth beatitude in this book.
- A. This denotes their state of grace from God. They are the objects of free grace, of supreme goodness, of rich mercy.
 - B. The word speaks of unworthiness in a sense. One was a thief (Luke 23:43), another a harlot (Luke 7:39), another a blasphemer and persecutor (I Tim. 1:13), another a murderer and adulterer (II Sam. 12:9), and others equally wicked (I Cor. 6:10). They are blessed because their sins are forgiven (Ps. 32:1-2).
 - C. They are blessed to be in the first resurrection. "Blessed" describes their happy condition in their glorified bodies. They can die no more (Luke 20:35-36).
- (2) "Holy."
- A. This first term describes their happy condition; the second their character. The word "saints" means "holy ones" (Heb. 12:14; Rev. 18:20; 22:6,11).
 - B. "Blessed" in view of what they once were; "holy" in view of what they now are. All has been by grace, yet grace does not oppose holiness (Eph. 1:4).
 - C. Happiness and holiness are inseparably associated and must never be separated.
- (3) "Part in the first resurrection." This statement is in marked contrast with and is the only alternative to the "rest of the dead" who have "their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8).
- (4) "The second death"---see Rev. 20:14 and 21:8.
- A. As there are two resurrection, so are there two deaths. The first death has authority over all the bodies of men (Rom. 5:12; 8:10). Only the rapture can cause us to miss mortal death (Phil. 3:20-21; II Cor. 5:1-4).
 - B. The second death is eternal banishment from God (Matt. 7:23; 10:28; 25:46; II Thess. 1:8-9) by being cast into the lake of fire for eternity (Rev. 20:14; 21:8).
 - C. The "second death" has no claims over "the sons of the resurrection."
- (5) "They shall be priests of God and of Christ."
- A. It is the business of priests to carry on for others "the things pertaining to God" (Heb. 2:17; 5:1).
 - B. Christ is the high priest (Heb. 3:1; Zech. 6:13). Each believer is a priest (I Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:6; 5:10). All in the first resurrection are priests and will perform the function of priest for 1,000 years.

(6) "And shall reign with him for a thousand years."

A. The reign of Christ is always viewed as a future event (Rom. 5:17; II Tim. 2:12). It is viewed as such even after the saints are glorified (Rev. 5:10).

B. "Shall reign" is identical with "shall be kings" (Rev. 1:6; 5:10).

C. Saints are now heirs of the kingdom (Jas. 2:5) and when the kingdom comes, the saint shall possess it (Dan. 7:22).

IV. THE LOOSING OF SATAN AND HIS FINAL REVOLT (20:7-9).

1. The loosing of Satan upon the earth (v. 7).

(1) "When the thousand years are expired"---the Greek word for "expired" is teleo. It is rendered "fulfilled" in verse 3 and "finished" in verse 5. It should have been uniformly rendered "finished."

(2) "Satan shall be loosed"---from the abyss (20:1-3). He does not escape during the 1,000 years. God lets him lose. Revelation 20:3 referred to this.

(3) Satan is loosed for four reasons---

A. To demonstrate that man even under the most favorable circumstances will fall into sin if left to his own choice.

B. To demonstrate the foreknowledge of God who foretells the acts of men as well as His own acts. God does know what sinners are going to do.

C. To demonstrate the incurable wickedness of Satan.

D. To justify eternal punishment, that is, to show the unchanged character of wicked people ever under Divine jurisdiction for a long period of time.

(4) The blessings of the millennium are not described in Revelation 20. The primary purpose here is to give the career and judgment of Satan. We must go to the prophets to discover the characteristics of the millennium.

2. The deceiving and mobilization of the nations by Satan (v. 8).

(1) Those who live through and beyond the 1,000 years must be tempted by Satan as were the rest of humanity.

(2) Those born in the millennium are raised up in an ideal environment of peace, prosperity, and righteousness. There have been no such things as poverty, wars, sickness, etc., (things now used as excuses for not being a believer). Here is proof it is man's sinful condition which makes him a Christ rejector---leaves him without excuse.

(3) "To deceive the nations"---Satan's character and goals

have not changed even after his thousand-year school of experience. He rushes back to his old task of deluding earth's inhabitants to war against God, to which the "enmity against God" of the "mind of the flesh" was ever so prone.

- (4) "In the four quarters of the earth, . . . the number of whom is as the sands of the sea." The population of the earth will be greatly thinned during the tribulation (Isa. 24:6; Rev. 6:8; 9:18) and all the wicked will be gathered out before the millennium begins (Matt. 13:41-43; 25:31-46). With little death during the kingdom age the righteous in literal bodies will have many children born to them (Isa. 65:23; Zech. 8:3-8). Many of these will not be saved and will render only "feigned obedience" to Christ in the millennium (Ps. 18:44; 66:3; 148:7-9; Zech. 14:16-19). Few unsaved will die in the millennium (Isa. 65:20).
- (5) The large number of unsaved on earth at the end of the millennium proves the 1,000 years are literal. The enemies of Christ are destroyed in Rev. 19:17-21. Where does this large number of people come from if the 1,000 years are but a brief space of time?
- (6) "Gog and Magog." This is not the battle mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39. I list the following reasons---
 - A. Here Gog and Magog are separated nations; in Ezekiel Gog is of the land of Magog (Ezek. 38:2).
 - B. Here the armies come from the four corners of the earth; in Ezekiel they come from the north (Ezek. 38:15).
 - C. Here Satan is the leader; in Ezekiel Gog heads the hosts.
 - D. Here the object is the beloved city; in Ezekiel the object is to carry away silver and gold (Ezek. 38:12).
 - E. Here the battle is after the millennium; in Ezekiel it is before the millennium (Ezek. 39:17-21).
 - F. Here the judgment is sudden; in Ezekiel more time is involved (Ezek. 38:19-22).
 - G. Here the enemy is burned; in Ezekiel they are buried (Ezek. 39:11-16).
3. The besiegement of the holy city and the fire from Heaven (v. 9).
 - (1) "And they went up"---Jerusalem is located on Mt. Zion. The phrase "go up" to Jerusalem occurs 20 times in the New Testament.
 - (2) "The breadth of the earth"---the four quarters of the earth.

- (3) "Compassed"---Gog and Magog encircle the camp of the saints."
- (4) "The beloved city"---Jerusalem (Ps. 78:68; 87:2; Isa. 1:26). The beloved city is the same as the camp of the saints. There will be saints on the earth in the millennium and their chief city will be Jerusalem. The enemy who seeks their destruction are on earth.
- (5) The fire comes from God out of Heaven (like in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah), showing again these events are on earth. When the smoke clears the saints are still there. This probably when Malachi 4:1-3 takes place.
- (6) Man has been tested under every possible condition, in every possible way, under human government, law, grace, and in the millennium under glory, and in all cases he has failed and proved himself a totally depraved sinner!

V. THE DOOM OF SATAN (20:10).

1. As the dragon he is shut up (Rev. 20:1), as Satan he is loosed (Rev. 20:7), and as the Devil he is cast into the lake of fire.
2. "And the devil"---the great blasphemer, the false god, the rebel against God, the murderer from the beginning, the father of lies, the coveter of Divine worship, the enemy of God and man, is foiled and defeated for ever! His doom was fixed 7,000 years before its execution (Gen. 3:15).
3. "That deceived them." He deceived Eve, the whole world, and even after a 1,000 years in God's jail he still deceived the millennial population. Now the great deceiver is gone for ever!
4. The first prediction concerning Satan (Gen. 3:15) is the last to be fulfilled. God never intended to save the Devil (Matt. 25:41). His nature never changes.
5. "Into the lake of fire and brimstone." The bottomless pit was his temporary prison (Rev. 20:1-2). He now goes to his final abode.
6. "Where the beast and false prophet are"---the beast and false prophet still exists after a 1,000 years of torment. Hell is a place where evil men are, not were. The doctrine of soul sleep is false as this verse shows. Hell does not "end it all" (Mark 9:49).
7. "Tormented day and night"---without intermission (Rev. 4:8). Hell is not annihilation.
8. "For ever and ever"---literally from the Greek "to the ages of ages." This is as long as God lives (Rev. 4:9-10; 5:14; 10:6; 15:7), or ceaseless. The Bible teaches that the wicked exist for ever, though in an unending state. Better believe it here than to find out hereafter.

