

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter One

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, an appearing, a manifestation, a coming."

A. We get our English word "apocalypse" from this Greek word.

B. This book is all about an unveiling, an appearing, a manifestation, the coming of Jesus Christ.

C. This 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 Revelator or that he is the subject of the Revelation.

A. It is made by Him and it concerns His future manifestations.

B. 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).

C. There is stress on the humanity of Christ (Mark 13:32; Luke 19:15; Acts 1:6-7). As God He needed no revelation of any kind.

(3) "To show unto his servants."

A. Not merely John, but all followers of Christ and all students of the Word.

B. The word "servant" (*doulos*) which means "bondslaves," or "his slaves."

C. "To show" (*deiknumi*) means mental apprehension (Matt. 16:21) and visual revelation (Matt. 8:4). Both verbal and visual are involved in this revelation.

(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. "Must" denotes necessity and certainty.

(5) "Shortly" means they will begin and be completed in a short space of time when they start to happen.

A. Christ's coming is imminent in the Bible.

B. "Shortly" means certainty and rapidity of action are involved here (Hab. 2:3).

C. "Shortly" does not always mean immediately (Rom. 16:20).

(6) "Signified."

A. This does not mean the whole book is nothing but symbols, but that it does contain some symbols.

- B. "Signified" does not necessarily mean to show by signs as other verses prove (John 12:33; 18:32; 21:19; Acts 11:28; 25:27). It can mean to signify by word and not by symbol.
 - C. The reference may be to the seven periods of church history disclosed in chapters 2-3.
- (7) "By his angel"---John's guardian angel under whose care John seems to have been placed.
- A. This angel does not come forth until later chapters (17:1; 19:9-10; 22:8).
 - B. This is probably Gabriel, the informing angel (Dan. 8:16; 9:2,21-22; Luke 1:26-31; 2:10).
 - C. Both Daniel and Zechariah (1:9) received visions from angels.
- (8) "His servant John"---the Apostle John its human writer.
- A. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome and the brother of James.
 - B. He was the author of the Fourth Gospel and of the three epistles which bears his name.
 - C. Daniel was greatly beloved (Dan. 9:23; 10:11,19) and so was John (John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7,20).
2. The book is an actual eyewitness record of what John actually saw (v. 2).
- (1) "Who bear record" is terminology which clearly identifies John the apostle as the writer (John 19:35; 21:24; I John 1:3).
 - (2) "Of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ." God is the source of the Word. The testimony of Jesus is also the Word of God. Note three witnesses: Word of God, the testimony of Jesus Christ, and what John saw.
 - (3) "And of 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). From the neglect of this book, one might suppose it said: "Blessed are those who do not read..."
 - (2) "He that readeth"---the only book which contains such a direct promise of blessing. It seems the Holy Spirit anticipates many would probably neglect to read it.
 - A. The reference is to the reader in the congregation whose duty was to read aloud the Bible to the whole congregation.
 - B. There were very few copies of the Scriptures in those days.
 - (3) "And they that hear."

- A. Since Bibles were scarce in those days there must have been some good hearers in those days.
- B. It is a blessing to hear the Bible read, especially this book.

(4) "The words of this prophecy."

- A. The book as a whole is prophetic and demands the futuristic approach.
- B. Many put much stress on the addresses to the churches, and then treat lightly the prophetic part, which is especially blessed.
- C. While prophecy is the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God, this book is primarily a book of predictive prophecy (22:7,10,18).
- D. The Book of Revelation is the crowning consummation of many unfilled prophecies in the Old Testament.
- E. The very words are declared to be the words of prophecy. Note the emphasis upon the very words themselves.
- F. It contains over 400 quotations or allusions from Old Testament prophets, and about 50 or more are from the Book of Daniel.

(5) "And keep those things which are written therein."

- A. How can we keep these things if we do not understand what they are?
- B. "Keep" means to treasure up in the heart (Luke 2:19) and to obey it in life and practice.
- C. Prophecy is practical. Those who would understand it must be right in their spiritual position before God and willing to follow truths wherever it may lead us.

(6) "For the time is at hand."

- A. The Greek word *kairos* denotes a season or period, and not merely a point in time (Matt. 13:30; Mark 11:13; Rom. 8:18).
- B. The reference is to the phrase in Daniel "the time of the end" (Dan. 8:17; 11:35,40; 12:4,9).
- C. "At hand"---points to the nearness of the time of these predicted events.
- D. Unlike the 70 weeks, the church age is a timeless period, and it is not considered directly in predictive language.
- E. Prophecy demands our present study. It does not concern things remote, but things which are near.
- F. Time means little to the One Who inhabited eternity (Ps. 90:4; II Pet. 3:8).

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

1. The seven churches in western Asia Minor, the proconsul of 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) "John to the seven churches which are in Asia."

- A. These words are not addressed to the church of Asia, but to "the churches."
This is not the church universal, but to local churches with real visible members with problems. There are no words to an illusory body here.
- B. Each church was an assembly independent of the other, having its own angel (pastor) and looking to no higher earthly authority than itself.
- C. Why just seven churches? These seven are a prophetic revelation of the history of the church from the days of Christ to rapture. These seven churches represent seven distinct periods of church history.
- D. There were probably three other churches in Asia Minor: Colosse (Col. 1:2), Hierapolis (Col. 4:13), and Troas (Acts 20:6-7).
- G. Seven stands for completeness and perfection. In the Book of Revelation the number "7" occurs 49 times, or seven times seven. This book is the complete and perfection revelation of God concern the things to come upon this earth.

(3) "Grace unto you, and peace."

- A. "Grace" was the usual Greek salutation, "peace" the Hebrew.
- B. Grace and peace are characteristic of this present age. Grace stands opposed to law and peace to war.
- C. When the church age ceases at the rapture, justice and war are sent on the Gentiles and Israel.
- D. There would be strife and suffering in the world, but they would enjoy grace and peace in their hearts.

(4) "From him which is, and which was, and which is to come."

- A. With variations, this expression occurs five times (1:4,8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5).
- B. This is the first in a series of divine titles following verse 8. The unspeakable and incommunicable name of God---the Jehovah of Israel---the I AM (Ex. 3:14).

(5) "From the seven Spirits which are before his throne."

- A. Some say the Holy Spirit in His sevenfold perfection and diversity of operations.
 - a. angels in this book are never described by *pneuma* but by *angelos*.
 - b. why would created beings be joined with persons in the Godhead in the salutation?
 - c. the Holy Spirit is seen here in His complete and perfections (Isa. 11:2; Zech. 4:1-10).
- B. Others say it is the seven angels mentioned later in this book (1:20; 8:2,6;15:1).
 - a. before the throne implies inferiority, hardly a position for a member of the

Godhead.

- b. note how the angels are mentioned in Matthew 13:41 and compare with Revelation 14.
- c. it is best to make this the Holy Spirit and a greeting from the trinity.

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

(1) "And from Jesus Christ."

- A. This completes the trinity, which started in verse 4. Grace and peace come from our Lord Jesus Christ and the other two divine persons.
- B. "Jesus" is composed of two syllables, signifying Jehovah-saving (Matt. 1:21).

(2) "Who is the faithful witness."

- A. Christ is the faithful Witness, for all of us at times are unfaithful. The church has not always been a faithful witness.
- B. Christ is seen here in the office of a prophet.
- C. It is impossible for Christ to lie. Thus all His promises and threatenings may be fully relied upon as absolute truth (Isa. 11:5).
- D. As a prophet, Christ is the faithful Witness (Isa. 55:4; John 8:18; 18:37; Rev. 3:14).
- E. The word "witness" (Greek *martus*) is the source of our word "martyr." He was a faithful witness until His death.

(3) "And the first begotten of the dead."

- A. He once was in a state of death.
- B. He 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 arose from the dead not only first in point of time but also in rank.
- C. He arose after offering the great sacrifice. Here we see His priestly office (Heb. 7:16-17, 24-26; 9:12; 10:12; 13:20).
- D. All raised from the dead before Christ were brought back to life to die again.

(4) "And the prince of the kings of the earth."

- A. Christ is called the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6), the Prince of Princes (Dan. 8:25), the Prince of Life (Acts 3:15), and a Prince and a Savior (Acts 5:31).
- B. A prince is a king in preparation. Christ has now gone into Heaven to receive the kingdom (Luke 19:12-15). Later in Revelation we see Him taking the kingdom as King of kings (Rev. 19:16) and sharing the kingdom with His saints (Rev. 20:4-5).
- C. His kingly office is seen here (Ps. 2:6, 9-12; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).
- D. Some render the Greek word "prince" here as "ruler."

(5) "Unto him that loved us."

- A. There is no warrant for the changing of the past tense as Westcott-Hort revisers say.
- B. Christ loved us in the past (Gal. 2:20), and He loves us now, and He will love us to all eternity.
- C. The love of God is the grand source and spring of our salvation.

(6) "And washed us from our sins in his own blood."

- A. Some render "loosed," which is also true, but I prefer the KJV here.
- B. Only the unclean need to be washed. Sin is our uncleanness.
- C. Sin is almost all we can call our own. Its stains must be washed out.
- D. The idea of complete cleansing is seen here (Ps. 51:2,7; Isa. 1:16,18; John 13:10; I Cor. 6:11; Tit. 3:5).
- E. It is a once-for-all washing like Aaron at the inauguration of his priesthood.
- F. "By" is probably better than "in", for it was by His blood our sins were purged. The blood of Jesus took away the sins of all His servants or slaves.

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

(1) And hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father."

- A. We are no longer slaves of sin. The former slaves have become kings and priests (I Pet. 2:5,9; Rev. 5:10; 20:6).
- B. The picture of the past national priesthood of Israel (Ex. 19:5-6) is used to illustrate the present priesthood of all believers.
- C. The possibility of Israel become a kingdom of priests was conditioned on their obedience to the law, but ours is conditioned on the perfect obedience of Christ.
- D. God in Revelation is seen, not so much as the Father of all believers as in the epistles, but as the Father of Christ.
- E. Please note it is the same persons who are loved that are washed and made kings and priests. It is the same "us" in these verses.

(2) "To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

- A. There is an allusion here to Daniel 7:14.
- B. "Glory" pertains to the exalted spiritual state of our Lord, and "dominion" to His absolute sovereignty.
- C. "For ever and ever" denotes a period of which has no end---"to the ages of the ages." It is used 10 times of God and Christ, and 4 times of the reign of the saints, torment of Babylon, the image worshippers, the Devil, the beast, and the false prophet.
- D. "Amen" means "so be it." It is derived from the word "believe," which means "to regard as true."

3. A prophetic testimony (v. 7).

(1) "Behold, he cometh."

- own
- A. "Behold" is the imperative form of the verb "see" or "look." Look for your own interest and benefit.
 - B. This is the post-trib coming back to the earth to reign---the unveiling of Christ with which this book is so much concerned (Matt. 24:29-30).
 - C. Here a distant event is spoken of as taking place in the present time.
 - D. The second coming of Christ is a most important article of the Christian faith. It is necessary to vindicate the justice of God's moral government in the world.

(2) "With clouds."

- A. In the Old Testament 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).
- B. When Christ comes to earth to reign he comes in clouds (Dan. 7:13-14; Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; Rev. 14:4).
- C. Christ went away with a cloud (Acts 1:11).
- D. At the rapture we go up to meet Christ in the clouds (I Thess. 4:17).

(3) "And every eye shall see him."

- A. There is a twofold manifestation. At His first advent He was manifested to all but after His resurrection only to His disciples. At the second coming it will be reversed.
- B. This clause is in sharp contrast with Hebrew 9:28. This is Revelation 19:11.
- C. This speaks of the universality of His revelation and manifestation---every eye on the earth (Matt. 24:27).

(4) "And they also that pieced him."

- A. This is a quotation from Zechariah 12:10, and it is a reference to the nation of Israel (Acts 2:22-23; 3:14-15).
- B. This is the events of Zechariah 12:10-13:1.
- C. John saw the spear that pierced His side (John 19:33-37; Ps. 22:16).
- D. "Every eye" is much wider than Israel.

(5) "And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

- A. This is wider than Israel and refers to all living Gentile nations on earth (Matt. 24:30; Rev. 5:9; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6).
- B. This is not a picture of an already converted world that the post-millennialists tell us about.
- C. II Thessalonians 1:8-9 and Revelation 6:16-17 give the reason for their mourn-

ing. See also Rev. 9:20-21; 14:6; 15:4; 16:9,11,21.
(6) "Even so, Amen" (22:20).

- A. The first is the Greek; the second is Hebrew word for affirmation. "Yes, yes, Come Lord Jesus!"
- B. It is addressed to Gentile and Jew.

IV. THE DIVINE SPEAKER (1:8).

1. "I am"---the self-existing and ever-existing One (Ex. 3:14). The verb indicates being but not becoming. Christ, the coming One, is eternal, essential, and un-originated deity---the Lord God of the Old Testament.
2. "Alpha and Omega" (21:6; 22:13). This is the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet---the A and O.

- (1) By use of the alphabet, the knowledge of the ages is stored in written records.
- (2) Christ conveys the whole revelation of truth from God to man.
- (3) The dignity of the Speaker demands profound attention.
- (4) Christ is the source, the beginning of truth revealed, all promises given, and all testimony committed.
- (5) His glory is the goal. Everything finds its answer in Him. Note here the trinity of Christ's being. Also what was said of the Father in verse 4 is here said of Christ.

3. "Which is, which was, and which is to come" (4:8; 11:17; 16:5).

- (1) This terminology is a close equivalent of Hebrews 13:8. Christ is the omnipresent One---the One who transcends time.
- (2) This name speaks of the eternity of Jesus Christ.

4. "The Almighty."

- (1) The Greek word occurs 9 times in Revelation (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 14; 19:6,15; 21:22). In Revelation 19:6 it is translated "omnipotent." The only other place it is found in the New Testament is II Corinthians 6:18.
- (2) The work denotes more than omnipotence; it has the sense of universal rulership or sovereignty.
- (3) In the Hebrew it is *shaddai*---"the sufficient One." The Greek *pantokrator* means "the One of all power."

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

1. The island of Patmos (v. 9).

- (1) "I John" (21:2; 22:8). The name of the apostle John occurs elsewhere only in 1:1 1:4. Compare with "I Daniel" (7:28; 9:2; 10:2).
- (2) "Who also am your brother."

- A. John identifies himself to the churches, and he identifies himself with them.
- B. "Brother" expresses equality and fellowship. "Your" (plural) includes the entire membership of the seven churches.
- C. The aged apostle merely considers himself one of the brothers.

(3) "And companion in tribulation."

- A. "Companion" in the Greek means "sharer" or "partaker." It shows how the churches and John were undergoing tribulation (John 16:33; Acts 14:22).
- B. This is probably A.D. 96. Domitian ruled in Rome from A.D. 81-96. He was one of the cruelest of the Roman emperors and hated Christians.
- C. To make this the great tribulation is faulty exegesis.

(4) "In the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

- A. John and all the members of the seven churches were in the kingdom of God
- B. Suffering tribulation produces patience (Rom. 5:3-5), and such patience would give to them an abundant entrance into the millennial kingdom (Matt. 5:10).
- C. Note the closeness of relations between the Lord and His people (Matt. 25:40, 45; Acts 9:4).
- D. We are now in His kingdom and patience, and we shall be in His kingdom of glory, which is yet to be manifest.
- E. Christ is patiently waiting His manifestation in glory (II Thess. 3:5).

(5) "Was in the isle that is called Patmos." This was 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 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.

- A. Common Christians were martyred, but the more famous like John were sent in exile.
- B. Here we learn the places in this book are to be taken literal, unless there is sufficient reason to the contrary.
- C. This exile did not separate John from Christ nor limit his testimony.

(6) "For the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus."

- A. "For" (*dia*) means "because of" or "on account of."
- B. John did not take up residence to receive the vision as some teach.
- C. 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 people. Thank God for him! Give us more Johns!
- D. "The testimony of Jesus" refers to the doctrine peculiar to the New Testament.
- E. John had been preaching for about 60 years at this time.