VI. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GREAT WHITE THRONE (20:11).

1. "And I saw a great white throne." This is not the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16), nor is it the throne of God mentioned in Rev. 4:2 and some 32 times after this. It is a temporary throne of judgment out in space.
2. The throne is "great," not merely in size but because of the purity of the Judge. This judgment is final and its decisions cannot be appealed. It is "white" because of the purity of the Judge. This is a final, personal, eternal assize!
3. "Him that sat on it"---Jesus Christ to whom all judgment has been committed (John 5:22; Acts 17:31; II Tim. 4:1). Christ at this time has already judged the living (Matt. 25:31-46), now He is about to judge the dead.
4. There is no rainbow above this throne (Rev. 4:3), speaking of grace in the midst of judgment. There is no slain Lamb seen (Rev. 5:6), for Christ did not die for those who go to Hell. The throne sitter is called "God" in verse 12; Christ is God.
5. "The earth and the heaven fled away." While this speaks of the greatness of the Judge, it also suggests this throne is not on earth or in Heaven. It must be out in space. The wicked would not be permitted to enter the Third Heaven which is the seat of Divine government.
6. Now earth and its attendant Heaven, the stage upon which has been enacted the great drama of the ages, flees away. Defiled, sin-stained, rebellious, blood-soaked, tear-soaked it passes away like a dream in the night. What majesty in that Face! Yet men once spat upon it!
7. Will the earth be annihilated?
 - (1) Note some passages (Isa. 51:6; Matt. 24:35).
 - (2) I believe the earth and heaven will flee away in the sense of their form, but not their substances (Ps. 102:25-26; Rev. 21:1). Note "there was found no place for them."
 - (3) The Greek word "pass away" (parerchomai) does not mean termination of existence, but to pass from one condition to another (II Cor. 5:17; Jas. 1:10; Rom. 8:19-23).
 - (4) The fire in Rev. 20:9 will renovate the earth so that its exterior surface shall be completely changed (II Pet. 3:7-13).
 - (5) The earth is to abide for ever (Eccl. 1:4; Ps. 104:5) and the children of Israel shall dwell in it for ever (Gen. 13:15; Isa. 60:21; 66:22; Ezek. 37:25).
 - (6) No place is found for them in human vision, for they appear as the new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1).

VII. THE RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED DEAD (20:12-13).

1. The resurrection of the bodies of the wicked dead (v. 12).
 - (1) This is the rest of the dead mentioned in verse 5. It includes all the wicked. This is a resurrection to judgment (Dan. 12:2; John 5:29; Acts 24:15).
 - (2) This is the second resurrection. The wicked dead from Adam to the end of the millennium will be in this resurrection. There will be no living wicked after the fire comes down (Rev. 20:9; Job 18:18; Mal. 4:1). No righteous will be raised at this time since none die in the millennium.
 - (3) The second death has authority over all not in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6). The believer will not be the subject of this judgment (John 5:24). Those in this judgment have been dead physically and spiritually. Such persons are already condemned (John 3:18-20).
 - (4) "Small and great" intellectually, physically, financially, positionally, and even in other ways. Note the other times this phrase is used (Rev. 11:18; 13:16; 19:5,18).
 - (5) "Stand before God"---Christ is the Judge (John 5:22), and Christ is God. Who can stand in judgment and escape by his own merits (Ps. 143:2)?
 - (6) "And the books were opened"---it requires books to register the wicked (Matt. 7:13-14). A single book suffices for the inclusion of the righteous. These books are---
 - A. The Divine record of their works while on earth (Job 16:19; Mal. 3:16; Rom. 14:11-12).
 - B. The Bible (John 12:48; Rom. 2:12; Gal. 3:10; Jas. 2:12).
 - C. The book of God's decrees (Ps. 139:16; Heb. 10:7).
 - (7) Secret sins will be judged (Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 12:36; Luke 8:17; 12:2-3; Rom. 2:16). Every man may have a recording angel who in this life who tabulates everything he does. God may have an X-ray camera and plenty of videotapes. Every action and thought is recorded in the memory of man.
 - (8) God is omniscient and requires no such records. These records are for men and angels to see that God's judgment is a righteous judgment.
 - (9) "Another book. . .the book of life"---the roll containing the names of God's elect who inherit eternal life (Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8). The book is there to prove they are not God's elect.
 - (10) "Judged out of those things which are written in the book." The different degrees of wickedness will determine the

degree of punishment (Matt. 11:21-22; 23:14; Luke 12:47-48). They are judged on the basis of their works for the sole purpose of determining their degree in the lake of fire.

2. The sea, death, and Hell yield up their prisoners (v. 13).
 - (1) "The sea gave up the dead"---they did not have a burial on land but in the sea. Many have drowned in the sea (Gen. 6:17; II Pet. 3:6).
 - (2) "Death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." These are inseparable companions (I Cor. 15:55; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14). Death claims the body and Hades the soul (Ps. 16:10). Here their body and soul are rejoined.
 - (3) The resurrection bodies of the unsaved will be the same old mortal bodies they died in. There in a trembling, aching body of flesh every man will face the record of his life.
 - (4) "Every man according to his works." They will plead their own meritorious works in payment for salvation (Matt. 7:21-23). God will judge and condemn them by their works (Rom. 3:23; Tit. 3:5).

VIII. THE FINAL ABODE OF THE WICKED---THE LAKE OF FIRE (20:14-15).

1. The disposition of death and Hell (v. 14).
 - (1) "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." The spirits in Hades united with their bodies, and then are cast into the lake of fire. Hades, the prison of the unsaved, is cast there also.
 - (2) "This is the second death." The second death is the body and soul being cast into the lake of fire (Matt. 10:28).
 - (3) Where is the lake of fire? Not on the new earth (II Pet. 3:13). Probably a far-distant star or a black hole (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; Jude 13; II Pet. 2:17). Far away from God's presence (II Thess. 1:8-9).
 - (4) Their bodies will not be consumed in the fire (Mark 9:49). Eternally remain in a state of being consumed (Mark 9:43-48; Matt. 22:13).
2. The final act (v. 15).
 - (1) A search was made but no trace was found.
 - (2) It is not whosoever believeth here, but all who do not believe (John 3:18,36; 5:25; 23:33).
 - (3) It is not the absence of good works in the book that dooms a person. It is the absence of his name. Only names, not works, are written in the book.
 - (4) All names found that day were written before that day.

There is no record of anyone's name being written upon that day, but rather the opposite. If any is not found already written! How solemn this is!

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Twenty-One

I. THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH (21:1).

1. The present earth is defiled by sin (Isa. 24:5) and the heavens are not clean (Job 15:15; Eph. 6:12). The atmospheric heavens and earth must be judged (Isa. 14:13; 34:4-5; Matt. 24:29,35).
2. Here a new epoch begins. There is a new creation in honor of the last Adam just as there was a creation prepared for the first. Beyond the storm in the latter part of chapter 20 lies the eternal calm of chapter 21.
3. This is not the millennial state, but the utopian age to follow the millennium. While they are alike in some ways, they differ in the following particulars---
 - (1) The Millennium precedes the last judgment (Rev. 20:1-15) but the eternal state follows it (Rev. 21:1-2).
 - (2) The millennium is limited to 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-7), but the eternal state is for ever and ever (Rev. 22:5).
 - (3) Satan is bound in the millennium (Rev. 20:1-2), but he is in the lake of fire in the eternal state (Rev. 20:10). The Devil is not mentioned in the eternal state.
 - (4) There are seas in the millennium (Ps. 72:8; Isa. 11:9; 60:5; Ezek. 47:10,20; 48:8-10,28; Zech. 9:10; 14:8; Rev. 20:3), but there is no sea in the eternal state (Rev.21:1).
 - (5) Some will die in the millennium (Isa. 65:20), but none in the eternal state (Rev. 21:4).
 - (6) There is a temple in the millennium (Ezek. 40-47), but there is no temple in the eternal state (Rev. 21:22).
 - (7) Christ reigns in the millennium (Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 20:4-6). In the eternal state both God and Christ reign (I Cor. 15:25-26; Rev. 22:3).
4. All these eternal conditions are necessarily dim. We must not be wise above what is written, but we should attempt to be wise up to what is written.
5. Only Isaiah (65:17; 66:22), Paul (Heb. 12:25-27), and Peter speak of these times (II Pet. 3:13).
6. This regeneration of the heaven and earth is to take place to fit both for the future residence of the redeemed human race who will then have new bodies.
7. The word "new" in both the Old and New Testament texts means new in respect to freshness, rather than new with respect to existence. The old heaven and earth must be completely cleansed (II Pet. 3:10-12). The earth is not to be burned into a

cinder and cast away as useless into some trash pile (Ps. 2:8).