2. The Lord's Day or the Christian Sabbath (v. 10).

(1) "I was in the Spirit."

- A. "Was" means literally "became," hence the sense "came to be" (4:2).
- B. "In the Spirit" occurs again in 4:2; 17:3; 21:10. Compare with Ezekiel 2:2; 3:12,14; 8:3; 11:1,24; 43:5; Acts 10:10-11; 22:17-18).
- C. It means to be under the influence and guidance of the Spirit as he worshipped.

(2) "On the Lord's day"---the first day of the week, the day of Christian worship and rest.

- A. The construction is used only one other place. I Corinthians 11:20 says: "The Lord's supper."
- B. The Lord's day is no ordinary day, nor is the Lord's Supper any ordinary supper. The Lord's Supper is fitly associated with the Lord's Day, for often we have the supper on Sunday.
- C. 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.
- D. A number of premillennialists make this to be the day of the Lord, but chapters 1-3 belong to this dispensation.

(3) "And I heard behind me a great voice."

- A. "I heard" occurs 28 times and "I saw" 44 times in this book.
- B. The word "great" occurs 82 times. Revelation is the "great" Book of the Bible.

(4) "As of a trumpet."

- A. 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).
- B. One will sound at the Rapture of the saints (I Thess. 4:16; I Cor. 15:51-52).

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

- (1) The voice repeats the "I am." Here it is Jesus Christ, but in verse 4 it was the Father.
- (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. John was to write what he saw---an eyewitness account.
- (3) How merciful the transmission by writing. Had they been handed down by memory, how much would have remained until today?

(4) The seven assemblies actually existed in that day. They are enumerated in clockwise order.

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

(1) "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me."

- A. "Voice" is used here instead of Christ who spoke to John.
- B. John was facing westward on Patmos and turned eastward toward the seven churches.

(2) "And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks."

- A. The Greek word (*luchnia*) translated "candlestick" is better translated "lampstand."
- B. 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).
- C. John did not see seven shafts on one stand, but one shaft on one stand. This is individual and independent churches bearing the Light of the world (Matt. 5:15-16; John 8:12; Phil. 2:15).
- D. We do see the church here in all her branches, but seven local churches in Asia Minor (Rev. 1:20).
- E. "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) And in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like the Son of man."

- A. Here we see Christ as a glorified man displaying and exercising all the perfections of deity.
- B. 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.
- C. The churches are placed in a circle around Christ. Our Lord is the focal point of the whole scene. Only Christ can answer fully the lampstand in Exodus 25.
- D. The next time we see Christ in a trumpet like voice He is speaking from the open door in Heaven (4:1).
- E. Christ is seen here in the midst of His churches indicating His supervision over the churches. He acts in full authority with reference to His churches.
- F. When Christ comes again the day will break (I Pet. 1:19) and the sun rise (Mal. 4:2). The time for the lampstands and stars will have gone.

(2) "Clothed with a garment down to the foot."

- A. This form of dress corresponds with that of the Jewish high priest (Ex. 28:2,4 31, 29:5).

- B. The Jewish priesthood and ordinances were merely figures of Christ who was to come.
- C. The throne is not seen. Jesus and the churches are alone with each other. The priests had the care of the lamps. Jesus is like a priest judging leprosy in the camp.
- D. Here is the kind of clothing God approves of for men and women. There is no nudity or semi nudity among the inhabitants of Heaven.

(2) "And girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

- A. This resembles Aaron's ephod.
- B. This speaks of the dignity of His priestly judgment.

6. The head and eyes of the Priest-Judge (v. 14).

(1) "His head and his hair were white like wools, as white as snow" (Prov. 16:31;20:29).

- A. His hair looks like an English Judge. Here is seen the wisdom of the ages.
- B. Compare with Daniel 7:9-10.
- C. White hair signifies seniority, superiority, and sobriety.
- D. Here is also seen here in His eternity---the everlasting Father and the Ancient of days.

(2) "And his eyes were as a flame of fire."

- A. Here is His omniscience and His all-searching righteousness against sin and sinners (Mal. 3:3; Matt. 3:12).
- B. Here are the eyes of a Judge, piercing, penetrating, perceiving, consuming commending, and condemning (Jas. 5:9). Christ is the undecivable One.
- C. Isaiah speaks of this same Person (11:1-5).
- D. He has only the look upon His enemies to consume them (Dan. 10:6).

7. The feet and voice of the great Judge (v. 15).

(1) "And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they were burned in a furnace."

- A. The word *chalkolibanos* translated "fine brass" is a purified brass alloy, almost white, used in military armor and weapons. It was counted purer than gold itself.
- B. Fine brass is durable and shining. This speaks of the certainty of His judgment and his unyielding strength in judicial matters (Ezek. 1:7).
- C. 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 ungodly.

(2) "And his voice as the sound of many waters."

- A. 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).
- B. Waters roar (Ps. 46:3; 96:11; 98:7). The Lord roars (Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2).
- C. Christ is the unanswerable One.

8. A further description of the glorified Christ (v. 15).

(1) "And he had in his right hand seven stars."

- A. The pastors of the seven churches are in the right hand of Christ (Rev. 1:20; 3:1). Pastors are under His power, authority, and protection. He uphold 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).
- B. The responsibility of stars is to shine (Dan. 12:3; Jude 13). Pastors are to shine during the darkness of the night of the Lord's absence from earth.
- C. The stars are distinct from the lampstands. They are stars in His hand, not stars in His crown.
- D. While this does not deny the democratic idea of church government, it proves the pastors of churches are appointed and sustained by Christ (Jer. 3:15; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).
- E. If they are faithful, none can pluck them out of His hand; if unfaithful, none can deliver them out of it.
- F. Pastors are nearer Christ than even His churches. They are under His special observance and judgment.
- G. All saints are in the hands of God (John 10:28-29).

(2) "And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."

- A. The word *romphaia* means "a large, broad, tongue shaped sword of Thracian origin.
- B. 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).
- C. The spoken word of God, or the written Word of God is like a sword (Heb. 4:12).
- D. Christ is the invincible One.
- E. As the Son of man, He is the Avenger appointed by God (I Thess. 4:6), and the rest of this book is the proof of this.
- F. This comes after the stars, as if to say those in high place will be more severely judged (Jas. 3:1).

(3) "And his countenance was as the sun shining."

- A. 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).
- B. This is not sunrise or sunset, but the sun as it appears at noon.

for I know their works
& their thoughts

THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

I. THE CHURCH, THE CITY, AND THE CHRIST (2:1).

1. The church---"Unto the angel of the church."

- (1) This church was founded by the apostle Paul about A.D. 58 (Acts 19:1-9). Paul continued to teach the church for about two years (Acts 19:10).
- (2) Many were converted and added to the church (Acts 19:10-20). Finally, violent opposition forced Paul to leave for Macedonia (Acts 20:1).
- (3) Paul left Timothy to pastor the church (I Tim. 1:2-3). Paul never returned to the church, but he did meet with the elders in Miletus (Acts 20:28-32).
- (4) It seems from the letter dictated by Christ and transmitted by John some 38 years later the church had not given much heed to Paul's warning.
- (5) It is not said "the church of Ephesus," but "in Ephesus." This was a single congregation with one pastor. It represented Christ in that city.
- (6) This church was nearest John. It was about 50 miles northeast of Patmos. John lived in this city before he was exiled.

2. The city---"at Ephesus."

- (1) The word "Ephesus" means "to let go" or "relaxation." This church is a typical picture of spiritual decline and departure from God---a backslidden church.
- (2) 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. After his exile, John returned to this city.
- (3) It was the capital and largest city of the province of Asia (modern Turkey) and a great seaport. It had political, religious, and commercial greatness.
- (4) In this city was the Temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world. It took 200 years to build at the expense of all Asia (Acts 19:28).
- (5) Ephesus was noted for its magnificent theater (Acts 19:29), which seated about 50,000 people.

3. The Christ---"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."

- (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 not 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.

II. THE COMMENDATION (2:2-3,6).

1. The church took a stand against false teachers (v. 2).

- (1) "I know"---Christ can neither be deceived nor surprised concerning His church (Isa. 66:18).
- (2) "Thy works and labours." She was a working church, a veritable beehive. They were not satisfied to hold their own.

- (3) "And thy patience." They work and waited on the Lord (Heb. 12:1; Gal. 6:9). Money *AND* numbers did not impress them (Rev. 13:10; 14:12).
- (4) "How thou canst bear them which are evil." They believed in a regenerated church membership. They did not tolerate heretics.
- (5) "And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

- A. They were careful about their pulpit.
- B. They put false apostles to the test and found them to be religious liars (II Cor. 11:13-15).
- C. Scholarly and influential preachers did not impress them, unless they were sound (Ps. 119:104,128).

- 2. They were a hard working church (v. 3).
- 3. This orthodox church hated the deeds of heretics (v. 6).

- (1) The word "Nicolaitanes" comes from *nikao* ("to conquer") and *laos* ("people")---from which comes the English word "laity," hence "laity-conquerors."
- (2) They were like Diotrephes (III John 9). They were church leaders who lorded over God's heritage. Here is the beginning of priest craft (Rev. 2:15).
- (3) They mixed Christianity with pagan impurities. It was the idea that worldliness cannot harm a Christian---antinomianism.
- (4) Nicolaitanism is seen in our day in pastors and deacons setting themselves in authority over the churches.

III. THE COMPLAINT (v. 4).

- 1. This church was doctrinally sound, but it had lost much of its early love for Christ.
- 2. The chief love of a church is Jesus Christ, not soul winning. They hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, but they did not love Christ enough.
- 3. Some are so involved in fighting heresy they forget to love Christ. A loud cry against heretics ~~are~~ no proof of real love for Jesus Christ.

IV. THE COUNSEL (V. 5).

- 1. The whole church needed to repent, for it was a backslidden church.
- 2. They must remember and repent---return to the first love and first work.
- 3. Christ threatens immediate punishment if they did not repent and reform.
- 4. The removal of the candlestick out of his place is the removal of the church from the city.
Or, the meaning may be it will cease to be a New Testament church even though it continue a physical existence. It would be a body without a Head.
- 5. A church without love for Christ is a worthless candlestick; Ichabod should be written over its door.

V. THE COMFORT (v. 7).

- 1. Verse 7 is an individual promise to any faithful member.
- 2. The overcomer is the born-again believer (I John 2:13; 4:4; 5:4-5).
- 3. The undefeated church member is promised the privilege of partaking of the tree of life (Gen. 2:9; 3:22,24; Rev. 22:2,14).
- 4. Church members are divided into victors and vanquished. The victory is not to every warrior who enter the battle, nor will the crown be awarded to all.

Ep 18
 1:15
 3:17-19
 5:1, 25
 6:24

THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA

I. THE CHURCH (2:8).

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.
4. The churches of today which are like Smyrna are found in Russia, China, Spain, Sudan, etc.

II. THE CITY (2:8).

1. This city still survives today as Izmir, in Turkey. It is on the Aegean Sea at the bottom of the Marmorean Gulf. It dates from about 1500 B.C., having been founded by some piratical Greeks. It was located 35 miles north of Ephesus at the mouth of a small river, Meles. It was one of the most beautiful Greek cities ever erected, it was called "The Lovely" and "The Ornament of Asia."
2. The whole religious pantheon was represented there: temples existed to Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, Asclepius, Demeter, and Cybele. This ring of heathen temples around the city was called the "Crown of Ionia." As early as 196 B. C. a temple had been built to emperor worship, which was compulsory.
3. Smyrna received its name from her traffic in the Balsam herb for which it was famous. The same Greek word translated "Smyrna" in Revelation 2:8 is also translated "myrrh" in Matthew 2:11 and John 19:39.
4. Myrrh was used in making perfume (Ps. 45:8). It was an ingredient of the holy anointing oil for the priests (Ex. 30:23), and for the purification of women (Est. 2:12).
5. Myrrh was associated with the first coming of Christ (Matt. 2:11; Mark 15:23; John 19:39-40), but in the second advent He appears without myrrh (Isa. 60:6). He returns as the Sovereign, not the Sufferer.
6. The Greek word *smurna* is of Semitic origin. The Hebrew root means "bitter." This church was in bitter sorrow and suffering.

III. THE CHIRST (2:8).

1. Once again Christ is revealed to them in the best way suited to comfort them in their circumstances and condition.
2. The two natures of Christ can be seen in His twofold description.
3. 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.
4. "Which was dead, and is alive." I have been through what you are suffering on account of your faith and fidelity. Death did its worst to Me, but I conquered.
5. There is life after death for those who are Christians (John 11:25-26; 14:19).

IV. THE COMMENDATION (2:9).

1. "I know thy works." This was a working church. It suffered but it also worked.
2. "And tribulation."
 - (1) They were being subjected to persecution, affliction and oppression. They were in a city which worshipped many gods.
 - (2) Jesus promised the church tribulation (John 16:33) and so did Paul (II Tim. 3:12). John had experienced some of it (Rev. 1:9).

3. "And poverty (but thou art rich)."

- (1) It cost something to be a Christian. The angel and the church were poor.
- (2) They had treasures in Heaven (Prov. 13:7; Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 12:15; II Cor. 6:10; Heb. 10:34; Jas. 2:5).
- (3) Christ knew something of poverty (II Cor. 8:9; Matt. 8:20).

4. "And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews."

- (1) There was a large community of Jews in Smyrna. They furnished the wood to burn Polycarp.
- (2) The word "blasphemy" (it could be rendered "slander") shows that a false religious profession is blasphemy.

5. "And are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan."

- (1) They were Jews after the flesh, but not after the Spirit (Rom. 2:28; 9:6).
- (2) They had a synagogue of Satan, a false church.
- (3) Some in Ephesus want to be apostles and some in Smyrna wanted to continue the priesthood. These came together in an apostolic succession and visible priesthood with sacrifices and penances.

V. THE COMFORT (2:10).

1. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

- (1) Suffering was near at hand, but they were not to fear it (Matt. 10:28). This was a suffering church.
- (2) Suffering does not separate from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:38-39).

2. "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried."

- (1) Satan is the prime agent in the affliction of this church.
- (2) God gave Satan permission for His glory and for the vindication of His saints.
- (3) Kings and popes are instruments of the devil who was a murderer from the beginning.
- (4) The same event which is a temptation from the devil is a trial from God. He has designed suffering as a means of discipline (I Cor. 11:30-32; Heb. 12:3-13) to prevent sin (II Cor. 12:7), to teach obedience (Heb. 5:8; Rom. 5:3-5) and to

enable us to give a better testimony (Acts 9:16).

3. "And ye shall have tribulation ten days."

- (1) Some spiritualize this to be ten years of special persecution, or ten waves of severe persecution from Nero to Diocletian.
- (2) It is ten literal days---a brief period. Why say God mean something different from what ~~he~~ said?
- (3) If I am wrong in this literal view, I prefer to be among the wrong, rather than to believe man instead of God.
- (4) "Days" are to be taken literal (Gen. 7:4,10,12; 40:12-13; Num. 14:33).
- (5) Daniel was tested ten days (Dan. 1:12,14-15,20).
- (6) In Esther 2:13 a whole nation was to be killed in one day!

4. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

- (1) They were to be faithful to the extent they would die for their faith, not merely until they died a natural death (Acts 22:4; Rev. 12:11).
- (2) "Faithful" comes from a root which means to be convinced. They were to be convicted ^{ed} Christ would be their courage and strength in suffering.
- (3) The crown of life is the martyr's crown given to those who die for Christ and for those who suffer for Him (Jas. 1:12).
- (4) This is a special reward above the eternal life enjoyed by other saints.
- (5) Crowns are promised only to the church, not Israel or angels.

VI. THE COUNSEL (2:11).

1. There is no complaint against this church. She is the best in the bunch. Christ only urged her to be steadfast.
2. The second death is to be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14; 21:8).
3. The Greek uses a double negatives: "He that overcomes shall in no case be hurt of the second death." It means in no way can he be hurt.
4. This means they will be in the first resurrection and the bliss of the millennium (Rev. 20:6).

THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS

I. THE CHURCH (2:12).

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 19:10; 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.
3. The twin heresies of Nicolaitanism and Balaamism had made inroads into this church.

II. THE CITY (2:12).

1. Pergamos was the capital city of Mysia, a Roman province in the northeast of Asia Minor. It was 45 miles north of Smyrna and 75 miles north of Ephesus. In a legend it was supposed to be founded by a son of Hercules on a lofty hill.
2. "Pergos" means "high and lofty" or "the tower." This name arose from its high altitude. *"GAM" signifies "to unite, a union, or marriage"*
3. Pergamos was the seat of the Roman government in the province of Asia during the time of John the apostle
4. In this city there was a royal library of 200,000 volumes---and all of this some 1500 years before the printing press. These books were all hand written.
5. Religiously, it as the headquarters of heathen worship and the home of pagan divinities. It contained temples to Aesculapius, Jupiter, Bacchus, Minerva, Apollos and Venus. The worship of these was attended by gross immoralities.
6. It was the first city to establish the worship of the Roman emperor.

III. THE CHRIST (2:12).

1. Christ has a sharp two-edged sword for retributive justice (Matt. 10:34; Rev. 1:16; 19:15). This denotes the authority of His Word (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 threatened them with His sword.

IV. THE COMMENDATION (2:13).

1. Christ knew the setting and environment of this church. This church as surrounded by gross immorality, intellectual paganism, false science, religious fanaticism and hostile governmental powers.
2. "Satan's seat" is properly "Satan's throne."
 - (1) Some make this the altar of Zeus, which had the appearance of at throne, towering 800 feet.
 - (2) Others say it was the famous library with its heathen literature.
 - (3) Still others say it was the temple erected to the worship of the Roman emperor, Augustus.
 - (4) It may have been the seat of the ancient religions of Babylon, which had existed from the days of Nimrod. It has been moved from Babylon to Pergamos and

later to Rome.

- (4) Satan's throne is not in Hell, nor has Satan ever yet been to Hell. His throne is on earth where he is the head of the world systems (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; I John 4:3-4; 5:19). His greatest work is through demon-controlled preachers (II Cor. 11:13-15).
- (5) It is not wrong for a church to be located near the headquarters of Satan (Matt. 16:18). *J Pa 5:13*
- (6) They upheld the name of Christ. The early Christians believed in His name (John 1:12), were saved in His name (Acts 4:12), prayed in His name (John 16:23), gathered in His name (Matt. 18:20), preached in His name (Luke 24:47) and forsook all for His name (Matt. 19:29).
- (7) 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."

V. THE COMPLAINT (2:14-15).

1. Balaam advised Balak and the princes of Moab to use the Moabite and Midnite 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.
3. God's people always fall under His displeasure when they compromise with evil workers.
4. The reference to the Nicolaitanes is now to their doctrine. What was deeds in the church at Ephesus (2:6) is now become doctrine.
5. The Pergamities had not kept out false teachers, as had the church at Ephesus. They had not embraced their doctrine, but they allowed them to preach and be church members.
6. Christ hates both the deeds (2:6) and the doctrine (2:15) of heretics.

VI. THE COMMAND (2:16).

1. Christ told the church to repent. The entire church was to blame for permitting such thing to go in their assembly.
2. Christ said He would fight against the heretical church members with punishment and judgment---the sword of judgment (19:15).
3. The church needed to cease all fellowship with the Balaamites and the Nicolaitanes.

VII. THE COMFORT (2:17).

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. This may be literal manna like the Israelites ate.
2. "A white stone"---a token of acquittal and victory. *(9:12)*
3. "A new name" known only to the receiver (Isa. 62:2; Rev. 3:12; 19:12). 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.

THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA

I. THE CHURCH (2:18).

1. This church may have been founded by Paul and Silas during their visit at Philippi when they preached to Lydia (Acts 16:14-15).
2. It could have been that Epaphras (Col. 4:12) or Archippus preached here (Col. 4:17). It is the longest letter to any church.

II. THE CITY (2:18).

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 the northern extremity of the valley between Mount Tmolus and the southern ridge of Temnus.
2. It was 27 miles from Sardis and 35 miles southeast of Pergamos, and about the same distance from the seacoast.
3. The principle deity of the city was Apollo, worshipped as the sun-god under the surname Tyrinnas. *v u s*
4. The city was known for "wool workers, linen workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leather workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave dealers, and bronze smiths" (Ramsey).
5. Her most celebrated trade was the production of purple dye (possibly closer to scarlet) that was obtained from a madder root, a plant grown in the area. Some say it came from crushing a shell-fish from the Lycus River which flowed through the town.

III. THE CHRIST (2:18).

1. The term "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. The title "Son of God" occurs only here in the entire book. It denotes the deity of Christ in contrast with His humanity.
3. In view of the low spiritual condition of the church, it was important that they know they were dealing with One possessed of all the attributes of deity (Gen. 16:13; John 2:24-25)
4. Christ sees through all masks and all coverings (Heb. 4:13). He is omniscient as well as almighty.
5. "Eyes like unto a flame of fire." Christ has the power of penetration into the very reigns of the heart of a man or church. There is no hiding from Him.
6. "Feet are like fine brass." Here are feet which trample down everything unclean and hostile. Brass is a symbol of judgment (Num. 21:9).

IV. THE COMMENDATION (2:19).

1. They not only worked for Christ, but they were working more for Him than they did in times past.
2. "Charity" means "love." Love led the list, a thing lacking at Ephesus (2:4)
3. Their activities sprang from their faith.
4. "The last to be more than the first"---this church seem to be making spiritual progress.

3. Her progeny (v. 23).

- (1) "Her children"---base born children born as a results of her adultery (II Sam. 12:14; II Kings 10:7).
- (2) Some say this merely means the people who embraced her teachings. I disagree.
- (3) To kill with death means by pestilence here in the Greek. The plague would be readily identifiable as a divine judgment.
- (4) "All the churches" in Asia Minor. Jesus is recognizing some churches here other than the seven addressed.
- (5) In our day open sexual sins are committed by church members without protest from the church. Marriage and divorce are common.
- (6) Judgment is always according to works.

VII. THE CONSIDERATION (2:24).

1. The whole church was not defiled. There was a sound remnant owned by Christ. They are called "the rest" and "as many as have not this doctrine."
2. They were not told to leave the church, but to stand up for the truth.
3. Christ shows compassion toward the consecrated few members in this compromising church.
4. The godly suffered because they had failed to purify the church of such ungodly members.
5. "The depth of Satan." Those seduced by Jezebel had engaged in the deep things of Satan. God has His divine depths (I Cor. 2:10; Rom. 11:33).

VIII. THE COUNSEL (2:25).

1. Keep the faith until I return.
2. The proper attitude of any church is to hold fast the faith in view of Christ imminent return. Christ did not tell this church to hold fast until Antichrist came.
3. They must continue to stand apart from Satan's deception.
4. "Till I come" shows this message is to all churches until the rapture.

IX. THE COMFORT (2:26-29).

1. The right to rule with Christ over the nations (Ps. 2:7-9; Dan. 7:22; Rev. 5:10; 20:4-6). The overcomer will share in the rule which the Father has given Christ (Luke 22:29; I Tim. 2:120).
2. The morning star is Christ (Rev. 22:16; Num. 24:17). The Savior will give the overcomers a personal interest in Himself.
3. The morning star heralds the promise of full day. When Christ comes he will turn the 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-year tribulation period he will come as "the Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2) to Israel at the beginning of the glad millennial day.

5. Is your last state worse than your first (Matt. 12:45; II Pet. 2:20)? Or, is your faith growing and your love increasing (II Thess. 1:3)?

V. THE COMPLAINT (2:20-21).

1. Jezebel in the Old Testament was a promoter of whoredoms and witchcraft in Israel (I Kings 16:29-33; 21:25; II Kings 9:22).
2. Jezebel was a female of great rank and influence in the church who seduced members of the church to mix heathen impurities with the worship of God.
3. The demon that controlled Jezebel of old controlled this woman in the church. Some versions have "thy wife Jezebel," meaning she was the pastor's wife.
4. "Which calleth herself a prophetess."

(1) She falsely professed herself a prophetess. The New Testament knows of but few prophetesses (Luke 2:36; Acts 21:9).

(2) "Calleth herself" indicates she was a self-proclaimed prophetess.

5. "To teach my servants" contrary to I Timothy 2:12. Balaam was outside; Jezebel was inside the church.
6. "To seduce (Greek *Plana*) my servants" or "deceive" or "lead astray."
7. "To commit fornication, and to eat things offered unto idols."

(1) She probably said sexual license was merely physical and did not harm the spirit. Such a practice would be a means of winning converts to the church.

(2) To eat things offered to idols violated the decision of the Jerusalem council (Acts 16:29).

- 5'
8. Though given opportunity to repent, she repented not (v. 21).

(1) "Repentance" means "a change of mind."

(2) We are left under the belief that she had no hope of recovery. Christ accuses people to their face; the Devil to their back.

(3) There is spiritual fornication---the misuse of things sacred (Jer. 3:6; Ezek. 23:19; Hos. 9:1).

(4) It may well be that Jezebel was guilty in both ways.

VI. THE COMMAND (2:22-23). There is a threefold judgment:

1. On her person---"I will cast her into bed." The bed of pleasure would become the bed of pain---most likely a death bed (II Kings 9:32-36).
2. On her partners---"And them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation."

(1) This proves Jezebel was a real woman, not a religious sect as some say.

(2) She was a married woman, and she had committed adultery with some of the male members of the church.

(3) "Great tribulation" here does not have the definite article as it does in Rev. 7:14.

(4) Only repentance could prevent their judgment.

THE CHURCH AT SARDIS

I. THE CHURCH (3:1).

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.

II. THE CITY (3:1).

1. The word "Sardis" means "escaping ones." It is also the name of a precious stone.
2. 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.
3. It was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, and it was situated at the foot of Mount Timolus, 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.
4. This was the home of King Croesus and of Aesop. A small remnant of the city still exists, but the most has been in ruins for over 500 years.

III. THE CHRIST (3:1).

1. The "seven Spirits of God" describe the one Holy Spirit in His sevenfold office (Isa. 11:1-5). The Spirit in all His perfection and fullness.
2. Christ has the fullness 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 this church 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.
5. Some make the seven spirits seven celestial beings, saying Christ cannot have power over the Holy Spirit, but in the covenant the Spirit took a subordinate role to the Father and the Son.
6. Christ has the Spirit and supplies the Spirit in this church age (Acts 2:1; John 14:25).
7. In Revelation 2:1 it is "holdeth" (*krateo*) but here it is "hath" (*echo*).

IV. THE CENSURE (3:1).

1. There is no commendation for good works---a dead church has no good works. There is no need to condemn a thing which is dead.
2. She professed to have true spiritual life, but it was in name only. She was a sham and a mockery.
3. The pastor, the deacons, the teachers, and leaders were spiritual^{ly} dead. They were cold, worldly, drowsy, and neglectful of spiritual matters.
4. There was little lacking in outward appearance of this church. It had the reputation for being a progressive church. It was probably well attended and well advertised.
5. We know it was dead because Christ said so (1 Sam. 16:7). It was a corpse wrapped

in grave clothes.

V. THE COMMAND (3:2-3).

1. "Be watchful" or "become awake and on the watch" (Vincent). Their hope and expectation of Christ's return had faded away.
2. "Strengthen the things which remain." They were to strengthen their weak points (Neh. 4:20). This refers to the ordinances and worship services, which they still kept up.
3. "That are ready to die" or "that are about to die." The last spark of life was about to die. Even the minority was about ready to quit. As a church they were not fulfilling the purpose for which¹ instituted His church.
4. "For I have not found thy works perfect before God."

(1) It was not so much what He does find as what he did not find. They were not full or complete.

(2) They had a name among men but not "before God."

5. "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent."

(1) These memories would be a major step in leading the church to repent.

(2) Vainly do we forget, if Christ remembers.

(3) "Hast received" indicates the blessings had not changed but the church had changed.

(4) A church nearly dead needs to repent. While there is life, there is hope.

6. The coming of Christ.

(1) Christ will come unexpectedly and with devastating suddenness (Rev. 16:15; Matt. 24:42-44).

(2) Cyrus came upon Sardis as a thief in the night and conquered the city.

(3) Some worldly church members (as well as lost church members) will be engaged in Christ-dishonoring activities at the rapture (I John 2:28). To the watching bride Christ will not be a thief (I Thess. 5:2,4).

(4) The last words are double negatives in the Greek---"by no means will you know" (Robertson).

VI. THE CONSIDERATION (3:4).

1. "But thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments."

(1) This implies a church roll book (Acts 1:15; I Tim. 5:9).

(2) In former churches a few were wrong; in Sardis a few were right. In the early churches there were many declensions from sound doctrine.

(3) The word "few" (*oligos*) means "small, slight, little."

(4) Thank God for the faithful few, God's remnant, the Master's minority.

(5) "Garment" is used figuratively to denote the conduct and character of the individual in the church. There is a life-style unstained by defilement (Jas. 1:27;

Ps. 119:1).

(6) Amidst evil examples, a few can be undefiled before God (Jude 23). This few was not told to leave the church.

(7) White-clothed priests to the temple of the mother-goddess Cybele in Sardis was a familiar sight to the citizens. Christians would not share in these processions.

(8) "They shall walk with me in white."

A. "White" denotes spotless purity. It is the clothing of angels (Matt. 28:3; Mark 16:5; John 20:12; Acts 1:10), of the saints (Rev. 4:4; 6:11; 7:9,13; 19:8), and of Christ (Dan. 7:9; Mark 9:3; Rev. 14:14; 19:11,14; 20:11).

B. "Walk" implies spiritual life, for only the living walk. Here is perfect communion with Christ (Gen. 5:24).

(9) "For they are worthy."

A. Worthy to walk with Me in white.

B. They ^{are} worthy of the kingdom and first resurrection (Luke 20:35; 21:36; II Thess. 1:5).

VI. THE COMFORT (3:5-6).

1. "Clothed in white raiment." They had not defiled their garments, so they are given white raiment.

2. "I will not blot out his name."

(1) There is no need to make a difference between the book of life and the Lamb's book of life as some do here.

(2) Disloyal citizens in Sardis had their names blotted from the register.

(3) Christ is not threatening to remove a name, but He is encouraging the overcomer. The verse does not indicate the possibility of names being blotted out, but the impossibility.

(4) The names of God's elect were in this book before the foundation of the world, and the name of the non-elect were never there (Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28; Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1; Rev. 13:8; 17:8).

3. "But I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

(1) Those who confessed Christ's name in Sardis may have lost family and friends.

(2) These unknown names on earth would be well known in Heaven (Matt. 20:32-33; Luke 12:8-9).

js

THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA

Rev. 3:7-13

I. THE CHURCH (3:7).

1. The Lord Jesus had nothing but commendation for this church. We might call it an ideal church. I would have like to be a member of this 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."

II. THE CITY (3:7).

1. The word "Philadelphia" means "brotherly love."
2. 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 Timolus.
3. It 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.
4. 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.
5. The city was subject to many earthquakes. Its modern name is Ala-Sheher, which means "the city of God."

III. THE CHRIST (3:7).

1. The description of Christ in each of these letters is adapted to the condition of the church.
2. "Holy" means Jesus Christ in His person is essentially holy. Holiness is an attribute of deity (Rev. 6:10).
3. "True" means Jesus Christ is the perfection of truth (John 1:9,14,17; 8:40; 14:6; 18:37; I John 5:20). "Holy" means right in character; "true" means right in conduct.
4. "The key of David."

(1) Eliakim had the key to the royal treasury of King David (Isa. 22:20-22). He was the steward of all the palace of David.

(2) The verse teaches Christ has the crown rights to the throne of David (Isa. 9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 15:16; Rev. 11:15-17).