8. "No more sea."

- (1) About 70 percent of the present earth is covered by seas. To remove the seas will extend the land surface which will make room for the nations of them who are saved. The Creator shall again remodel and refashion this globe.
- (2) Now the seas serve as a bulwarks and securities between nations. This is not needed in the eternal state. Thus the absence of the sea will permit greater intercourse between earth's inhabitants who will then be one great family.
- (3) The sea is essential to animal and vegetable life on earth, but it is not needed in eternity. No animals on the new earth and glorified bodies are flesh and bone (Luke 24:39; Phil. 3:21), but have no need blood (I Cor. 15:50) to serve as a cleanser and restorer of the body's flesh as at present. Blood is about 90 percent water.
- (4) There is some water on the new earth (Rev. 22:2), but no large bodies of water as at present.

II. THE FIRST VISION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM (21:2).

1. Some make all of this to be highly figurative language. They say that a literal city is gross and materialistic, but gold, jasper, and pearls are not symbols in our modern world even! To make the city literal is better than to entertain the vague and misty fog that constitutes the idea of eternity entertained by some brethren.
2. Some say the New Jerusalem was suspended in the air over the earth during the millennium as the residence of the risen saints. This is wrong. The saints and Christ are to reign on the earth, not in heaven (Rev. 5:10). The heaven burn up at the end of the millennium. Would not the fire destroy the New Jerusalem if it hovered in the air over the earth?
3. Cities have been built after the way of Cain (Gen. 4:17; Ps. 49:11-13). One has replaced another, and each one has been a hotbed of corruption from Babel to Babylon. The city today attracts the natural heart and makes a drain on rural regions. Country churches have turned out most of our good preachers!
4. "The holy city." Jerusalem is called the holy city (Neh. 11:1; Isa. 52:1; Dan. 9:24; Matt. 4:5; 27:53; Rev. 11:2). She is not such in the tribulation (Rev. 11:8). This city is holy because it is built by a holy God (II Cor. 5:1; Heb. 11:10; John 14:1-3). Even the inhabitants of this city are holy!
5. "New Jerusalem." This Scriptures often speak of this city (John 14:1-3; II Cor. 5:1; Gal. 4:24; Heb. 11:10; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 3:12; 21:10).
6. "Coming down from God out of heaven."

- (1) This means coming from the Third Heaven, the residence of God, to the new earth. Then it has not been hovering over the earth
 - (2) This city cannot be Heaven, for it is said to descend from it. But this is what most people mean by "going to Heaven." In truth, the heavenly Jerusalem is coming to us!
 - (3) The city is a literal one---as literal as any man has ever built.
7. "Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."
- (1) "Prepared" takes us back to other Scriptures (John 14:2; I Cor. 2:9; Heb. 11:6).
 - (2) To John the city looked like a radiant bride, beautiful in glistening white garments, ready for her wedding.
 - (3) The church will dwell in this bridal city, for the church is the bride of Christ (John 3:29; II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-8).

III. GOD TO DWELL WITH MEN (21:3-4).

1. God to tabernacle with men (v. 3).

- (1) "The tabernacle of God is with men."
 - A. In previous mentions of the tabernacle of God in this book it has been in Heaven (13:6; 15:5). This one is on the new earth.
 - B. God dwelt between the cherubim in Eden (Gen. 3:8,24; 4:16).
 - C. He dwelt in the tabernacle in the wilderness (Lev. 26:11) and later in the temple.
 - D. God was in Christ in the days of His flesh (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; John 1:14). Christ was the substance of which the first tabernacle was the shadow (Heb. 9:8,11-12).
 - E. God dwells in His church (I Cor. 3:16-17) and in the bodies of believers (I Cor. 6:19-20).
 - F. His actual dwelling on earth awaits the fixed and holy eternal state.
- (2) "He shall dwell with them."
 - A. The word "dwell" is the verb form of tabernacle. God will tabernacle with men on earth. He will move His throne from the Third Heaven to this planet!
 - B. The Maker and Sustainer of Heaven and earth shall actually and really dwell with men on earth.

- C. This is no figure of speech, but a coming grand reality, the profound depth of which baffles our finite minds.
 - D. Why is tabernacle (a temporary tent) used instead of temple (a permanent building)? Maybe two reasons---
 - a. A tabernacle is a home-like dwelling place. This is a familiar home, not a formal temple. Men do not dwell in temples. Here is perfect intimacy of a home.
 - b. The saints will not settle permanently on the new earth, but visit other parts of God's creation--- His inheritance and ours (Eph. 1:10-11).
- (3) "They shall be his people and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."
- A. This speaks of unbroken and complete reconciliation and fellowship between God and man.
 - B. God Himself shall be with them without any covering or external medium of communication (Matt. 5:8; II Cor. 6:16).
 - C. God in the greatness of His glory and moral excellence of His Being.

2. Four "no mores" (v. 4).

- (1) "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (cf. Isa. 25:8-9; Rev. 7:17).
- A. This does not mean there shall be no tears in Heaven. Tears are not necessarily a sign of pain. There are tears of joy. John wept in Heaven (Rev. 5:4-5).
 - B. If there are tears God shall wipe them away. This is a most condescending, compassionate, and affectionate act on the part of God!
 - C. There will be very little if any occasion for tears in the new Jerusalem. Most likely never again will tears glisten in our eyes. The eye will not be a fountain of sorrow.
- (2) "There shall be no more death."
- A. Death shall die and be destroyed (I Cor. 15:25-26).
 - B. Death came in Eden (Rom. 5:12); it is banished for ever in Paradise restored.
 - C. No one will ever die. No grave will be dug, no mourners will go about the streets, no funeral services to attend, never see death again!
- (3) "Neither sorrow, nor crying."
- A. No more sorrow or crying of any kind. Not over the loss of property or friends---sins or our little love for Christ---that we must die one day.

B. Since Eden there has not been a day, or an hour, in which this has not been a sorrowful world. No tribe or family is exempt from grief. We have days of sorrow and nights of crying.

(4) "Neither shall there be any more pain."

A. How full of pain the world now is. How many lay in bed suffering under incurable diseases---undergoing severe surgical operations.

B. In the world of tomorrow all this will be over.

(5) "For the former things are passed away." The former days of tears, death, and pain are gone for ever. A world where there is no judgment on sin.

IV. ALL THINGS MADE NEW (21:5-6).

1. The new order of things in the eternal state (v. 5).

(1) "He that sat upon the throne"---Father, Son (Rev. 20:11; I Cor. 15:24,28), and Holy Spirit.

(2) "All things new."

A. Not a vestige of the old is to remain (Isa. 65:17). A new people on a new earth.

B. Since the old creation there has been nothing new (Eccl. 1:9).

C. Note "make" is used here rather than "create." All that has marred by sin is removed (Acts 3:21).

D. It will not only be made new, but it will stay new. All things will remain eternally young and fresh.

(3) "Write"---John was so overwhelmed by the import of the new revelation that for a moment he forgot the Divine command to write (Rev. 14:13; 19:9).

(4) "These words are true and faithful."

A. Here God authenticates His own magnificent declaration. This is not a promise but the Divine assertion of that which is a fact when it comes to pass.

B. It is hard for humans in this present state to conceive of a life without pain, sorrow, and death. Hence God confirms His own words.

2. God's eternal purpose is completed (v. 6).

(1) "It is done"---all things new is done. The first is God's decree; the second its accomplishment (Rev. 16:17; Eph. 1:9-10).

(2) Some say that this means the end of God's revelation to

man. John, you have seen the consummation to which all prophecy tends (Dan. 8:28).

- (3) The throne sitter is the eternal trinity here. There is no mention of a Mediator or the Holy Spirit.
- (4) "I am Alpha and Omega" (Rev. 1:8,11, 22:13). The first and last letter of the Greek alphabet (A and Z as we say it).
- (5) "The beginning and the end"---the Creator and the Consummator of all things. All revelation originates with God is for His glory. Providence, promise, predictions, and prophecy come from the faithful covenant-keeping God.
- (6) "I will give to him that is athirst."
 - A. How gracious is God's promise after all His judgments. He offers the water of life to all who thirsts (John 4:10,13-14; 7:37-39; Isa. 55:1; Rev. 7:17).
 - B. This invitation is limited to the thirsty (Rev. 22:17). All that is needed is thirst.
 - C. The glorified bodies of the saints will be kept in eternal health by the fruit of the tree of life and the river of the water of life (Rev. 22:1-2; Gen. 3:22).

V. THE BLESSINGS OF THE OVERCOMER (21:7).

1. The overcomer is the regenerated believer whose faith enables him to overcome the world (I John 5:4-5). The overcomer in the first part of the Book was found in a church (Rev. 2:7, 11,17,26-28; 3:5,12,21).
2. "Inherit all things." We are joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17), and He is appointed to be heir of all things (Heb. 1:2), and so are we (I Cor. 3:21-23).
3. In other Scriptures believers are said to inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5), everlasting life (Matt. 19:29), the kingdom (Matt. 25:34), and the promises (I Pet. 3:9).
4. "I will be his God, and he shall be my son."
 - (1) God is the speaker here and there is no Mediator needed. The Edenic fellowship has been completely restored.
 - (2) Sonship is an eternal relationship. The overcomer has God, and God has the overcomer as a son.
 - (3) Not an outcast, or servant, but a son---a close, unbreakable, tender relationship of love, began in time (I John 3:1-2) and continued to eternity.
 - (4) A son, not a child. "Child" is connected with Divine grace and sovereignty; "son" with human responsibility, conduct, and acknowledgement.

- (5) It is because the believer has overcome all the threatenings and allurements of this present world scene that God own him as a son (Matt. 10:32-33).

VI. EIGHT CLASSES OF SINNERS (21:8).

1. "Fearful" or cowardly. They are the opposite of the overcomer. They had no courage of convictions and would not share the reproach of Christ. People who were afraid to trust Christ (Mark 4:40; John 14:27; II Tim. 1:7-8).
2. "Unbelievers"---those who have no faith---the most numerous class (John 3:18). There is no salvation for unbelievers (Mark 16:16). All unbelievers are infidels (II Cor. 6:16).
3. "The abominable"---those whose conduct is detestable to God---people morally, religiously, and physically filthy to God (Rev. 17:4-5; 21:27; Tit. 1:16). The word is often associated with idol worship in Revelation.
4. "Murderers"---those who meddle with that which peculiarly belongs to God---human life. This is violators of the Six Commandment (Ex. 20:13).
5. "Whoremongers"---violators of the Seventh Commandment (Ex. 20:14). This group is growing today faster than ever.
6. "Sorcerers"---those who profess intercourse with evil spirits. Physical death was the penalty in the Old Testament time (Deut. 18:10-12). Here it is the second death.
7. "Idolaters"---all worshippers of other gods. Violators of the Second Commandment (Ex. 20:4).
8. "All liars" of every degree, kind, and character---all who are false toward God or man. Violators of the Ninth Commandment (Ex. 20:16). These all die in their sins and do not know God's forgiveness (I Cor. 6:9-11).
9. "Shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

- (1) This is the last reference in the Bible to "fire." It speaks of the final and eternal Hell of the lost.
- (2) Religious infidels make "the lake of fire" a symbolic expression. Then what does it mean? who shall decide? Is it something less or more? To what court of appeal shall we take the question? If the language is not literal, must not the punishment be commensurate with literal fire? If the figure is fearful, what must the fact be?
- (3) The lake of fire is a literal lake of fire where men suffer in physical bodies. The Bible is positive and plain, and it cannot be made void by the vain reasoning of religious infidels!
- (4) "Burneth" is fire that is never exhausted. Thank God we can sing: "There is no condemnation, there is no Hell for

me. . .The torment and the fire mine eyes shall never see!"

VII. THE NEW JERUSALEM, THE HOME OF THE BRIDE OF CHRIST (21:9-11).

1. The angel's invitation to John (v. 9).

- (1) "One of the seven angels"---one of the vial angels (17:1; 18:1,21;19:10,17;21:1).
- (2) "Come hither"---compare with the same call in Rev. 17:1.
- (3) "The bride, the Lamb's wife"---John is actually shown the home of the bride, the dwelling place of the church. In 19:7 the church is called the Lamb's wife in prospect; here the church is recognized as the Lamb's wife because the marriage is past.
- (4) The bride is not the city. We learned from chapter 19:7-9 that the bride is not a physical city, but that it is the New Testament church. A city is more than buildings and streets. These are provided for the inhabitants which compose the real city (Heb. 12:22-24).
- (5) This city will be peculiarly the home of the New Testament church, the Lamb's wife (Eph. 5:27-33). Others will live in the city (John 14:1-3; Heb. 11:10-16) and some will have access to the city who live in the countryside (Rev. 21:24-26), but the church will be the wife in the home!

2. The mountain vision (v. 10).

- (1) "Carried me away in the spirit"---the angel transported John's human spirit into the glorious future which awaits God's people (note Rev. 1:10; 17:1), a Pisgah where the vision is clear and unhindered.
- (2) "A great and high mountain." The harlot church was on a mountain (17:3,9). The millennial city is on a mountain (Isa. 2:2; Ps. 68:14-16; Zech. 14:10).
- (3) "That great city"---in contrast with Babylon (17:5,18;18:10,16,19). That the New Jerusalem is great in size is evident from its dimensions (Rev. 21:16) and its many mansions (John 14:2).
- (4) "The holy Jerusalem"---to contrast it with the unholy Jerusalem of the tribulation period (Rev. 11:8).
- (5) "Descending out of heaven from God"---John saw the city coming to earth at a great distance earlier (Rev. 21:2). Now he sees it on a mountain on the new earth.
- (6) It is a common saying that God made the country and man made the city. In this case it is no longer true. This is a city God has made (John 14:2-3; Heb. 11:16). She is Divine and heavenly in her source.
- (7) A city is composed of individual dwellings. John 14:2 in the Greek is "many dwelling places." Each inhabitant in this city will have his own dwelling place (II Cor. 5:1).

Those whose earthly tabernacle has been dissolved shall at this time have a heavenly house in the heavenly city.

3. It will be lighted directly by the presence and effulgence of God (v. 11, 23; 22:5).
 - (1) "Having the glory of God"---God Himself dwelling the midst is the glory of this city. She shines forth in the universe of bliss, a luminary flashing in glorious beauty, the pure unsullied light of God.
 - (2) The millennial Jerusalem has the glory of God risen upon her (Isa. 60:1); the New Jerusalem has the glory of God revealed in her (Rom. 8:18). The harlot city showed the glory of man; here we see the glory of God.
 - (3) "Her light was like unto a stone most precious"---her light is really the radiance of God's holiness (21:23). No more will we be dependent upon creature-made lights. We shall have immediate light constantly from God himself (John 8:12; Jas. 1:17).
 - (4) This city is the crowning feature of the creation of God, the unique habitation of the redeemed for eternity.
 - (5) "Even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." The jasper has already been used to express Him who sits upon the throne (4:3). The river in 22:1 is "clear as crystal."
 - (6) The Shekinah glory filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34) and the temple (II Chron. 5:14). Christ came to manifest the glory of God (John 1:14; Heb. 1:3). Now the tabernacle of God is with man (21:3), and His glorious presence will illuminate the New Jerusalem, both spiritually and physically, for ever and ever. The saints are to share in this glory (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43; I Cor. 15:41-42; Rom. 8:18; I Pet. 1:7; 4:13-14; 5:1,4,10).

VIII. THE WALL AND THE GATES OF THE NEW JERUSALEM (21:12-14).

1. The great wall with twelve gates (v. 12).
 - (1) "A wall great and high."
 - A. As a rule, a wall conveys the idea of security and separation. This is not the case here.
 - B. The wall is not for protection from enemies, for there are no enemies to fear. These walls speak of strength and security for God's people.
 - C. This wall will be 1,380 miles high.
 - (2) "Twelve gates"---a means of entrance and exit.
 - A. The number 12 is conspicuous in the New Jerusalem: 12 gates (21:12); 12 angels (21:12), 12 tribes (21:12); 12

foundations (21:14); 12 apostles (21:14); 12 pearls (21:21); 12 manner of fruits (22:2)---a sevenfold description.