5. Christ has the power to open and shut.

(1) He has the power to open and shut the kingdom of Heaven. When Peter opened the door of the kingdom he left it open.

(2) He has power over life and death (Rev. 1:18).

(3) He has power to open and close the gates of the New Jerusalem.

(4) He has power to open the bottomless pit (Rev. 9).

(5) He has power to put Satan in jail (Rev. 20:1-3,7-10).

(6) Christ possesses administrative powers over His churches. He does not share

this

power with some earthly clergy. Christ can veto the decision of any church!

IV. THE COMMENDATION (3:8).

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 (I Cor. 16:9; II Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3).

2. This church did not pray for doors to be opened, for they were already open.

3. Opportunities for service are granted in proportion to diligence. Many fail to see the opened doors being blinded by greed and pleasure. How many door have we failed to enter.

4. "Thou hast a little strength."

(1) They had little strength in themselves being small in numbers. Their power came from Christ (I Cor. 3:7; II Cor. 12:9).

(2) Too many churches depend on their wealth, promotional schemes, and the eloquence of their pulpit.

5. "Hast kept my word."

(1) They loved and obeyed the Word (John 14:21,23). They had not gone modern.

(2) Many churches repudiate the Word, dilute it, allegorize it, or ignore it.

6. "Not denied my name."

(1) They would not publicly renounce Christ before cruel magistrates (Matt. 10:22; Acts 5:28-29, 40-41).

(2) They would not deny His kingly authority over the earth.

(3) Those who deal loosely with the Word will soon deny the name of Christ.

V. THE CONFIRMATION (3:9).

1. A Jewish synagogue bitterly opposed this church. All opposition to the Lord's church is from the Prince of Darkness.

2. The door of salvation in this age is mostly closed to the Jews. They deny Jesus is the Messiah.

3. 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!

4. This will literally be fulfilled in the millennium (Luke 22:30). Israel will acknowledge her error and testify to the faithfulness of true churches.

5. "I have love thee" (Eph. 5:25).

VI. THE CONSOLATION (3:10).

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 the earth."
3. The ultimate fulfillment of this awaits the rapture and the seven-year 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.
4. The hour of trial is the tribulations, which comes later in this book. This is the tribulation going on when Christ comes back to earth (Matt. 24:29-30).
5. These are to try the earth dwellers, not the church. These people have their home and treasuries on earth. They are unsaved.
6. This implies the church will not longer be on earth when the tribulation comes (Luke 21:36).
7. Why should the last generation of the church go through the Great Tribulation? Church members in all other generations have escaped it.

VII. THE CROWN (3:11).

1. This verse demonstrates the means by which Christ is to deliver His churches from the period of worldwide suffering. It will be by the pre-trib rapture.
2. Those who do not weaver 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 coming. Perseverance in service is essential to reward. We may lose by misconduct a glory we had else won (II John 8).

VIII. THE COMFORT (3:12).

1. "A pillar in the temple."

(1) There may be some reference to the pillars of Solomon's temple (I Kings 7:13-22; II Chron. 3:15-17).

(2) This is probably to be taken in a symbolic sense (Gal. 2:9). The overcomer had supported Christ's work and would be remembered (II Sam. 18:18).

2. "He shall go no more out."

(1) Steadfastness in duty shall be recompensed by steadfastness in glory.

(2) This denotes fixity in existence.

3. The name of God and the city.

(1) This denotes possession and identification (Rev. 14:1; 22:40).

(2) "I will write upon him the name of God." The overcomer will wear the band of Heaven; he will bear in his body the marks of God's ownership.

4. "The city of God, which is new Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:2). The victorious believer is to be a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem (John 14:1-3; Gal. 4:26).
5. "I will write on him my new name." What is not revealed cannot be known.

IX. THE CONCLUSION (3:13).

REVELATION CHAPTER FOUR

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

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

(1) "After this I looked."

- A. In the Greek it reads: "After these things." The verse begins and ends with the same words in the original.
- B. The phrase denotes sequence or a passing from what was mentioned to what follows in order of time.
- C. This phrase and others like it occurs 7 times in this book (4:1; 7:1,9; 15:5; 18:1; 20:3), and it signifies some interval. In Rev. 20:3 there is a 1,000 year interval.
- D. A new and distinct vision is here seen. The first "I saw" occurred in 1:12.
- E. The question may be asked: After what things?
 - a. It is after the churches have ended their ministry on earth, and they have been raptured to Heaven (John 14:1-3; I Thess. 4:13-18).
 - b. The church is mentioned 19 times in the first three chapters of this book.
 - c. In Chapters 2 and 3 it is 7 times said: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." In 13:9 I read: "If any man has an ear, let him hear." The church is left out. Why if it is still on earth?
 - d. Christ is no longer seen as a priest in the midst of the lampstands (1:13; 2:1) as a priest, but Christ is in the midst of the throne in Heaven (5:6).
 - e. We are now in the third division of the Book of Revelation which concern the future (1:19). Christ is no longer dealing with His churches on earth, but the nations on earth.
 - f. There is no mention of the church on earth again until chapter 19.
 - g. During this age Christ speaks through John to the churches. Then He teaches His people through an angel and the elders.
 - h. God sends different witness in the tribulation period (Rev. 11:5-7) than during the church age (Luke 10:9). Why does God need the 144,000 Israelites, if the churches are still here on earth?
 - i. In Rev. 3:10-11 Christ promises to deliver the church from the tribulation, in the last church letter (3:14-22) He is at the door of the church.

(2) "And, behold, a door was opened in heaven."

- A. Heaven was opened to receive Enoch and Elijah, and later Paul (II Cor. 12:1-4).
- B. Here it is opened to receive John. It will be opened again in 19:11 for Christ and the saints to return from Heaven.
- C. The scene shifts from earth to the Third Heaven where God's throne is located (Ps. 103:19).
- D. Heaven is opened to let Christ and the saints in 4:1 and to let them out in 19:

11.

(3) "And the first voice I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me."

- A. John had already heard this voice (1:10).
- B. A trumpet is associated with the rapture (I Thess. 4:16; I Cor. 15:52).
- C. We are waiting for a trumpet voice to summons us to the meeting in the air.

(4) "And said, Come up hither, and I will show you things which shall be hereafter."

- A. This is what Christ says to His churches at the rapture (S. of S. 2:10; John 14:1-3; I Thess. 4:17; II Thess. 2:1).
- B. John is like a living saint which is translated (John 21:22). John was permitted to live until in a vision he saw Christ's coming.
- C. This points to 1:19. The change from "shall" to "must" means not merely there events are to be expected, but they are a part of God's predetermined plan.
- D. These things will not happen until the church is in Heaven.

2. The throne in Heaven and the throne Sitter (v. 2).

- (1) In the twinkling of an eye John is in Heaven (I Cor. 15:52). He is a type of the raptured saint. Then he begins to describe the heavenly tabernacle of which the earth was a type (Heb. 9:1-6,24). Note "in the spirit" (1:10; 17:3; 21:10).
- (2) The Greek means this throne was being set up as John looked. This vision includes the placing of a throne as well as the throne itself.
- (3) This is probably Daniel 7:9-10. See also Ezekiel 1:26-28. This is a special throne set in Heaven for the purpose of executing judgments during the tribulation period. This is not the throne of Revelation 3:21, for two are seated on it.
- (4) This is a picture of the universe under the control of God the Father (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 45 times in the Book, and only 15 in the rest of the New Testament. It opens with a throne (1:4) and closes with one (Rev. 22:3).
- (5) "One sat on the throne."

- A. This is the Father only (5:13; 7:10; 19:4).
- B. From this throne goes forth the opening of the seals, the blowing of the trumpets, and the outpouring of the bowls of wrath.

3. The description of the throne Sitter (v. 3).

- (1) John does not see a shape, for Deity has no particular shape (John 5:37). What he saw was the brilliance and glory of the Father.
- (2) The jasper stone was a clear stone, not emerald green as some say (Rev. 21:11). It was like a diamond. The idea is crystal purity or holiness.
- (3) The sardine stone was a ruby red stone. This denotes the wrath of God who sits on the throne (Ezek. 38:18).

- (4) These stones were in the breastplate of the high priest (Ex. 28:17-21). The jasper was the last and the sardine was the first. They are in the foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:19-20). The jasper is first and the sardine the sixth.
- (5) The rainbow about the throne.

- A. The rainbow is first mentioned in Genesis 9:13-16. It was originally the sign of the Noahic Covenant, mercy founded upon an acceptable sacrifice (Gen. 8).
- B. It shows the throne Sitter is a covenant-keeping God.
- C. There was a rainbow in Ezekiel's vision of the throne (1:26-28). Noah's bow was semi-circular, consisting of the seven primary colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. The rainbow of John and Ezekiel was a complete circle and Jasper in color.
- D. The bow is seen again in Revelation 10:1.
- E. The terrible tribulation storm comes from the throne, like the flood did.
- F. The bow around the throne means judgment is mingled with mercy (Hab. 3:3).
- G. Note in the three stones the trinity. Jasper is God the Father. The Sardine is red or fleshy color, denoting Christ who became a man and shed His blood. The emerald represents the Holy Spirit. Cotton said this in the 1600s.

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

1. The twenty-four elders in Heaven (v. 4).

- (1) The word "seat" is the Greek word *thronos*, the same word translated "throne" in 4:2. These are smaller or lower thrones than where the Father sits (Dan. 7:9-10).
- (2) Who are these favored persons, seated in state, and dignified with crowns?

- A. Some say they are angels, but angels are never called "elders." They are all the same age, having been created at one time.
- B. The term "elder" is used to describe men as representatives of local synagogues (Matt. 15:2; 16:21) or representatives of local churches (Acts 20:17,28; Jas. 5:14).
- C. No elders are seen in Heaven in Isaiah 6 or Ezekiel 1 because prior to the resurrection of Christ all the redeemed were in the Paradise section of Sheol.

(3) Other facts---

- A. They are redeemed men (Rev. 5:8-10).
- B. They have thrones which are promised to the saints (Matt. 19:28; Rev. 2:26; 20:4).
- C. They wear crowns which are promised to the saints (II Tim. 4:8; Jas. 1:12; I Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10; 3:11).
- D. They wear white raiment, the attire of the saints (Rev. 3:5,18; 6:11; 7:9).

(4) Why are they 24 in number?

- A. The O.T. priesthood was represented by 24 orders of priests who served two

- D. The Holy Spirit is the true Light of God's throne. Like a torch, He is self-sustaining.
- E. The Holy Spirit in the completeness of His ministry is seen ready to execute judgment on the earth.

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

1. The sea of glass and the four living creatures (v. 6).

- (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 are said to stand on it (Rev. 15:2). The sea before the throne is motionless, for completely sanctified people dwell there.
- (3) The tabernacle was placed in the midst of the camp of Israel, so is 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 natural sea pictures the restless mind of man (Isa. 57:20). This sea in which John sees must picture the calm and eternal mind of God.
- (5) 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 "beast" is *zoa* in the Greek, and it means "living creatures." They are not deity, for they are called creatures. Deity was 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.
- E. They remind us of the seraphim (Isa. 6:1-6) and the cherubims (Ezek. 1:5-28).
- F. The lion, the calf, the man, and the birds are the creatures of earth. Do these symbolize the variety in creation that brings glory to God?

3. The appearance of these creatures (v. 7).

- (1) Ezekiel's cherubim was also a living creature (Ezek. 1:2; 10:15).
- (2) Again we see the standards of the order of Israel camped around the tabernacle

weeks each (I Chron. 23:3-5).

- B. There were 24 who served the house of God (I Chron. 23:3-4). God was praised by 24 instruments of music (I Chron. 25:31). There were 24 porters (I Chron. 26:17-19).
- C. The 24 elders are the chief priests of the heavenly course (Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10; 20:6).
- D. Israel was to be priests (Ex. 19:5-6) and so are New Testament believers (I Pet. 2:5,9).

(5) They are dressed like priests.

- A. White garments (4:4) are the ordinary clothing of priests (Ex. 28:42; Lev. 6:10; 16:4).
- B. They have harps, songs, and golden bowls, priestly items (I Chron. 25:3-6; 5:11-13).

(6) They are real men.

- A. The elders of Israel are the twelve sons of Jacob (Ezek. 48:31-34; Rev. 21:12) and the twelve apostles are the elders of the church (I Cor. 12:28; Rev. 21:14).
- B. These represent the O. and N. Testament saints caught out at the rapture.
- C. Some say the elders cannot be representative since they speak as individuals (Rev. 7:13). The O.T. priesthood did just this (Isa. 37:2; Jer. 19:1).

(7) The elders disappear from the records in 19:4 just before the bride comes forth.

(8) Why are they crowned in Heaven? The rapture has occurred, for crowns are to given out when Christ comes (II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4).

(9) They constitute the united royal priesthood predicted alike of Israel and the church. They are seen here in one company redeemed and glorified.

2. The throne of judgment (v. 5).

(1) "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices."

- A. This is no throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). This is a throne of judgment.
- B. A dreadful storm is about to burst on the earth beneath (Ex. 19:16; Rev. 5:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:10).
- C. "Voices" (*phomai*) is better rendered "sounds" or "noises."

(2) "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. 1:4; 3:1).

- A. Here again is the sevenfold ministry of the Spirit (Isa. 11:2-3; I Cor. 12:4-5).
- B. The Greek word here translated "lamp" (*lampades*) means "torch." "Candlestick" in 1:12 is a different word (*luchnia*).
- C. The lamp is for indoor service. The torch is more fitted for open-air work.

(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 eagle were unclean by the law and fed on others.

(3) We also see the cherubim over the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 20:17-22; Ezek. 1:12; 10:20-22).

4. The work of the living creatures (v. 8).

(1) They have six wings like Isaiah's seraphim (Isa. 6:3). In Ezekiel they had 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 living things.

(4) "Holy, holy, holy" is a reference to the trinity.

(5) "Which was, and is, and is to come" stresses the permanence of deity as compared with time related creation. Time is an interlude that was introduced into eternity by the Eternal Being.

(6) "Lord God Almighty" (Jehovah Elohim Ehaddai) suggests God is getting ready to deal with Israel once again.

- (4) These stones were in the breastplate of the high priest (Ex. 28:17-21). The jasper was the last and the sardine was the first. They are in the foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:19-20). The jasper is first and the sardine the sixth.
- (5) The rainbow about the throne.

- A. The rainbow is first mentioned in Genesis 9:13-16. It was originally the sign of the Noahic Covenant, mercy founded upon an acceptable sacrifice (Gen. 8).
- B. It shows the throne Sitter is a covenant-keeping God.
- C. There was a rainbow in Ezekiel's vision of the throne (1:26-28). Noah's bow was semi-circular, consisting of the seven primary colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. The rainbow of John and Ezekiel was a complete circle and Jasper in color.
- D. The bow is seen again in Revelation 10:1.
- E. The terrible tribulation storm comes from the throne, like the flood did.
- F. The bow around the throne means judgment is mingled with mercy (Hab. 3:3).
- G. Note in the three stones the trinity. Jasper is God the Father. The Sardine is red or fleshly color, denoting Christ who became a man and shed His blood. The emerald represents the Holy Spirit. Cotton said this in the 1600s.

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

1. The twenty-four elders in Heaven (v. 4).

- (1) The word "seat" is the Greek word *thronos*, the same word translated "throne" in 4:2. These are smaller or lower thrones than where the Father sits (Dan. 7:9-10).
- (2) Who are these favored persons, seated in state, and dignified with crowns?

- A. Some say they are angels, but angels are never called "elders." They are all the same age, having been created at one time.
- B. The term "elder" is used to describe men as representatives of local synagogues (Matt. 15:2; 16:21) or representatives of local churches (Acts 20:17,28; Jas. 5:14).
- C. No elders are seen in Heaven in Isaiah 6 or Ezekiel 1 because prior to the resurrection of Christ all the redeemed were in the Paradise section of Sheol.

(3) Other facts---

- A. They are redeemed men (Rev. 5:8-10).
- B. They have thrones which are promised to the saints (Matt. 19:28; Rev. 2:26; 20:4).
- C. They wear crowns which are promised to the saints (II Tim. 4:8; Jas. 1:12; I Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10; 3:11).
- D. They wear white raiment, the attire of the saints (Rev. 3:5,18; 6:11; 7:9).

(4) Why are they 24 in number?

- A. The O.T. priesthood was represented by 24 orders of priests who served two

weeks each (I Chron. 23:3-5). ^{24:7}

- B. There were 24, who served the house of God (I Chron. 23:3-4). God was praised by 24 instruments of music (I Chron. 25:31). There were 24 porters (I Chron. 26:17-19).
- C. The 24 elders are the chief priests of the heavenly course (Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10; 20:6).
- D. Israel was to be priests (Ex. 19:5-6) and so are New Testament believers (I Pet. 2:5,9).

(5) They are dressed like priests.

- A. White garments (4:4) are the ordinary clothing of priests (Ex. 28:42; Lev. 6:10; 16:4).
- B. They have harps, songs, and golden bowls, priestly items (I Chron. 25:3-6; ²⁶ 11-13).

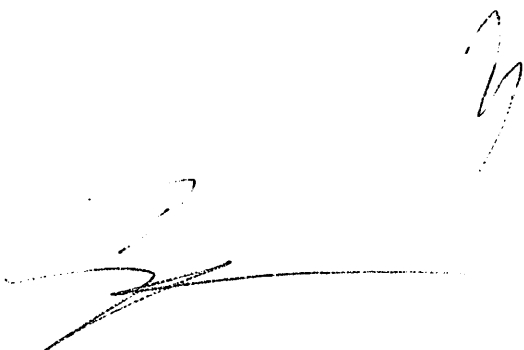
(6) They are real men.

- A. The elders of Israel are the twelve sons of Jacob (Ezek. 48:31-34; Rev. 21:12) and the twelve apostles are the elders of the church (I Cor. 12:28; Rev. 21:14).
- B. These represent the O. and N. Testament saints caught out at the rapture.
- C. Some say the elders cannot be representative since they speak as individuals (Rev. 7:13). The O.T. priesthood did just this (Isa. 37:2; Jer. 19:1).

(7) The elders disappear from the records in 19:4 just before the bride comes forth.

(8) Why are they crowned in Heaven? The rapture has occurred, for crowns are to given out when Christ comes (II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4).

(9) They constitute the united royal priesthood predicted alike of Israel and the church. They are seen here in one company redeemed and glorified.



- D. The Holy Spirit is the true Light of God's throne. Like a torch, He is self-sustaining.
- E. The Holy Spirit in the completeness of His ministry is seen ready to execute judgment on the earth.

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

1. The sea of glass and the four living creatures (v. 6).

- (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 ^{fill} still as crystal. It is a literal sea of glass for men are said to stand on it (Rev. 15:2). The sea before the throne is motionless, for completely sanctified people dwell there.
- (3) The tabernacle was placed in the midst of the camp of Israel, so is 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 natural sea pictures the restless mind of man (Isa. 57:20). This sea in which John sees must picture the calm and eternal mind of God.
- (5) 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 "beast" is *zoa* in the Greek, and it means "living creatures." They are not deity, for they are called creatures. Deity was 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.
 - E. They remind us of the seraphim (Isa. 6:1-6) and the cherubims (Ezek. 1:5-28).
 - F. The lion, the calf, the man, and the birds are the creatures of earth. Do these symbolize the variety in creation that brings glory to God?

3. The appearance of these creatures (v. 7).

- (1) Ezekiel's cherubim was also a living creature (Ezek. 1:5⁵; 10:15).
- (2) Again we see the standards of the order of Israel camped around the tabernacle

weeks each (I Chron. 23:3-5).

- B. There were 24 who served the house of God (I Chron. 23:3-4). God was praised by 24 instruments of music (I Chron. 25:31). There were 24 porters (I Chron. 26:17-19).
- C. The 24 elders are the chief priests of the heavenly course (Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10; 20:6).
- D. Israel was to be priests (Ex. 19:5-6) and so are New Testament believers (I Pet. 2:5,9).

(5) They are dressed like priests.

- A. White garments (4:4) are the ordinary clothing of priests (Ex. 28:42; Lev. 6:10; 16:4).
- B. They have harps, songs, and golden bowls, priestly items (I Chron. 25:3-6; 5:11-13).

(6) They are real men.

- A. The elders of Israel are the twelve sons of Jacob (Ezek. 48:31-34; Rev. 21:12) and the twelve apostles are the elders of the church (I Cor. 12:28; Rev. 21:14).
- B. These represent the O. and N. Testament saints caught out at the rapture.
- C. Some say the elders cannot be representative since they speak as individuals (Rev. 7:13). The O.T. priesthood did just this (Isa. 37:2; Jer. 19:1).

(7) The elders disappear from the records in 19:4 just before the bride comes forth.

(8) Why are they crowned in Heaven? The rapture has occurred, for crowns are to given out when Christ comes (II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4).

(9) They constitute the united royal priesthood predicted alike of Israel and the church. They are seen here in one company redeemed and glorified.

2. The throne of judgment (v. 5).

(1) "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices."

- A. This is no throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). This is a throne of judgment.
- B. A dreadful storm is about to burst on the earth beneath (Ex. 19:16; Rev. 19:1; 8:5; 11:19; 16:10). 16
- C. "Voices" (*phomai*) is better rendered "sounds" or "noises."

(2) "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. 1:4; 3:1).

- A. Here again is the sevenfold ministry of the Spirit (Isa. 11:2-3; I Cor. 12:4-5).
- B. The Greek word here translated "lamp" (*lampades*) means "torch." "Candlestick" in 1:12 is a different word (*luchnia*).
- C. The lamp is for indoor service. The torch is more fitted for open-air work.

(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 eagle were unclean by the law and fed on others.

- (3) We also see the cherubim over the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:17-22; Ezek. 1:12; 10:20-22).

4. The work of the living creatures (v. 8).

- (1) They have six wings like Isaiah's seraphim (Isa. 6:3). In Ezekiel they had 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 living things.
- (4) "Holy, holy, holy" is a reference to the trinity.
- (5) "Which was, and is, and is to come" stresses the permanence of deity as compared with time related creation. Time is an interlude that was introduced into eternity by the Eternal Being. *ELS*
- (6) "Lord God Almighty" (Jehovah Elohim Ehaddai) suggests God is getting ready to deal with Israel once again.

(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 eagle were unclean by the law and fed on others.

(3) We also see the cherubim over the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 20:17-22; Ezek. 1:12; 10:20-22).

4. The work of the living creatures (v. 8).

(1) They have six wings like Isaiah's seraphim (Isa. 6:3). In Ezekiel they had 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 living things.

(4) "Holy, holy, holy" is a reference to the trinity.

(5) "Which was, and is, and is to come" stresses the permanence of deity as compared with time related creation. Time is an interlude that was introduced into eternity by the Eternal Being.

(6) "Lord God Almighty" (Jehovah Elohim Ehaddai) suggests God is getting ready to deal with Israel once again.

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

1. The living creatures praise God because of creation (v. 9).

(1) "When" (*hotan*) means "as often as." Whenever occasion calls for it their response is immediate and unfailing. *@ similar expression*

(2) "Glory and honour and thanks" occurs 8 times (4:9,11; 5:12-13; 7:12; 19:1; 21:24, 26).

(3) These four living creatures represent four types of flesh on earth (I Cor.15:39).

(4) These creatures have ceased to celebrate the holiness of God in order to honor and thank Him.

(5) They are thankful for their preservation through the ages of angelic and human rebellion. Angels cannot praise God for redemption, seeing they were never lost. They can praise God for election and preservation.

(6) The creatures have no thrones, harps, crowns, or golden vials. They give glory while the elders worship.

(7) They are seen honoring God who is about to remove all unholiness from the earth. They are interested in earth's re-generation.

2. The elders worship God and give glory to Him (v. 10).

(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) Worship is really worth-ship, that is, ascribing worth to God. True worship consists in the attitude of spirit back up by words.

(3) "Cast their crowns before the throne."

- A. Their beautiful crowns suddenly seem unseemly in the presence of the great King. They feel unworthy to rule in His presence.
- B. Our faithfulness is because of his faithfulness. We accomplish only what He willed and enabled us to do through Christ. All things are of God.
- C. What if by unfaithfulness we have no crowns to cast down?
- D. They lay aside their glory to add to His glory, thereby ascribing all glory to Him.
- E. On earth we want to get credit for what we do. In Heaven we will realize we were all unprofitable servants, not even worthy to serve God!

3. The doxology of creation (v. 11).

- (1) They see God as the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1; Acts 17:24; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Rev. 10:6). Without creation there would have been no redemption.

There

is not a theistic evolutionist or an Arminian in the whole crowd.

- (2) Verse 11 shows that God created all things because He wanted to do so (Prov. 16:4; Isa. 43:7; Rom. 11:36).
- (3) Neither angel nor man can create anything. Random matter cannot create itself. Only God can create and has created.
- (4) In Heaven we will know the joy of having been created. There are no songs of evolution in Heaven, only of creation (John 1:1-3).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

- I. **THE BOOK OF SEVEN SEALS IN THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER (5:1).**
 1. In chapter 5 the vision of the throne is continued that was begun in chapter 4. Two additional features are added: a book of seven seals and the slain Lamb.
 2. "The right hand" suggests not only its divine source, but also supreme authority as pertaining to its subject matter. The hand of God indicates power to translated it into action.
 3. This is the fifth mention of the throne-Sitter (4:2,3,9,10). Christ is no longer on the Father's throne as our High Priest (Rev. 3:21), for He has arisen to put His enemies under His foot (Ps. 110:1).
 4. "Book" is better translated "scroll."
 5. The book 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; Jer. 32:10-15; Ezek. 2:9-10).
 6. Daniel delivered a series of prophecies concerning the setting up of Christ's kingdom on earth, but it was sealed up (Dan. 12:4,8-9; 8:26). This is the book of Daniel's prophecies now ready to be fulfilled (Rev. 22:10).
 7. Roman law required a will to be sealed seven times. Seven seals indicate it was securely sealed, and that only a qualified person could open it. Only its Author knew its contents.
 8. This book is the title deed of Christ to the earth He has redeemed (Ps. 2:8; 24:1; Matt. 13:44). It is also the title deed of the inheritance of the redeemed (Ps. 37:11, 34; Matt. 5:5).
 9. By sin Adam lost his inheritance (Ps. 115:16) to Satan (John 12:31).

- (1) Christ will soon be seen as our kinsman Redeemer who is ready to claim His inheritance and ours (Eph. 1:13-14; Rom. 8:20-21).
- (2) Man does not have the deed to his inheritance. It is being safely kept by God.
- (3) This book is the foreordained process by which our Lord will claim His inheritance and ours. This is the revelation proper and covers the things from here to the end of the Book (Rev. 1:1).

II. A QUALIFIED PERSON NEEDED TO OPEN THE BOOK (5:2-4).

1. The proclamation of a strong angel (v. 2).
 - (1) The angel exhibits his strength by the loudness of his voice, which reaches through heaven, earth, and the underworld (10:1; 18:21 Greek).
 - (2) "Who is worthy?"
 - A. Who can stand beside the Father, as chief minister and agent of the throne?
Who can be trusted with the secrets of God?
 - B. Who has the right to redeem the forfeited inheritance, the lost Paradise?

- (3) This may be Gabriel whose name means "strength of God."
- (4) A kinsman redeemer is sought (Lev. 25:23-25,48; Ruth 1-4).
- (5) One must be found who can claim the uttermost parts of the earth (Ps. 2:8). The property must be restored to those who it had been wrested and confiscated. A kinsman must institute the prosecutions for the ejected of the usurper.

2. No kinsman 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. Man cannot rescue himself from his own predicament and pit of sin. The mortgage deed to this sin-cursed earth was signed over to man.
- (4) The Devil and the demons have no desire to see man's inheritance restored, neither do they have the power to do it.
- (5) There was no reply to the herald's challenge. Neither man nor angel stirred.

3. John weeps (v. 4).

- (1) There is weeping in Heaven. John wept at man's terrible unworthiness in doing anything to redeem himself. This was not the emotion of a disappointed curiosity.
- (2) No person could be found. The scroll remained sealed. The title deed remained unclaimed. Arminianism is a great heresy! The judgments could not proceed until the book was opened.
- (3) The crisis hour had come in human history, and it seems no one can meet the crisis.
- (4) Some are content to be ignorant of prophecy, things that the angels desire to look into!

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

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

- (1) "One of the elders"---the 24 elders. Was it Judah himself?
- (2) "Weep not." John was the only one weeping. He must cease for the demonstration of Heaven is about to take place. It is no time to weep.
- (3) A title of Christ who came from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:9-10; I Chron. 5:2; Ps. 89:20-29; Isa. 9:6-7; Ezek. 21:27; Heb. 7:14).
- (4) The Root of David is another title of Christ (Isa. 11:1,10; Matt. 1:1; 22:42-45; Rev. 22:10). He was David's Lord (Matt. 21:41-46).
- (5) "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).
- (6) "Hath prevailed" could be translated "overcome," look back to other Scriptures (Luke 11:22; John 16:33; Rev. 3:21).

(7) Jesus Christ had paid the price (Gen. 3:24; Zech. 13:7). The sword of justice pierced Him, and He became worthy to take the title deed to the earth.

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 sees not a conquering king, but a suffering servant.

(2) The 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 (3:21), now He is seen standing to take His kingdom by great judgments (Ps. 110:1-2).

(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) "As it had been slain."

A. Christ has the marks of His death upon Him (Luke 24:40; John 20:20,27; Zech. 12:10).

B. Christ is seen here as a butchered lamb in the midst of the throne of God's holiness. The Father accepted His sufferings and death.

(5) "Having seven horns."

A. Horns are symbolic of power.

B. Jesus has universal and irresistible power (Luke 1:69; Matt. 28:18). Power is needed to power down wickedness in the earth.

C. The Lamb is about to become a Lion (Matt. 12:20).

(6) "And seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

A. The eyes stand for omniscience (Zech. 3:8-9; 4:10). Christ has all power and all knowledge as the incarnate One.

B. These seven eyes are to look upon the seven-sealed book.

C. Christ is the perfect "seer" or prophet. He has the Spirit without measure (John 3:34; Acts 10:38).

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

(1) Christ comes up to the seat of God, a thing that a mere creature could not do without a mediator.

(2) The Father had already given Christ the authority to open the book and to accomplish the events by successive periods of time (Rev. 1:1).

(3) Christ went up and took the book and now has it. He is now fully authorized to reclaim the alienated inheritance. The usurper is about to be disposed.

(4) The purpose in taking the book is to open it and to reveal its contents.

(5) Two persons in the trinity are clearly seen in this event.

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

1. The creatures and the elders fall down before the Lamb (v. 8; Heb. 1:6).

- (1) The significance of this event is recognized by those closest to the throne.
- (2) This is the usual posture of profound worship (Matt. 2:2; I Cor. 14:25).
- (3) "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.
- (4) The elders are real people who represent the redeemed and raptured saints of the Old and New Testaments. They represent the saints in Heaven in their priestly office.
- (5) The four living creatures are real angels who represent the attributes of deity in creation.

- A. The creatures do not sit ("they rest not").
- B. They haven't no crowns or thrones---no harps or bowls.
- C. Grammatical construction implies this view. "Every one" is masculine and agrees with elders, not beasts, which is neuter.
- D. Harps are never used by spirit beings.
- E. The odors (incense) are the prayers of the saints (Rev. 8:3), not the prayers of angels.