- B. The number 12 appears in the multiplied form in the mention of 12,000 furlongs (21:16) and 144 cubits (21:17).
 - C. The millennial Jerusalem had 12 gates (Ezek. 48:31-34). The same is true of the New Jerusalem.
- (3) "Twelve angels"---porter angels, keeping the gates ever open.
- A. They are not there as guardian angels, seeing there is no need of angelic protection.
 - B. These angels will minister to those entering and leaving the city (Heb. 1:14).
 - C. Because of the number of angels attached to the city (Heb. 12:22), there may be a continual rotation of these porter angels at the gates of the city.
- (4) "The name of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel."
- A. This is the 12 elders in Israel, or the 12 sons of Jacob. Here is the explanation of the 24 elders of chapters 4-5, representing the 12 patriarchs and the 12 apostles.
 - B. Compare with Ezekiel 48:21-34.
 - C. Why the 12 tribes of Israel on the gates? Because Israel brought Christ into the world, and without Christ none could have entered through the gates into the city (John 4:22). Both Christ and the apostles were Jews.
2. The three gates on each of the four walls (v. 13).
- (1) The Israelites were camped around the tabernacle in this manner:
- A. Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun---east (Num. 2:1-9).
 - B. Reuben, Simeon, and Gad---south (Num. 2:10-16).
 - C. Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin---west (Num. 2:18-24).
 - D. Dan, Asher, and Naphtali---north (Num. 2:25-31).
- (2) In the millennial land they are as follows in Ezekiel 48:21-35:
- A. On the east, north to south---Joseph, Benjamin, Dan.
 - B. On the north, west to east---Reuben, Judah, Levi.
 - C. On the south, east to west---Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun.
 - D. On the west, south to north---Gad, Asher, Naphtali.
- (3) No Israelites are mentioned outside the city in the New Jerusalem, but some Gentiles are outside the city (21:27).

3. The twelve foundations (v. 14; cf. Heb. 11:10).

- (1) The 12 apostles are the elders of the church (I Cor. 12:28). These along with the elders in Israel make up the 24 elders, showing that both Israel and the church will dwell in the city.
- (2) Israel and the church never become one in the Scriptures. Is this were the case, then we ould have 24 gates and 24 foundations. Jew and Gentile are not here seen as a united group.
- (3) Old Testament saints are not included in the foundations because they are never spoken of as apostles, much less as apostles of the Lamb. The Lamb relationship is a New Testament concept. Note Ephesians 2:20; 4:11 here.
- (4) The "twelve tribes" is an unheard-of terminology in reference to the church. Israel and the church remain two distinct groups even to the eternal state (Eph. 3:21).

IX. THE DEMENSIONS OF THE CITY (21:15-17).

1. The angel measure the city (v. 15).

- (1) This is the angel who has been talking with John in 21:9.
- (2) Here it is a golden reed. Earlier a reed is mentioned (11:1), but it was not said to be a golden reed.
- (3) A golden reed to measure a golden city! The Jewish reed was about 10 feet long.

2. The largest city in the history of the world (v. 16).

- (1) We are warned about taking from the Book of Revelation (22:19). This includes taking from the size of the city as given here in the Bible!
- (2) "City lieth foursquare"--a cube, not a pyramid. The length, and breadth, and height are all the same.
- (3) The holy of holies both in the tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple were a perfect cube (I Kings 6:20). This was where God dwelt. The pyramidal shape is always associated with paganism.
- (4) "Twelve thousand furlongs."
 - A. A furlong is the Greek Stadia, a Greek measure corresponding to 600 Greek feet or about 607 English feet.
 - B. This makes the city 1,380 miles square. Such a city would cover over half of United States. This is the Father's house of "many mansions" (John 14:2; Amos 9:6).
 - C. The city could accommadte 20 billion residents, according to some scholars.
 - D. David Cooper says there will be something like 2,000,000,000 ordinary city blocks on one level. Everybody could

be living in a house on a lot 100 feet wide and 200 feet deep, on a street 100 feet wide.

3. The wall is measured (v. 17).

- (1) A cubit is the length from a man's elbow to his middle finger tip---about 18 inches. This makes the wall either 216 feet high, or 216 feet thick. I believe it is its thickness. Why would 216 feet high wall surround a city 1,380 miles high? What a sight to behold!
- (2) "According to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel" ---whether man or angel measured it, the measurement is the same.

X. THE BEAUTY OF THE HEAVENLY CITY (21:18-21).

1. The walls and the city (v. 18).

- (1) "The building" in the Greek is endomesis, and it means "structure." The word signifies the materials of which the wall is composed.
- (2) The wall corresponds with the city it surrounds (21:11). The wall expresses in its very structure the same radiant glory as the city. Oh, to behold the sun-like glory of this city!
- (3) The jasper stone was renowned in the ancient world, but it is still unidentified today. It was in Eden (Ezek. 28:13) and on the breastplate of the high priest (Ex. 28:20; 39:13). It is associated with the sardine stone (Rev. 4:3) and the clear cystral (Rev. 21:11).
- (4) From all information I can glean it was a fine translucent, capable of different colors, radiant white but also with a flashing fiery red and purple tints.
- (5) "The city was pure gold, like unto clear glass"---transparent gold, or gold that shines like a looking glass. Like the gold of Havilah (Gen. 2:11-12).
- (6) The words "pure" and "clear" speak of flawless perfection as to the materials in the city. The most beautiful and valuable of metals in now the most abundant of metals.

2. The precious stones of the foundation (vv. 19-20).

- (1) Beneath the walls are interspersed 12 great foundations (21:14), inserted between the 12 gates. Each foundation consists of one particular type of stone, trimmed with many other different kinds of precious stones.
- (2) These stones remind us of the precious stones in the priestly breastplate (Ex. 28:17-20) and the stones in the heavenly garden (Ezek. 28:13-14), but the order and number is not the same.
- (3) Does Isaiah 54:11-17 speaks of the millennial Jerusalem, or the New Jerusalem? The stones point to the latter.

(4) The stones and their colors---

- A. Jasper---a transparent stone capable of different colors but primarily white. Something like a diamond.
- B. Sapphire---blue in color.
- C. Chalcedony---bright green, or copper-colored, or grey with purple, blue and yellow.
- D. Emerald---bright and shining green, like the throne of God and the rainbow around it (Rev. 4:3).
- E. Sardonyx---a red and white color stone---onyx with red veins, or bluish white some say.
- F. Sardius---bright red. Probably the same as the sardine stone (Rev. 4:3).
- G. Chrysolite---a golden yellow, or blood green.
- H. Beryl---a yellow stone or sea green.
- I. Topas---yellow green.
- J. Chrysoprasus---a gold tinted green stone.
- K. Jacinth---violent or red with a mixture of yellow, or blue stone and deep red.
- L. Amethyst---a purple color, or a mixture of strong blue and deep red.

3. The gates and the streets (v. 21).

- (1) It is hard to imagine a pearl which could make several gates that are 1,300 miles high! Nothing is impossible with God.
- (2) These gates extend upward through the entire height of the great walls, thus permitting access at all levels. The gates are never closed (v. 25) so they really constitute merely great openings in the wall.
- (3) The gates of pearl signify a sinner saved by grace (Matt. 13:45-46). The gates to the first paradise have long since been closed because of sin.
- (4) The streets are pure gold. How unlike modern city streets which are dark and dirty and often the scene of crime and sorrow (Isa. 15:3; Ps. 55:11; 144:14).

XI. THE TEMPLE OF THE CITY (21:22).

- 1. A temple confines the manifestation of God's presence to one place where a priest mediates. "No temple" means immediate access to God without the intervention of a priest or a mediator. The Divine presence is equally diffused throughout the city.
- 2. There were priests in the Old Testament temple. In the New Testament all believers are priests, and Christ is the high

priest in Heaven with a temple (Rev. 11:19) and an altar (Rev. 8:3). In the new Jerusalem the work of Christ is over, and God and man are again one. No symbols are needed, no aids to worship, when God Himself is present, and we see Him as He is.