- (6) There are harps or string instruments in Heaven (Rev. 14:2; 15:2). It is a well-known 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 in Heaven there will be plenty of it.
- (7) "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 "bowl, bason, goblet, or cup."
- (8) The golden bowls represent the prayers of the saints. Their answered prayers are stored up in bowls awaiting the personal attention of the Lord. These prayers concern the second coming of Christ and His kingdom (Matt. 6:10).
- (9) Our prayers are sweet incense before God's throne (Ps. 141:2). In the tabernacle there was an altar of incense just outside the vial before the mercy seat (Ex. 3: 8; Luke 1:8-10). Compare with Heb. 13:15 and I Thess. 5:17.
- (10) There is no sanction here of Rome's dogma of the saints praying for us and offering our prayers to God. The saints while they prayed these prayers were on earth. Nor is there any warrant here for Christians praying for the saints in Heaven. We must pray only to God (Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9).
- (11) The worship here is unlike what goes on each Sunday in our churches today. There is no pretense or make-believe in heavenly worship. Here is worship service unprecedented in all history.

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 (*kainos*), not new in point of time (*neos*). 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) The Lamb does not proceed to open the book until the group in Heaven proclaims His worth to do so. The church is in glory before the seals of judgments are broken.
- (3) "Worthy to take the book"---He alone in all the universe was found worthy to be the instrument of this revelation.
- (4) "Thou wast slain, and has 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, who are not redeemed. The Alexandrine manuscript omits "us" but not the Textus Receptus.
- (5) The price of redemption is the blood of the Lamb (I Pet. 1:18-19). Some liberal churches refuse to sing hymn about the blood of Christ.
- (6) "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 and who enter Heaven.
- (7) The reference cannot be to Israel, for she is a single nation. God has His elect hidden in every nation (Matt. 28:19). This also proves the elders represents all the redeemed.

3. The redeemed saints are made king-priest (v. 10; 1:6; 20:6).

- (1) This is through our union with Christ who made us such by His death and resurrection. We are viewed as in the kingdom from the side of redemption by Jesus' merits.
- (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 more 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 on earth. Christ is going to reign, not in the air, but in Jerusalem in Palestine (Isa. 23:24; Jer. 23:5-6; Zeph. 3:14-16; Zech. 14:9) and we are to reign over the earth!
- (5) This verse locate the millennial reign of Christ on earth, not in Heaven where non-millennialists believe it to be. This reign is always spoken of a being future. "They reign" of the Alexandrine must be rejected.
- (6) The glorified saints in Heaven sing about reigning on the earth. If the saints were already reigning, there would have been no need for John to weep.

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

1. The angels praise the Lamb with the death marks upon Him (v. 11; Ps. 68:17; Heb. 12:22).

- (1) The number of the redeemed will be several billions, but the number of angels will be greater. What an innumerable throng in one mighty symphony of praise.
- (2) The proposition "round about" could be translated "encircling" to show the rising of ranks of angelic beings.
- (3) The fact that angels are round about the elders should settle the question forever that the elders themselves are not angels. The passage later says all the angels stood round about the elders. The elders are a separate and distinct group.
- (4) The term "ten thousands" is actually "myriads," so that the number of angels is said to be "myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands"---innumerable (Dan. 7:10).

2. The sevenfold anthem of praise to the Lamb (v. 12).

- (1) "Saying with a loud voice." The angels say, but do not sing as the elders. They tell about the worth of the Lamb, but they do not directly address the Lamb as do the elders (4:11; 5:9).
- (2) The sevenfold adoration---
 - A. "Power" (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 1:3). He has power over disease (Mark 5:25-29), demons (Mark 5:1-20) and death (Mark 5:35-40).
 - B. "Riches" (II Cor. 8:9; Hag. 2:8).
 - C. "Wisdom" (I Cor. 1:3; Col. 2:3).
 - D. "Strength" (Ps. 24:8; Matt. 12:29).
 - E. "Honor" (Ps. 8:5; Heb. 2:7,9).
 - F. "Glory" (John 1:14; 2:11; 11:4,40; 17:5,24).
 - G. "Blessing" (Ps. 103:1-2; Rev. 5:13).

- (3) 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 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---several melody of voices of men, angels and inferior creatures---billions of harps playing, etc. See Psalm 148:7-10.
- (2) This includes animals that also suffer from man's sin (Rom. 8:22-23).
- (3) The second coming of Christ involves the restoration of all things (Acts 3:20-21; Phil. 2:8-11).

- (4) "Every living 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, fallen angels, metals, minerals, etc. "In the sea"---fish and all kinds of sea creatures.
- (5) Some would exclude rebel angels and ungodly men in this.

2. The four living creatures cry it is so and the elders worship (v. 14).

- (1) This is the fourth time the living creatures and elders are mentioned in chapter 4-5 and always in the same order.
- (2) God is now honored through the Lamb. It was never the purpose of God to exalt Christ above Himself, but it was the purpose of the Father to exalt Himself through Christ.
- (3) "Amen" means "may it be so" or maybe here "it is so."
- (4) "Liveth for ever and ever" occurs seven times in this book (1:18; 4:9,10; 5:14; 10:6; 11:15; 15:7).
- (5) "Him"---either God or Christ (Rev. 4:9-11). Some versions omit "him" and leave it to refer either to God or Christ, or both.
- (6) Christ is the believer's only stay. He is the sinner's only refuge. He is creation's only hope.

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 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. 24:31; I Thess. 1:9-10; 5:4-9). This is God's judgment 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).

1. The Lamb opens the first seal---Antichrist (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 takes 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 (Jer. 30:7). This is the sound of majesty and might.
- (4) "One of the four beasts"---one of the four living creatures before the throne of God in Heaven.
- (5) "Come and see."

A. Some reject the Textus Receptus here and omit "and see," making it a command to the rider of the white horse. "Be going."

B. Many manuscripts support the KJV. "Come" could be rendered "be going." (II Kings 8:1; Isa. 7:18-19).

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

(1) The comparison and contrast with the rider in chapter 19.

- A. Except for both being white, they have nothing in common.
- B. This rider is not named; the one in chapter 19 is.
- C. This rider has a crown (*stephanos*---triumphal crown); the rider in 19 has many crowns (*diadema*---diadems).
- D. The one in chapter 6 has a bow; the one in chapter 19 a sword.

(2) This white horse rider is Antichrist (Dan. 9:26; 11:36-43; Matt. 24:4-5; 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 on white horses. He is the head of the revived Roman Empire and the coming world ruler.

- (3) 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.
- (4) Reasons why the white horse rider in Revelation 6 is not the as the One in chapter 19.
 - A. The rider in chapter does not come from Heaven.
 - 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 all power (Matt. 28:18) and many crowns (Rev. 4:10). 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 He has many crowns (Rev. 19:12).
 - D. This rider has a bow; Christ comes with a sword and a rod of iron (Rev. 12:5; 19:15).
 - E. Christ's reign does not bring famine and death, but peace and prosperity.
 - F. An angel could not bid Christ to come forth.
- (5) The world has rejected God's Christ, but it will receive the devil's christ (John 5:43). The world is looking for a superman to unite the nations and bring peace to earth.
- (6) The Antichrist is the fulfillment of the demands by fleshly men for a god and savior---the final stage of Arminianism.

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. The beasts are associated with things on earth.
2. The red horse and his rider---war (v. 4).
 - (1) This horse and his rider symbolizes war, strife, and violence as the rest of the verse indicates (Ezek. 14:21; Matt. 24:6-7; I Thess. 5:3).
 - (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 is national and international war and bloodshed.
 - (4) "To take peace from the earth"---by the Devil work and God's permission.
 - (5) "They shall kill one another."
 - A. Human life will have little value. Blood will be spilt like water. We are being condition today to accept violence and murder.
 - B. Civil war is especially seen here (Jud. 7:22; Zech. 8:10).
 - C. This is class wars, religious wars, and race wars.

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

1. The black horse of famine (v. 5; Matt. 24:7)

- (1) The order here is the natural order. The first horseman carried a bow, the second sword, and this one has a pair of balances.
- (2) Famine always follows war. There is no one to work the fields. Crops are destroyed by battle (Lev. 26:26; Jer. 14:1-2; Lam. 4:8-9; 5:10; Hag. 1:11).
- (3) This is not spiritual famine, for what have weights and measures and wheat and barley to do with such.
- (4) The two witnesses may have something to do with this famine (Rev. 11:3-6).
- (5) This is the opposite of the reign of Christ (Ezek. 36:29-30).
- (6) "A pair of balances"---a set of scales for weighing and selling grain. This is a symbol of scarcity of provision. This is food rationing again (Rev. 13:17).
- (7) The power of commerce, to generate prosperity or calamity, inflation or depression, is manipulated by politicians, merchants, and bankers.

2. The great scarcity of food and the high price of food (v. 6).

- (1) A voice in Heaven utters these words. Not the rider or living creatures, but Christ Himself. The famine comes on earth from secondary causes, but primarily from the Most High. 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 is about two pints---the daily ration of a slave in that day.
- (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 have ordinarily have bought eight times this much.
- (4) "Hurt not the oil and wine."
 - A. This may mean the vineyards and olive groves were largely uninjured. So not all the necessities of life are destroyed.
 - B. Christ is now besieging the earth and depriving His enemies of their food.
 - C. Needs are scarce; luxuries are plentiful. If there is no drinking water, they would drink wine with their meals.
 - D. Wine was used as a medicine in those days (Luke 10:34). Oil was also a source of energy (Matt. 25:1-13) and used for cooking. Compare Isaiah 24:7-11).
 - E. Is there some reference here to Babylon getting full control of the oil reserves of the world as well as the food supply?
 - F. Today some 400 million people are in danger of starvation. The famine involves more than third world countries.

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

1. Literally this is a sickly pale green like young vegetation. It looks like a corrupting carcass (Lev. 13:49).

2. "Death" confirms that the horsemen are not real persons but symbols of realities. This rider has a companion which follows him, called "Hell."
3. To deadly is this plague that Hades follows as the reaper to gather the awful harvest (Isa. 5:14; 28:15,18).
4. Death claims the body and Hell the soul of the unsaved.

- (1) No righteous is seen as dying here as all go to Hell.
- (2) Death does not end all. The souls of the wicked go to Hell after death.
- (3) Death and Hell are mentioned three times in Revelation (1:18; 20:13).

5. "And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth."

- (1) Who is "them"? Either Death and Hell or the four horsemen.
- (2) "Earth" must not be restricted to the land of Israel or to the boundaries of the Roman Empire as some do.
- (3) Their sphere of action covers one fourth of this earth.
- (4) "Fourth part" implies divine imitation of their action.

6. "To kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and will the beasts of the earth."

- (1) This means one person out of all families and friends shall die in a brief period of time.
- (2) The deaths are by war, famine, and disease.
- (3) The world population is about five billion. This means over a billion people will die---the greatest destruction of human life in history (Isa. 24:3; Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:22). Only about 50 million died in World War II.
- (4) Who are the "beasts of the earth"?

- A. They may be literal beasts who prey on the sick and dying (Num. 21:6; Deut. 32:24; Josh. 24:12; II Kings 2:24; 17:25; Isa. 30:6; Jer. 5:6; Ezek. 14:21).
- B. This is the opposite of the millennium (Isa. 11:7,9; Ezek. 34:25).
- C. God has in the past used hornets (Ex. 23:28), serpents (Num. 21:6), lions (II Kings 17:25), and she bears (II Kings 2:24).
- D. The Greek word for beast is *therion* which means "wild beasts." The word is used 38 times in the Book of Revelation, and in every instance it is a symbol of ungodly, powerful world leaders (Rev. 13:1,11).

- (5) The four horsemen represent the results of man's effort to direct the affairs of life apart from God.
- (6) People cry, "Peace," but war is coming. They cry, "Prosperity and plenty," but famine is coming. People cry, "Medical science has conquered disease," but pestilence is coming. Hunters complain of the disappearance of beasts to hunt, but they will multiply and slay thousands.

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) "I saw under the altar."

- A. The altar is mentioned six other times (8:3,5; 9:13; 11:1; 14:18; 16:7). In two other places the term is qualified by the adjective "golden" (8:3; 9:13).
- B. The reference here is to the brazen altar of burnt offerings, where blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar (Ex. 27:8 29:12; Lev. 4:7,17-18; 5:9).
- C. On this altar animals were slain in sacrifice and consumed. The pouring out of the blood, signified that a life was poured out (Lev. 17:11).
- D. 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).
- E. The untimely death of these martyrs is seen as a sacrifice upon God's altar in Heaven. Heaven is being seen here as a temple.
- F. These tribulation saints are under the altar. They are under the blood of Jesus Christ, which was sprinkled in the heavenly tabernacle.

(2) "The soul of them that were slain."

- A. These are tribulation martyrs who die in the first part of the tribulation. They are seen again in Rev. 20:4. Many of these will be Israelites (Matt. 23:32-36).
- B. These are seen in a disembodied state, having offered their lives for their Lord.
- C. The soul of man is that vital, spiritual, an immortal part of man which cannot die with the body (Matt. 10:28). Under the extraordinary impulse of the Spirit John can see souls (Rev. 20:4).
- D. Departed souls are seen here in Heaven. They are not in a state of unconsciousness nor are they irrational. They are without their bodies.
- E. They are under the blood of Christ, which was sprinkled in the heavenly (I Pet. 1:2). They are not in the immediate presence of God due to being unclothed (II Cor. 5:1-4).

(3) "For the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

- A. 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 are tribulation martyrs who are disembodied or unclothed. These are saved under the preaching of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:1-12) or by reading the Bible (John 20:31). They have died under the four-horse judgments.
- B. The Rapture will remove the saints, but not their Bibles.

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 are both crying and tears in Heaven (Rev. 5:4). These souls are conscious and know

that they 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 Pet. 3:9; 4:1). This is the dispensation of the law and the prophets (Ps. 54:5; 79:5; 143:12). It does not fit the economy of the church, but it does of Israel (Deut. 23:6; Matt. 5:43).
- (4) Compare with Ps. 94:3; Hab. 1:2.
- (5) These do not doubt their vindication or the vengeance on their enemies, but they do not want the judgment of their enemies delayed any longer.
- (6) "Them that dwell on the earth" (3:10). In its 12 occurrences in this Book it people who reject Christ and have settled down in the system of Antichrist.

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). The vengeance especially begins under the vials (Rev. 16:5-7).
- (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) "Fellow servants. . .be killed." This is a reference to what is mentioned later in the Book (Rev. 13:3,7-8; 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 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; Luke 21:25-26).
- (3) This is a judgment of the earth-dwellers, and it shows God's displeasure at the persecution of His servants. This is the beginning of the answer to the cry of the martyrs in Heaven.
- (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 shift 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) "The stars of heaven" are here distinguished from the mystic stars in 1:20.
- (2) This point to meteors falling to the ground and which hit as hard as unripe fruit. We call these "falling stars."
- (3) The earthquake inverse 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."
- (4) Will the swarm of giant meteorites trigger the global earthquake? God only knows.
- (5) Not all the stars fall, for some remain (8:12).

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 global earthquake. 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 exegetical of the other. This kills the spiritualizing method of interpretation.
- 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). Liberal theologians will have to tare up some of their sermon outlines.
- 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!
- C. Nature's hiding places are inadequate to shield anyone from God's wrath.

When men should flee to the Rock of Ages they will rather flee to the rocks of the ages.

(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. The wrath begins in the earth part of the tribulation period.
- C. The day of wrath (I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Ps. 76:7-12) is in contrast to the present day of grace (Rom. 5:9; 6:14).
- D. Men trace these events to the wrath of God and Christ. This is worth noting.

suddenly begin to shift 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) "The stars of heaven" are here distinguished from the mystic stars in 1:20.
- (2) This point to meteors falling to the ground and which hit as hard as unripe fruit. We call these "falling stars."
- (3) 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."
- (4) Will the swarm of giant meteorites trigger the global earthquake? God only knows.
- (5) Not all the stars fall, for some remain (8:12).