3. "No temple" is in contrast to nearly all other dispensations. But in this time no structure is necessary for the saints have the immediate presence of God.

XII. THE LIGHT OF THE CITY (21:23).

1. The verse does not say there will be no more a sun or moon in the sky, but the city had "no need" of the light of these. The starry heavens will endure forever (Ps. 148:3,6; Dan. 12:3).
2. If God dwells in light (I Tim. 6:16) and is light (John 1:7-9; 9:5; Jas. 1:18; I John 1:5-7), we can well understand how His presence will illuminate this glorious city.
3. "The Lamb is the light thereof"---Christ Himself, who is the uncreated light (John 8:12), is the Lamp of this city. The unclouded, undimmed glory of His own presence will defuse light throughout eternity. In consequence of the fulness of that light, there shall be no night!
4. There is nothing intrinsically evil in darkness (Gen. 1:3-5,31; Isa. 45:17).
5. Did Isaiah describe this city (Isa. 60:18-22)?

XIII. ACCESS TO THE NEW JERUSALEM (21:24-27).

1. The people in the countryside (v. 24).
 - (1) Many explain this by saying John is speaking of conditions in the earth during the millennial age. This will not fit the context which is about the new heaven and new earth.
 - (2) I believe we can be sure these nations live outside the new Jerusalem on the new earth in the age will follow the millennium. These nations are surely on earth, and they have access to the new Jerusalem which is also on earth.
 - (3) Some change "into" to "unto," and they say the nations do not actually reach the heavenly city, but present their offerings to it from the earth. But this translation is incorrect. Whenever a verb of motion capable of signifying penetration, or entrance into, a penetrable subject, such as a river, house, etc., is followed by the proposition "into" (Gr.---eis)---there entrance is affirmed.
 - (4) David Cooper believes these nations are a new race of

people who will be created and who will never know sin. There is no Scripture for this, unless it is Psalms 102:18.

- (5) Henry Morris believes they have come from people translated to Heaven like Enoch and Elijah still in the flesh. They will colonize the new earth. But, as we have seen earlier, these two men are the two witnesses who die and are resurrected to heaven.
- (6) Some make these kings Christ and His saints, but these are inside the city, not outside. Glorified saints are never called nations.
- (7) By "kings of the earth" it is best to understand sub-kings belonging to unglorified humanity who were brought over into the new earth from the millennial reign.
 - A. There is no translation of living saints at the end of the tribulation or the millennium mentioned in the Bible. Thus we may well assume these continue in their natural bodies.
 - B. These are called "nations," a term which generally refers to Gentiles nations in literal bodies.
 - C. We know that the nation of Israel will survive the destruction of the earth by fire (Isa. 66:22). That none of the other millennial nations should in like manner survive the dissolution of the earth is almost inconceivable. It seems Rev. 21:24 prove they will.
- (8) There are other scriptures which seem to point to unglorified saints in the eternal state.
 - A. The Noahic Covenant was to be "for perpetual generations" and "an everlasting covenant" (Gen. 9:12,16).
 - B. God promised to keep His covenant to a thousand generations---35,000 years (Deut. 7:9).
 - C. Abraham's seed were to be greatly multiplied (Gen. 22:17).
 - D. There is to be an increase of Christ's government (Isa. 9:7).
 - E. Ephesians 3:21 can read: "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, to the ages of the ages."
 - F. The present race on earth are "a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (Jas. 1:18). What is the harvest?
- (9) How can there be saved sinners in the new earth if righteousness dwells there (II Pet. 3:13)? How can there be people in literal bodies when there is no pain and death (Rev. 21:4)?

- A. It is possible that there may not be any sin in the life of these saved nations. The eating of the tree of life and the drinking of the water of life may heal their sins (Gen. 3:22-24; Rev. 22:1-2,14) and cleanse their blood (Joel 3:21).
 - B. We cannot be certain about these things which are yet future. We must in truth wait and see how God will do these things.
2. There shall be no occasion for closing the gates (v. 25).
 - (1) The gates of old Jerusalem were closed at night and dur- even the day in time of war. There are no enemies here; all nations are welcome, and into this city there is a continual throng of comers.
 - (2) "No night there"---one perpetual high noon. No cloud shall ever cross its sky, no shadow ever rest upon it. No night with its darkness, its fears, its terrors! An eter- nal city with no setting sun!
 3. These unceasing comers bring the glory and honor of the nations into it (v. 26).
 - (1) Their glory and honor are brought inside the city, not left outside. This proves the nations are outside the city and must come into it through the gates.
 - (2) All glory and honor rightly belongs to God (Rev. 4:11; 5: 12; Jer. 9:23-24).
 4. The absolute purity of the comers to the city (v. 27).
 - (1) The saved nations outside the city can enter into it (Rev. 22:14). These are God's elect whose names are in the book of life, but not all the elect live in the city.
 - (2) The least spot or taint of sin could not stand the glare of Divine glory.
 - (3) This verse must not be pressed to say all whose names are in the book of life live in the new Jerusalem. The con- text speaks of some saved who live outside of the city (21:24) and who have the privilege of access because they keep the commandments (22:14). Those who live outside the city are true Christian nations!
 - (4) All who were not found written in the book of life have already been cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).
 - (5) The number of names on the rolls of our churches is not coextensive with those written in the book of life.
 - (6) "Maketh a lie"---one may be guilty of working or acting a lie without saying a single word.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Twenty-Two

- I. THE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE (22:1).
1. "A pure river"---this stream is not polluted or muddy (Ps. 46:4; 92:12-13).
 2. The river I take as literal, as I do the throne. It is as real as the river which flowed through the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10) and so is the one in the millennium (Zech. 14:8; Ezek. 47:1-12).
 3. In Ezekiel the river proceeded from the temple and was associated with the altar, the place of sacrifice, but here it proceeds from the throne, the place of sovereignty.
 4. These waters will be uninterrupted continuous life ever fresh from God. This could be a tangible manifestations of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 44:3; John 7:37-39).
 5. "The throne of God and of the Lamb"---indicates the eternal state, not the millennial state. Jerusalem in the millennium is the throne of Christ (Zech. 6:13). Here the Lamb takes a second place (I Cor. 15:24-26).
 6. "Clear as crystal" is used often in this book (4:6; 21:11).
 7. There is no sea from which waters are raised by the sun (21:1), and no rainfall to supply the river with its flow. It seems the Creator is continually creating the waters.
- II. THE TREE OF LIFE (21:2).
1. Here is paradise restored. This is the same tree of life God planted in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9), from which Adam and Eve were banished (Gen. 3:22-25).
 2. When the Bible opens we see there the tree of life in the midst of the garden (Gen. 2:9). Here it is in the midst of the street, and there is no seclusion or no exclusion (Rev. 2:7; 22:14). Here is no cherubim nor flaming sword.
 3. "In the midst of the street, . . . on either side of the river" ---the trees on each side in the midst of the space between the street and river. This could be many trees like in the millennial Jerusalem (Ezek. 47:12), or it may be just one tree as some contend.
 4. Like Eden (Gen. 3:22-24), the eating brings health and life (Ezek. 47:12; Rev. 22:14). These are the nations in Rev. 21:24).
 5. The tree of life yields its fruits each month. No winter with its frosts blights this tree of life. Each month sees new growth satisfying the ever-new appetite of the beloved of God. There is no sameness, eating once, and never again.

III. THE THRONE OF GOD AND THE REMOVAL OF THE CURSE (22:3).

1. "No more curse."

(1) This is not true of things at present. The serpent was cursed (Gen. 3:14) and the ground (Gen. 3:17). Cain was cursed (Gen. 4:11). All under the works of the law are under the curse (Gal. 3:10).

(2) The curse is removed in the millennium (Zech. 14:11) and the eternal state. God only dwells where the curse is lifted. This condition flows from Christ's death (Gal. 3:10,13).

(3) The curse belongs to the old creation and not to the new ---the former heaven and earth, not with the final heaven and earth.

2. "Throne of God and the throne of the Lamb"---God's heavenly throne comes down to earth and is joined to the Davidic throne of Christ.

3. "His servant shall serve him."

(1) This is service without cessation, without weariness, without a flaw, and without one legal thought.

(2) What better way to spend eternity than to unceasing serve God? The eternal state is not a time of inactivity.

(3) Much time will be given to fellowship and testimony, for singing and playing the harps of gold, but there will also be productivity. There is no higher privilege than serving God.

(4) Before the fall Eden had to be kept by Adam (Gen. 2:6,15). Labor was not a part of the curse because of the fall.

IV. THE BLESSEDNESS OF FELLOWSHIP (22:4-5).

1. Perfect identification and transformation (v. 4).

(1) Perfect transformation---"And they shall see his face."

A. These are glorified saints (I John 3:2; Matt. 5:8; I Cor. 13:9-12). This is not true of our present state (I Tim. 6:16; John 1:18). We have only seen the human form of God (John 14:9).

B. No more hiding of God's countenance, no more hiding from the face of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

C. Oh, to see His face in unveiled righteousness. This is the beatific vision. Wonderful day when His face is fully displayed toward us!

(2) Perfect identification---"his name shall be in their forehead." (Rev. 3:8,10,12).

- A. The name in the forehead serves as a mark of identification as in 7:3 and 14:1. Note Satan's imitation in 13:16.
 - B. This signifies that we publicly, openly, belong to Christ. Since the name represents the person, it means we shall bear His moral likeness as well.
 - C. His character, what He really is, is seen clearly on the very forehead of every blessed one there.
2. Perfect illumination (v. 5; cf. 21:25).
- (1) There will be no night or darkness---one eternal day. The city is not dependent upon the lights of the world.
 - (2) The Light of the World (John 8:12) and the Father of lights (Jas. 1:17) are in the city.
 - (3) No more weariness that welcome the curtains of the night. The resurrection body has no need of sleep.
 - (4) The unceasing light from the city emanates directly from God Himself.
 - (5) "They shall reign for ever and ever." The millennial reign ends (Rev. 20:6-7), but the reign of the eternal state is "unto the ages of the ages" (Greek text).
 - (6) As long as we serve we reign; as long as we reign we serve. The yoke and the crown go together.

V. THE CERTAINTY OF THE BLESSED HOPE (22:6-7).

1. The angel authenticates the prophecy (v. 6; cf. 1:1; 15:3; 19:2; 21:5).
- (1) This is the same angel earlier mentioned (21:9,15; 22:1).
 - (2) John was not merely dreaming, nor were these things all simply allegories of unknown meaning. These events would come to pass.
 - (3) He whose very name is "Faithful and True" (Rev. 19:11) will speak words that "are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:5). The saying of his angel are likewise.
 - (4) "The Lord God of the holy prophets"---Jesus Christ was the direct inspirer of the prophets.
2. The blessing of keeping the saying of Revelation (v. 7).
- (1) "Behold, I come quickly." This is the language of imminency. It means the next thing on the program.
 - (2) Christ's coming at the rapture is impending as if it meant to be fulfilled at any moment (Rev. 1:3). How awful that Satan has caused so many to neglect and misinterpret this book, and thus to miss the blessing.
 - (3) Let us treasure these words, prize them, and act upon them.

VI. JOHN ATTEMPTS TO WORSHIP THE ANGEL (22:8-9).

1. John fell down to worship at the feet of the revealing angel (v. 8).
 - (1) He had made this mistake before (19:10) and had received a rebuke.
 - (2) John was so overawed by the total vision shown him by the informing angel that he again errs. No doubt John intended this only as an expression of reverence and submission to God, but this was inappropriate.
 - (3) There is a constant tendency to confuse the channel of blessing with its Source as does John here. Well intended flattery of ministers often does it destructive work as it did on others (Acts 12:21-23; Dan. 4:28-37).
2. The rebuke of the angel (v. 9).
 - (1) No angel, however exalted his standing, will allow himself to be worshipped (Heb. 1:6). Angels are very jealous in the maintenance of the rights of God and Christ.
 - (2) The fidelity and humility of the angel should shame us. Though higher than man, he says he is only a "fellow-servant" (sundoulos)---a word that wholly excludes independence in which man glories.
 - (3) Only one angel ever desired to be worshipped (Isa. 14:12-15).
 - (4) Consider the angel's words: "Worship God." Unless we are walking with God, other gods are holding our affections. The very glory of Divine revelations may tend to turn our weak hearts away from adoration of the Divine Person (II Cor. 12:7).
 - (5) Creature worship is a sin against God, an affront to the majesty of the Lord of hosts.
 - (6) This verse is a rebuke to aids in worship, such as an image, a musical hand-clapping atmosphere, a solemn atmosphere, a special building, or anything else (John 4:24).

VII. THE COMMAND TO PROCLAIM THE PROPHECY (22:10-11).

1. At no time from its recording till now has the Book of Revelation been a sealed book (v. 10).
 - (1) This is in direct contrast to the instructions given Daniel (Dan. 12:4,9). John's prophecy was nearer to fulfillment.
 - (2) The command to keep the book unsealed is to the churches, and they need to heed these words from Christ. The fanciful spiritualizing of some seal the book.
 - (3) This is a book of revelation, not speculations; an ap-

ocalype, not apocryha.

- (4) Christ said it is an open, unsealed, understandable book; men say it is filled with "unintelligible language" and "mystic symbols." Christ said (Rev. 1:3); men say, "Let it alone, you cannot understand it. (II Pet. 3:3-4).
2. The immutability of the state fixed and determined at the coming of Christ (v. 11).
 - (1) The coming of the Lord works no change in the moral character of man. This solemn declaration is inserted between two assertions of urgency and imminency, "the time is at hand," and "behold, I come quickly" (vv. 10, 12).
 - (2) Habits fix character, and character fixes destiny. Death or the coming of Christ fixes character and destiny. The wicked remain wicked, and the righteous remain righteous. In eternity sinning and suffering are united, equally so holiness and happiness.
 - (3) These words are in constrast to Isaiah 55:7. It is as if Christ said: "The time is so near that all I can say is 'Go on then to your everlasting doom.'" If the warnings of this book are not sufficient, there is no more God will say (Luke 16:31).
 - (4) "Unjust"---unjustified; "filthy"---those morally filthy and unwashed in the blood of Jesus; "righteous"---made righteous in Christ and who do the works of righteousness; "holy"---made so by the death of Christ and who live holy lives.
 - (5) The idea is that either filthiness or holiness is the choice of a man's life, viewed as a whole. Those who have made such a choice are living in it. "Let him keep on doing unrighteousness." Wicked men will continue in their wickedness and depravity forever.
 - (6) There is no purgatorial fire to cleanse from the pollution of sin, nor reincarnations in which to purge off moral degeneracy.
 - (7) The sinner should cry, "Lord, your eternal judgment is near. It is still the day of salvation. Save me even though I be filthy, or I perish!"

VIII. THE DIVINE SPEAKER (22:12-13).

1. The imminent return of Christ (v. 12).
 - (1) No less than six times does the Lord Jesus promise in this book that He will "come quickly" (2:5,16; 3:11; 22:7,12,20). The verb is in the present tense, connoting futuristic but impending action.

- (2) In the light of such a direct statement from Christ Himself, we should be expecting Christ at any moment, ordering our conduct in the light of the blessed hope.
 - (3) Christ is coming with that individual reward He retains in His own hand to bestow personally---"my reward is with me." The Lord will not committed even to Michael the giving out of rewards for the least service rendered Him.
 - (4) Often we hear when some one dies, "He has gone to his reward." This is wrong. No saint of either testament has been rewarded finally as of yet. Rewards are given out when Christ comes (Isa. 40:10; I Cor. 4:5; II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4). This rewarding will be a the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10-11; I Cor. 3:8-15).
 - (5) Salvation is apart from works, but rewards are according to works (II Sam. 3:39; 22:21,25; I Kings 8:32,39; II Chron. 6:23,30; 15:7; Ezra 9:13; Ps. 18:20,24; 28:4; 62:12; Prov. 24:12,29; Job 34:11; Isa. 59:18; Jer. 17:10; 25:14; 32:19; 50:29; 51:6; Lam. 3:63; Ezek. 7:3-4, 8-9,27; 18:30; 24:14; 36:19; 39:24; Hos. 4:9; 12:2; Zech. 1:6; Matt. 16:27; Luke 23:41; I Cor. 3:8; II Cor. 5:10; 11:15; II Tim. 4:14; Heb. 2:2; Rev. 2:23; 11:18; 18:6; 20:12,13; 22:12).
 - (6) All that takes place is foreseen and forearranged by Christ. All comes to pass in accordance with His previous knowledge and ordaining. Nothing is the results of chance or contingency.
 - (7) Are you laying up treasures in Heaven? Or, are you continually laying up treasures on earth?
2. Christ calls Himself Alpha and Omega for the fourth time (1:8,11; 21:6; 22:13)
- (1) Here one of the last testimonies to the divinity of our Lord. Christ is God before and after all.
 - (2) Christ is the A and the Z---the Creator (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:17) and Consummator (Heb. 1:2).