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 global earthquake. 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 exegetical of the other. This kills the spiritualizing method of interpretation.
- 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). Liberal theologians will have to tare up some of their sermon outlines.
- 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!
- C. Nature's hiding places are inadequate to shield anyone from God's wrath.

that they 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 Pet. 3:9; 4:1). This is the dispensation of the law and the prophets (Ps. 54:5; 79:5; 143:12). It does not fit the economy of the church, but it does of Israel (Deut. 23:6; Matt. 5:43).
- (4) Compare with Ps. 94:3; Hab. 1:2.
- (5) These do not doubt their vindication or the vengeance on their enemies, but they do not want the judgment of their enemies delayed any longer.
- (6) "Them that dwell on the earth" (3:10). In its 12 occurrences in this Book it people who reject Christ and have settled down in the system of Antichrist.

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). The vengeance especially begins under the vials (Rev. 16:5-7).
- (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) "Fellow servants. . .be killed." This is a reference to what is mentioned later in the Book (Rev. 13:3,7-8; 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~~ 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 27:²~~27~~ and with other scripture (Isa. ~~13:9-10~~; Hag. 2:6-9; Joel 2:10,30-31; Zeph. 1:15; Luke ~~21:25-26~~).
- (3) This is a judgment of the earth-dwellers, and it shows God's displeasure at the persecution of His servants. This is the beginning of the answer to the cry of the martyrs in Heaven.
- (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). *of which + earthquakes*
- (5) The vast worldwide network of unstable earthquake belts around the world will

When men should flee to the Rock of Ages they will rather flee to the rocks of the ages.

(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. The wrath begins in the ^{EARLY} part of the tribulation period.
- C. The day of wrath (I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Ps. 76:7-12) is in contrast to the present day of grace (Rom. 5:9; 6:14).
- D. Men trace these events to the wrath of God and Christ. This is worth noting.

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 period. Here are two companies of saved people after the Rapture. The first group is out of one nation and a definite number; the other of all nations and an indefinite number.
- (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 direction as the four winds are mentioned, or the four points of a compass.
- (3) God controls the wind and weather (Ps. 104:3; 148:8; Amos 4:7-8, ~~14~~, ~~53~~; Matt. 5:45), but He does it often through angels (Rev. 8:3-11; 10:7; 14:18; 16:5; 19:17).
- (4) 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).
- (5) This may explain why there will not be any rain for the first three and half years (Rev. 11:3-6). Without the wind there can be no rain.
- (6) Note the use of "four," which denotes universality, and "earth" three times in verse 1.
- (7) The winds have been blowing, but now there is a lull in the storm. Now no breeze of air blows, the very leaves of the trees are still, and there is no waves on the oceans.
- (8) The winds are often instruments of God's judgments (Job 1:19; 38:12; Isa. 41:16; Jer. 4:11-12; 18:17; 49:32,36; Ezek. 5:2; 12:14; Jonah 1:4,10-11).

2. The angel with the seal of God (v. 2).

- (1) Some believe the first four angels are the first four who later sound the trumpets and that this angel is Christ. I doubt this is Christ. Most likely a mighty angel.
- (2) "From the east"---the quarter from which God's glory often manifest itself, or the rising of the sun.
- (3) In the Greek-Roman world a seal denoted ownership. Slaves and soldiers had a visible tattoo on their hand or in their forehead.
- (4) 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). Even the locusts can see it (Rev. 9:4).
- (5) This mark 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). The 144,000 are possessed, protected, and preserved.

(6) This seal exempts from the torments of the tribulation period (Rev. 9:4). This sealing implies possession, security, and service.

(7) "Till we have sealed."

A. This means the four angels plus the angel from the rising of the sun.

B. It implies that after the sealing the judgments are next in order.

C. Does this indicate a time span between the Rapture and the beginning of the tribulation period? Some things suggest this---

a. there is a brief period of security after the Rapture (I Thess. 5:3).

b. the ten kingdoms of Europe must prepare to unite (Rev. 13:1-2).

c. a temple is to be built in Jerusalem (Rev. 11:1-2).

d. a great commercial center must be established on the site of ancient Babylon.

D. These servants are not the same ones mentioned in Revelation 1:1.

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 (Rev. 6:9; 7:9). There are other unsaved Israelites who will not worship the Antichrist and will be saved at the end of the tribulation (Rom. 11:26; Zech. 12; Isa. 53).

(2) This number is as literal as the 7,000 prophets in I Kings 19:18. 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) There is no point of enumerating the 12 tribes by name if they are not literally meant. Why mention Israel, if the church is meant?

(4) Some reasons to make the 144,000 literal.

A. They are contrasted with an indefinite number in 7:9.

B. They are literal for the following reasons---

a. the mention of tribes.

b. they stand opposed to the Gentiles (7:9). The churches have no tribeship.

c. the tribe of Judah has to be taken literal. Christ is the lion of Judah.

d. children of Israel is literal in Revelation 2:14.

e. John needed not instruction concerning the twelve tribes, but he did concerning the great multitude.

C. The tribes of Israel are to be regathered (Hos. 3:4-5) and restored (Isa. 49:3-6) by God (Deut. 4:29-31). They will inherit the land according to their tribe (Ezek. 47:13). Their names are upon the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:12) as well as on the millennial city of Jerusalem (Ezek. 48:3-35; Matt. 19:28).

4. The Seventh-Day Adventists make this 144,000 the faithful of their communion who keep the seventh-day Sabbath. The Jehovah's Witnesses make them the overcomers of their religious society. Other cults do much the same. We should ask such people, "Which tribe are you from?"
5. This 144,000 are called "servants" (7:3; 14:3-4), a word applied to gospel ministers in the New Testament. This is a 144,000 like the apostle Paul (Isa. 49:5-6; 66:19; Dan. 12:3; Matt. 24:14).
6. 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 first 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 (Gen. 12:2-3; Num. ~~23:9~~; 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, for Israel is to be first blessed. True of judgment also (Rom. 2:9; 3:10). *9*

(2) "A great multitude, which no man could number."

- A. Israel was numbered and on earth. These are unnumbered and in Heaven.
- B. "Great multitude." The same words in the Greek are translated "much people" in 19:1. This is the same group in both passages.
- C. "No man." Literally, no one, since the word "man" does not occur in the Greek text.
- D. This multitude is an elect remnant of Gentile (and some Jews) in addition to the elect of Israel and the church age.
- E. The 144,000 are the firstfruits (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 Bible and Christian literature (Acts 3:19-21). This will be the greatest harvest of souls 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 (Ps. 67:1; 98:3; Isa. 49:6; 52:9-10). Praise God!

(4) "Stood before the throne."

- A. This is a place of honor and favor (I Sam. 16:21-22).

- B. They are standing in the position of servants and not seated like the elders.
- C. This proves they are in Heaven and answers the question of Revelation 6:16-17.
- D. Compare with (Luke 21:36; Rom. 14:10; Rev. 15:2).

(5) The great multitude is distinct from the raptured saints and the church.

- A. Those were kept out of the tribulation (3:10); these came out (7:14).
- B. Those wore white raiment (4:4); these white robes (7:14).
- C. Those sat on thrones round about the throne of God (4:4); these stand before the throne (7:11).
- D. Those wore crowns (4:4); these are uncrowned.
- E. Those have harps (5:8); these have palms (7:9).
- F. Those sung a new song (5:9); these cry with a loud voice (7:10).
- G. Those are kings and priests (5:9-10); these serve day and night in the heavenly temple (7:15).
- H. The great multitude is the same as the martyrs in 6:9-11.

- (6) "Clothed with white robes"---the attire of princes and priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).
- (7) "Palms in their hands"---an emblem of joy and triumph (John 12:13; Lev. 23:40). These came out of the wilderness of the world to the tabernacle of God in Heaven. They are having a heavenly Feast of Tabernacles.
- (8) Please note the church calls God "our Father" (Matt. 6:9), but the great multitude "our God" (7:10). Also note that the Lamb no longer sit on the throne.

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

1. The angels, elders and four living creatures 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 reach 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 presence 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 govern-

ment 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.

(7) "Power"---which He exerted in creation and redemption. He still exerts it in providence and the government of the world.

(8) "Might"---or strength---the Almighty God, the source of everlasting strength.

- B. They are standing in the position of servants and not seated like the elders.
- C. This proves they are in Heaven and answers the question of Revelation 6:16-17.
- D. Compare with (Luke 21:36; Rom. 14:10; Rev. 15:2).

(5) The great multitude is distinct from the raptured saints and the church.

- A. Those were kept out of the tribulation (3:10); these came out (7:14).
- B. Those wore white raiment (4:4); these white robes (7:14).
- C. Those sat on thrones round about the throne of God (4:4); these stand before the throne (7:11).
- D. Those wore crowns (4:4); these are uncrowned.
- E. Those have harps (5:8); these have palms (7:9).
- F. Those sung a new song (5:9); these cry with a loud voice (7:10).
- G. Those are kings and priests (5:9-10); these serve day and night in the heavenly temple (7:15).
- H. The great multitude is the same as the martyrs in 6:9-11.

- (6) "Clothed with white robes"---the attire of princes and priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).
- (7) "Palms in their hands"---an emblem of joy and triumph (John 12:13; Lev. 23:40). These came out of the wilderness of the world to the tabernacle of God in Heaven. They are having a heavenly Feast of Tabernacles.
- (8) Please note the church calls God "our Father" (Matt. 6:9), but the great multitude "our God" (7:10). Also note that the Lamb no longer sit on the throne.

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 is found 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.
- (3) The Lamb no longer sits on the throne. He is standing out in front of it.

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

1. The angels, elders and four living creatures 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 reach 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 presence 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.
- (7) "Power"---which He exerted in creation and redemption. He still 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; Dan. 12:1). A literal translation would be "out of tribulation, the great one." "Out of" supposes them to have been in it.
- (3) "Washed their robes. . .the blood of the Lamb."

A. This presupposes their robes were defiled by sin, and that they washed them in the blood of Jesus Christ (I John 1:7). They have on the garment of salvation or justification (Rom. 5:9; Rev. 1:5).

B. Their robes are white; they are free from sin and acceptable to God. Not by their own merits or works, but they wholly trusted Christ's blood and righteousness.

C. None are said to have washed their robes in baptism or even martyrdom.

D. The washing of clothes was an essential preparation for the descent of

Jehovah

in Exodus 19:10-11.

- (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"---as a shepherd does His flock (Isa. 40:11; Ps. 23:5; 36:8).
 - A. We are dependent creatures even in Heaven. We are possessed by immortal spirits which have powers, capacities, and desires that require gratification.
 - B. Those in Heaven are strangers to wants which arise from painful sensation, but they are not strangers to that hungering and thirsting after God (Ps. 27:4; 42:2; 43:4; ;63:1-2; 84:1,10; Matt. 5:6).
 - C. Their spiritual desires are kept in continual exercise.
- (3) "Living fountains of water"---describes the fullness and availability of these satisfying waters (Isa. 12:2).
- (4) "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"---dry their tears and later remove the occasion of tears (Isa. 25:8; Rev. 21:4). They shed tears due to their persecutions 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. There are tears in Heaven (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 causes 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 many mean that all occasion of tears will be removed for ever or that our capacity to recall unpleasant 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.

- (4) People are saved in the tribulation just like they are saved today by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:25).

V. THE HEAVENLY BLISS OF THE DISEMBOodied 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 ages 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 in the millennium and the eternal state.
- (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). There 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; 16:1, 17). Not a place of inactivity.
- (4) "Day and night."

A. This denotes the constancy and uninterrupted of their service. It is an allusion to the priests and Levites who served day and night (I Chron. 9:33).

B. The argument that "day and night" must apply to the millennial state by some is invalid. This term is used of the accusations of Satan in Heaven against the saints (Rev. 12:10), the service of the four living creatures in heaven (Rev. 4:8), and of the punishment of the wicked (Rev. 14:11; 20:10).

C. In the present state we are incapable of this continual worship. Then no weariness and anxieties in that never-ending Sabbath! No formalities or hypocrites are among these. No coldness of feeling, no deadness of love, no languishing of affection, 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. 25:34-36; 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 Psalm 121:5-6.

3. They are sustained and solaced (v. 17).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Eight

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

1. "And when he had opened the seventh seal."

- (1) The seventh seal includes all that happens under the seven trumpets and the seven bowls of wrath. It reaches to the end of the tribulation period.
- (2) The seals, trumpets, and bowls are not consecutive. The trumpets begin after the seal, and the bowls after the trumpets.
- (3) The seven trumpets are the seventh seal, and the seventh trumpet is the seven bowls of wrath.

2. "There was silence in heaven."

- (1) This silence is not on earth as the noise of battle and nature are in turmoil.
- (2) There will come a time when the earth is silent (Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7; Zech. 2:13).
- (3) This is the calm before the most awful storm that shall ever break upon this earth.
- (4) It seems this silence continues until broken by the "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquake" (8:5).
- (5) This silence is a pause of action on the part of God (Ps. 2:5).
- (6) The elders cease their harp playing, the angels hush their voices, the glorified saints their praises, the martyred souls their cries, and the cherubim their shouts of "Holy, holy, holy."
- (7) 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.
- (8) God is slow to wrath; judgment is His strange work. He will not smite with the heaviest indignation till sin is come to the full.
- (9) "About the space of half an hour." This is literal time---about the space spent in silent worship in the temple during the burning of incense.

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

1. The seven angels (v. 2).

- (1) "And I saw"---a new vision begin here, and it includes four trumpets. The next vision begins in 8:13, and it includes the last woe trumpets.
- (2) "The seven angels which stood before God."

- A. Are these the seven spirits earlier mentioned (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6)? Some say so.
- B. Is this what Zechariah 3:7 is referring to?
- C. These are angels of the highest order---ministers of God's providence who

- stand in His Divine presence and wait to obey His Divine commandments.
- D. These are carefully distinguished from other angels (Rev. 1:4; 5:11; 15:7).
 - E. In earthly courts men stand before the king (Esth. 1:10; Dan. 1:19). These angels behold the Father's face (Matt. 18:10). 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.

(3) "To them were given seven trumpets."

- A. 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).
- B. God's trumpet never gives an uncertain sound (Ex. 19:16; I Cor. 14:8).
- C. Christ is probably the Giver of these trumpets (John 5:25,27). These angels have a direct commission from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- D. These trumpets declare war on the earth (Zeph. 1:14-18).
- E. The Lamb opens the seals, but the angels sound the trumpets.

2. The angel at the altars in Heaven (v. 3).

(1) "Another angel."

- A. Some say the Angel of the Covenant, Jesus Christ, who has just finished with the seven seals. This Angel ministers Godward and manward (I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:24), and He acts as a Judge.
- B. Where does the Bible speak of mediating angels?
- C. Some disagree and say he is a nameless angel with a priestly ministry for this time. They say that Christ gives the incense to the angel to add to the prayers.

(2) "Came and stood at the altar."

- A. This first altar is the brazen altar, the place of judgment.
- B. We are back on Jewish ground, for here we have the two altars in the Old Testament. First the brazen altar and then the altar of incense (Heb. 8:5; 9:1-5,23-24; I Chron. 23:11-13,19).
- C. The scene is of the ancient priest in the tabernacle before the altar of incense (Ex. 30:1-8). A censer is a fire pan (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 brazen altar to be carried into the Holy of Holies where the incense was added (II Chron. 26:19; Ezek. 8:11). The incense had to be kindled by the fire from the brazen altar of burnt offerings. Christ's 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) "There was given unto him much incense."

A. Our prayers are purified by holy incense from Christ. Our prayers are heard because of His merits and His mediation.

B. These are given to Christ as the Mediator and Son of man as He is acting as our High Priest.

(4) "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.

(5) Note the difference between the cry of the martyred souls and the prayers of living saints. Dead saints cry to the throne for justice against the wicked---not as Romanists suppose, for blessing on the righteous. Now Heaven and earth both ask for vengeance.

(6) 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) Immediately after the prayers of the saints ascend, Divine judgment descends.

(2) 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.

(3) Prayers and incense go up together (Luke 1:10).

(4) The Angel's intercession is accepted, the petitions are heard.