IX. THE MEANS OF ACCESS TO THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CITY (22:14-15).

1. The keeping of His commandments gives the right to enter into the city (v. 14).
 - (1) Some Greek versions read: "Blessed are they who have washed their robes." This removes the pretext for the notion of salvation by works. This is an error.
 - A. Two eminent church fathers (Cyprian and Tertullian) quote the passage like the KJV.
 - B. White robes are worn by tribulation saints (Rev. 7:9, 13-14). The church is arrayed in white raiment (Rev.

19:8) and so are other glorified saints (Rev. 19:14).

C. The reference here is to neither the tribulation saints or the church saints. These are the saved nations in literal bodies who live outside the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24). Obedience to God's commandments in this age is not ground on which we have eternal life (John 5:24). Obedience to the commandments will be the basis of entering the New Jerusalem and partaking of the tree of life in the age to come.

D. God's people love and keep His commandments in all ages (John 14:15,21; 15:10; I John 2:3-4; 3:22,24; 5:2-3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12). They surely keep this one (I John 3:23).

(2) It is best to take the rendering found in the KJV.

2. Another description of unsaved people (v. 15; cf. 21:8,27).

(1) What does "without" means here? without the city? without the new heaven and new earth? without the realm of God's elect people (Eph. 2:12; Col. 4:5; I Thess. 4:12; I Tim. 3:7)? This question is not easily answered.

(2) Here it would seem to mean the unsaved are without the right of access into the New Jerusalem (2:27). The commandment-keepers can go in; they cannot enter.

(3) We must not assume the unsaved are just outside the city at this time (II Pet. 3:13), for they are in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8).

X. THE BOOK OF REVELATION WAS WRITTEN TO THE CHURCHES (22:16).

1. "I Jesus"---Christ claims to be the source of this revelation. The One who opened the book (1:1) will not close it. The medium of communication between Jesus and John was an angel.

2. "To testify unto you these things in the churches."

(1) The universal, invisible church is not seen in this book or any book in the New Testament. The Book of Revelation was not written to the church universal, but to the local churches.

(2) The whole contents of this book is to be preached and taught in the churches (1:4,11; 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22).

3. "I am the root and offspring of David" (5:5). The two natures of Christ are seen here. As Divine He is the Root of David's house. As a man He is the offspring of David. He is David's Lord and Heir (Isa. 11:1; Matt. 22:41-46).

4. "The morning star"---another title of Christ.

(1) "Morning" (Greek, orthrinos, a term generally applied to Venus) here is a different word than in chapter 2:28 (Greek, proinos, meaning "morning"). Christ is the special

and unique morning star.

- (2) The morning star announces the dawn. Christ comes as the Morning Star at the Rapture to announce the dawn of the Millennial Day. At the Rapture He is the Morning Star; at the coming back to earth He is the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:1).
- (4) We are now in the night which is far spent. The world is asleep and looks not for Him. But some starlit morning He shall come again for His people.

XI. TWO GREAT INVITATIONS

1. An invitation for Christ to return, "Come, Lord Jesus."

- (1) The first two clauses of verse 17 are the answer to the last clause of verse 16. This is not the cry of the Spirit only, but that of the bride jointly with the Spirit. It is not the Spirit in the bride, but both who unite in the cry for Christ to return.
- (2) It is wrong to make this the Spirit and the bride's invitation for the sinner to come to Christ. Such an idea cannot be reconciled with the preceding verses.
- (3) This is the only prayer of the Holy Spirit recorded in Bible to my knowledge.
- (4) All through the centuries the true churches (the bride of Christ), indwelt by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 3:16-17), have preached about the second coming of Christ. They have had an ardent wish for Him to come again and receive His people unto Himself. Those who have not done so are not in the bride, according to this text.
- (5) Mark the words: "And let him that heareth say, Come." Here we see a saved person outside the bride who also desires for Christ to come. This construction indicates that not all saved persons are in the bride.

2. An invitation for the sinner to come to Christ, "Come to the Lord Jesus."

- (1) This is a general invitation to salvation during this church age (cf. Isa. 55:1; Matt. 11:28). The Spirit prompts the churches to invite sinners to come to the water of life, the tree of life, the New Jerusalem, etc. This is one of the greatest works of New Testament churches in this present age.
- (2) Arminians tells us this is an invitation to all men without exception to come to Christ for salvation. In truth it is a limited invitation to the thirsty and willing. Some are not thirsty or willing to come to Christ. There are some whosoever won'ts.
- (3) This verse does not say, "Whosoever will can come even if he does want to at the present."

- (4) "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life" does not teach that every sinner has a will to come to the water of life (Christ), for John 5:40 refutes such a notion. Rather, it teaches if a man has a will to come, let him come. He comes because he is drawn (John 6:44) and because God made him willing (Ps. 110:2; Phil. 2:13).
- (5) This verse does teach that it is the duty of the churches in this age to invite thirsty and willing sinners to partake of the water of life. Are we doing this?
- (6) "Freely"---the Greek word dorean (Rom. 3:24; John 15:25) means "gratuitously" or "without a cause in us why it should be given." The free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23).

XII. A SOLEMN WARNING (22:18-19).

1. You cannot add to the Book of Revelation or subtract from it. This is true of the whole Bible (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Jer. 36; Prov. 30:6; John 10:35). You may attempt to do it but only with this curse and malediction.
2. "The words of the prophecy of this book"---Christ jealously guards the words of this book. He tells us it is a book of prophecy (vv. 7,9,10,18,19). Christ says the things in this book will surely come to pass.
3. Men may regard this book as "a mere Hebrew rhapsody," "a book of ambiguous metaphors," or "a book of God's hidden secrets," He may ignore it and misinterpret it, but God claims every word of this prophecy, and upon him that would dare to add to it, or take away from it, He shall execute His solemn sentence. Liberals and cultists beware!
4. Prophecy is the unfolding of God's predetermined plan and purpose. In the process of time it will issue into God's glory. This cannot be changed by some critic or skeptic who dares to misinterpret His providence and assail His sovereignty (Dan. 4:35).
5. "It is as much as if He should have said,---"Let every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, keep in mind, that every thing here testified is sacred; and that if any man be found adding to, or detracting from what is here said, God shall deprive him of the part, which he may have hoped to share in its blessings" (William Jones, 1830).
6. The Book of Revelation is a complete record of God's judgments rewards, which cannot be increased or diminished. It should be to us "the whole counsel of God."
7. An old Puritan preacher use to say, "There are just two things I desire to know: The first, Does God speak?---the second, What does He say."
8. The cults add to this book and the liberals take away from it

(II Pet. 3:16). Both will be left behind when Christ comes to suffer the plagues written in this book. The child of God will not add to or take from this precious book.

XIII. THE THIRD ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS SOON RETURN (22:20).

1. The first announcement of His speedy return was connected with our guarding this book (v. 7); the second with the rewards He personally is bringing His servants (v. 12).
2. This is the last utterance of Christ that is recorded in the Bible. This is a final and glorious announcement.
3. The natural response from John was a prayer that the Lord would come quickly as He had promised to do. John's prayer came from one who had just seen the glories of the world to come. Believers will continue to utter this prayer until the very moment of His return.

XIV. THE BENEDICTION (22:21).

1. How fitting a benediction to close the last revelation! John opens (1:4) and closes with the subject of God's grace. He could like Paul in this epistle!
2. It has been grace and will be grace until the judgments of this book shall commence. Through sunshine and shadow, His unfailing, infinite grace has been the strength and support of His people.
3. "Amen"---"so be it." So ends the book; so ends the whole volume of the inspired Scriptures, leaving, as the last sounds for our ears, the last memory for our hearts, the assurance of His sudden return. Are you ready for the return of Christ?