(5) The Lamb's sacrifice is the basis of his opening the seals. The Angel's offering of incense is the basis of the trumpet judgments.

(6) Here is the high priest kindling the wood for the sacrifice in which the ungodly will be destroyed (Lev. 1:7; Deut. 32:22).

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) The scientific explanation does not fit here, for the thunder precedes the lightning.

(3) This is a second filling of the censer. This is the judgment of God against sin.

(4) This happens in answer to the prayers of the saints. The prayers of the saints, perfumed with the incense of Christ's merits, gains acceptance (Ps.18:6-9; Ezek. 38:22; 39:6; Hos. 8:14; Amos 1:4,7,10,12). This is a baptism of fire.

5. The seven angels prepare to sound (v. 6).

(1) The angels preparing themselves to sound signifies a different in posture. A human would inflate his lungs and swell his lips and cheeks.

(2) They are to blow the alarm in rapid succession, one after another.

(3) Reasons for taking the trumpets in the literal sense---

- A. This book takes off the veil, and its descriptions, whenever possible, are to be taken literally.
- B. How could a secret be announced by the sounding of a trumpet?
- C. The plagues of Egypt were literal. Why not these plagues?
- D. The miracles of Israel's deliverance from Egypt are to be repeated on a greater scale (Micah 7:15-16; Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 23:7-8). Israel is in more danger from Antichrist than from Pharaoh.
- E. The covenant God made with Israel expressly promises miracles of terror as its basis (Ex. 34:10).
- F. The law threatens miracles of woe on Israel, if they break God's law (Deut. 28:58-59).
- G. The wickedness of man has come to the full (Ps. 2).
- H. Satan is working miracles during this time (II Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:2-3,13; 16:14). So will the God of Israel.
- I. These days are like the time of Noah and Lot (Luke 17:26-30). Miracles and angels were active in these days.

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

1. This resembles the seventh Egyptian plague (Ex. 9:22-26). Joel 2:30 speaks of this time.
2. There was hail and fire but not blood in the land of Egypt. The first trumpet has blood (Job 1:16; 38:22-23; Joel 1:18-20). This probably blood-covered water. Blood itself is 90 percent 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 (Ps. 78:47-48).
4. "Third part of the trees were burnt up"---one-third of the forests and orchards of the world are destroyed.
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 giant meteorite or asteroid (Luke 21:11). This is God's judgment against the sea (Amos 7:4; Hos. 4:3) and repeat of the first Egyptian plague (Ex. 7:9-21; Ps. 105:29; Matt. 20:21).
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 chain.

5. "Third part of the ships were destroyed"---naval vessels and merchant ships. This may be due to a great tidal waves created by the falling mountain.
6. 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. There is nothing figurative about this trumpet. It is better to believe what God has said (Luke 21:11).
2. The word "lamp" is *lampas*, meaning "a torch." It is not *luchno* which means "a lamp." A torch burns only at one end.
3. This may be a meteor that fall apart as it near the earth, scattering its burning particles over the earth. Others say it is a comet, whose orbit has been altered by God to bring it within the gravitational range of the earth.
4. The Greek word for "fountain" also means "well" (John 4:6,14). It refers to subterranean sources of water, received through springs and wells.
5. "The star is called Wormwood."

(1) Wormwood is the bitterest shrub known. Several varieties are found in the East, and in Syria and Palestine.

(2) It is bitter, and it creates bitterness (Jer. 9:13-15; 23:15; Lam. 3:15).

(3) 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) Men are reaping the bitter fruits of sin

6. Wormwood is the deadly liquor ingredient known as absinthe. This word is used only once in the N.T., but several times in the O.T., and it is once translated "hemlock." It is 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 poison known as gall (Deut. 29:18; Lam. 3:19). This is the drink Christ refused on the cross (Matt. 27:34).
7. "Fountains of water" may means Elim (Gen. 24:13; Ex. 15:27). The comet may crash into some great water-table where rivers and fountains abound.
8. To cut off their water supply will leave men and women desperate and hopeless. Some will drink and die, and then go to a pit wherein is no water (Zech. 9:11).
9. None of this poses any problem to the Creator of stars (Gen. 1:14-16). God knows how many stars there are (Ps. 147:4), and He calls them all by name (Job 9:9-10). The name of this star is "Wormwood" (bitterness).

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

1. The fourth angel sounds (v. 12).

(1) The sun is not the emperor, the moon the church, or the stars some church bishops. Even little children know what the sun, moon, and stars are. This is

the ninth Egyptian plague (Ex. 10:21-22).

- (2) These astronomical disturbances are the fulfillment of prophetic forecast (Isa. 5:10; 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 on the fourth day (Gen. 1:14-16).
- (3) 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.
- (4) This may be a black body that absorbs the light instead of reflecting it. It may cause a partial eclipse of the sun, moon, and stars. It is surely a display of Divine power outside the range of normal experience.
- (5) Note the progress: One third of the green trees and grass; one third of the marine life and shipping; one third of the fresh water supply; and one third of the heavenly bodies.
- (6) This will surely set the "star-gazers" on their heads. No stars, no moon, just black, impenetrable darkness. Then they reappear! Can the scientists explain all of this to the people left on earth?
- (7) Compare with Revelation 6:12-14.
- (8) We must not doubt the miraculous in the Bible (Josh. 10:12-14; Isa. 37:7-8).

2. The angel flying through the sky (v. 13).

- (1) Westcott and Hort adopts "eagle" instead of "angel" in this verse. The ASV and RSV do the same. This is wrong.
- (2) It is surely an angel who does this, for angels are used in God's judgment. But it is also true that eagles are mentioned in connection with God's judgment (Deut. 28:49; II Sam. 1:23; Isa. 40:31; Jer. 4:13; Hab. 1:8; Matt. 24:28; Rev. 19:17).
- (3) This could be an angel with the head of an eagle (Rev. 4:7). Skeptics and infidels may see and hear all of this.
- (4) Those marked for judgment are "the inhabitants of the earth." This is a judgment people left on the earth.
- (5) "By reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels, which are yet to sound! this is a solemn warning of immediately impending judgments.
- (6) Beware of spiritualizing these judgments of prophecy, let you undermine your own faith in the miracles of Divine history like in the Exodus.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapter Nine

I. THE FIFTH TRUMPET---THE FIRST WOE TRUMPET (2:1-2).

1. The sounding of the fifth trumpet (v. 1).

- (1) These last three are the woe trumpets. The first four judgments were directed toward earth's ecology, but the last three are directed toward man. The fifth and sixth trumpets come, not from Heaven, but from the earth, or from beneath.
- (2) Many people have already died in the blazing forests, on sinking ships, and from poisoned water.
- (3) "I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth."

- A. Falling stars occurred under the sixth seal (6:13) and the third trumpet (8:10). These were meteors, or real falling stars.
- B. The star here is to be taken as a symbol for Satan. A literal star could neither take a key nor unlock a door.
- C. Angels are called "stars" (Job 38:7; Isa. 14:12; Rev. 1:20) and "the host of heaven" (I Kings 22:19; II Chron. 18:18; Ps. 148:2; Josh. 5:14).
- D. Personal pronouns are used of him and personal acts are ascribed to him (vv. 2,11).
- E. The Greek text can read: "A star from heaven fallen unto earth." John saw the star after it was fallen (Isa. 14:12; Rev. 12:7-9).
- F. The angel in Revelation 20:1-3 is probably Michael.

(4) "To him was given the key to the bottomless pit."

- A. This key or authority belongs to Christ (Rev. 1:18; 20:13-14).
- B. "Was given" means by the orders of Christ (Job 1-2). Satan can only do what God allows him to do. He does not have authority over the bottomless pit.
- C. It is not the door to a house that is opened, but the mouth of a pit. The Greek for "bottomless pit" (*abussos*) means "abyss." The corresponding Hebrew word is translated "deep" or "depth" (Gen. 7:11; 8:2; 49:25; Ex. 15:5-8; Job 38:30; Ps. 36:6; 42:7; 135:6; Prov. 8:23-31; Isa. 24:21-22; 51:10; 63:13; Ezek. 26:19-20; Amos 7:4; Hab. 3:10).
- D. Rotherham gives it: "The key of the shaft of the abyss." This means a shaft sunk through the crust of the earth (Matt. 12:40; Rom. 10:6-7; Eph. 4:9).
- E. The dungeons of old times were usually pits under the ground (Gen. 40:15; 41:14; Jer. 38:6,13). God's prison is beneath the earth.
- F. The bottomless pit is the lowest part of *hades*, the prison house of demons (Luke 8:28-31; Matt. 8:29). This place is mentioned a number of times in Revelation (9:1-2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3).
- G. This is the place from which the beast emerges (Rev. 11:7; 17:8), and it is the prison of Satan during the millennium (Rev. 20:1-3).

2. The smoke of the bottomless pit (v. 2).

- (1) This is a real place and real smoke comes out of it. Symbols do not darken the sun and pollute the air. This smoke comes up from the boiling lava of the pit (Gen. 19:24-28).
- (2) Somewhere on earth there is an opening leading to the great shaft, which goes down to the center of the earth (Job 38:17). This place has gates (Isa. 38:10; Matt. 16:18; Rev. 1:18).
- (3) This smoke comes from a great flame below. It is like an active volcano. While the opening of the pit is due to a supernatural being, the results of it are natural. Compare with Deut. 29:23 and Jer. 4:23-28. See other verses (Luke 16:24; Matt. 5:22; 13:42).
- (4) This is a sample of Hell on earth. We are about to see a demoniacal, Satan-directed attack upon men.

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

1. The hordes from Hades (v. 3; Joel 2:1-11).

- (1) The smoke and pit, the grass and trees, are literal, and so are these creatures. They are not symbols of heresy, or of an invading army. Most creatures are stifled by smoke and consumed by fire. These are supernatural beings.
- (2) To seek to twist these verses from their literal sense is wickedness, for unbelief is wickedness. No period in past history is known to fit these descriptions.
- (3) Are they demons? real locusts, symbols? If symbols, what are they symbols of? Real locusts have been used to punish men (Ex. 10:12-20; Deut. 28:38-44; 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 form of demons.
- (4) Spiritualizers say these are the Saracens or the clergy of the pope. But when did the sufferers from the Saracens seek death without find it? When did the clergy of the pope spare those who had the mark of God and injure only those who hold to false religion?
- (5) This reminds us of the eighth Egyptian plague (Ex. 10:12-15). See also Luke 10:18-20. Contrary to the think of some, demons are not the spirits of wicked men.
- (6) "Unto them was given power."
 - A. This is no ordinary power, but something extraordinary (vv. 3,10; Joel 2:2).
 - B. 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 demons from the pit?
 - C. "Was given" (vv. 3,10) means by Divine permission they torment men on the earth.
 - D. Ordinary locusts have no such sting (v. 5).

(7) These are not common locusts.

- A. Common locusts eat vegetable production (v. 4) and have no king (Prov. 30: 27; Rev. 9:11).
- B. Are these demons who assume so locust-like bodies? Or, they real demons see seen for the first time by men on earth?
- C. While they have some features like locusts, they have some likeness to the lion, the horse, the scorpion, and even man. They do have stingers like scorpions.

2. Their first prohibition (v. 4).

- (1) Ordinary locusts as a rule do eat these things, and, if not restrained by God, they would do so now it would seem.
- (2) The grass and the herbs here are literal, and so are these creatures.
- (3) Men are the prey of these locusts. These supernatural creatures have intelligence and can obey a command. These are creatures from beneath.
- (4) The mark of the 144,000 Israelites is literal and visible, for these creatures recognize it.
- (5) From the limitation of the objects of their injury I infer, except for the prohibition, they would attack 144,000 equally with the wicked, or in preference to them.
- (6) Because of the destruction under the former trumpets, earth's vegetation was spared for a time for its reestablishment and growth.
- (7) The 144,000 Israelites are exempted from these locusts (Rev. 7:1-8). Here we see why God sealed them. This put the sealing before the Fifth Trumpet.

3. The second prohibition (vv. 5-6).

- (1) Five months is the time limit of ordinary locusts (May-September). After five months (150 days) they must return to their prison.
- (2) There was no limit under the Second Seal, but there is a limit here and upon other times of judgment (Num. 11:19-20; II Sam. 24:13).
- (3) The torment comes from the excruciating scorpion-like 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 (II Chron. 10:11).
- (4) These locusts are witnesses that there can be a worm that can abide in the fires of Hell.
- (5) The purpose of this torment is remedial as well as punitive, but the plague produces a desire for death, not repentance.
- (6) God uses locusts to punish here as He used hornets in olden times (Josh. 24:12). But for the limitations set by God, they would willingly slay men.
- (7) The people on earth are like lost souls. There is no refuge; no protection from these scorpion-locusts. It seems from this demons torment people in Hell.
- (8) For five months men cannot commit suicide. They must live against their wills live in anguish. No freewillers then!

- (9) Guns will misfire, knives slip from the hand, poison will lose its 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; 3:21; Jer. 8:3).
- (10) 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 makes converts from these things.

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

1. Their shape, heads, and faces (v. 7).

- (1) It amazes me that some men deny these are real creatures, although God has taken 4 four verses to describe them. The words "like" and "as" occur 9 times.
- (2) The description begins at the head and moves backward, ending with the description of their tail.
- (3) They are shaped like horses prepared unto battle (Joel 2:4-5). They resembles horses in armor. Are they as big as a horse in size?
- (4) They fly like locusts, run like horses, and sting like scorpions (Joel 2:7-10).

2. Their hair and teeth (v. 8).

- (1) Ordinary locusts have no teeth or bones.
- (2) They have the faces of men and hair of women (I Cor. 11:14-15). Think of some of the modern hair styles. They have the combined qualities of beasts and men.

3. Their breastplate and wings (v. 9).

- (1) Small wings could not create a sound like chariots of many horses at full speed.
- (2) Men will use every mean to get rid of them (Joel 2:5,8). Height is no security against them.
- (3) They will later appear as frogs (Rev. 16; 13).

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 no king (Prov. 30:27).
- (2) Some make this king a different person from Satan. I see no need to do this. This is the same as the fallen star in verse 1. The very title "king" implies one with great authority.
- (3) The name of the king is given in two tongues, Hebrew and Greek, so that neither Jew nor Greek can fail to identify him.
- (4) The Hebrew word Abaddon means "destruction," equivalent to the bottomless

pit. Here the word is personified and is applied to him who leads souls to destruction---Satan, the destroyer.

- (5) Apollyon is a masculine noun which means destroyer.
- (6) Satan is the prince of demon (Matt. 9:34; 12:24).
- (7) Christ saves His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21); Satan destroys his people in their sins.
- (8) The Bible seems to make a distinction between Sheol and the bottomless pit (Job 26:6; Prov. 15:11; 27:20).
- (9) This destroyer and his son (Antichrist) is well known to Old Testament writers (Isa. 16:4; Jer. 4:7; 6:26; Dan. 8:24-25; 9:26; 11:44).

6. The two remaining woe trumpets (v. 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.
- (3) The first woe trumpet lasts at least five months.
- (4) "Hereafter" means "after these things."

V. THE SIXTH TRUMPET---THE SECOND WOE (9:13-14).

1. The voice from the divine altar before the throne (v. 13).

- (1) The trumpet includes this chapter, chapter 10, and it goes to 11:14. Some 33 verses are devoted to its description.
- (2) This is either the voice of God or the angel ministering on previous occasions (8:3). In the fifth trumpet it was the voice of an angel flying in mid-heaven.
- (3) This is a continuation of the answer of the prayers of the saints (6:10).
- (4) These horns on the earthly altar were continually being touched with the blood the finger of the priest who was burning the fat of the sacrifice on the altar (Lev. 4: 17-18). No blood is mentioned on these horns of the altar. This means that God is acting in judgment.
- (5) 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 King 1:50; 2:28).
- (6) These horns speak of the sovereignty of God and His universal power. Coming from the four horns His judgment goes forth to the four quarters of the earth.

2. The unloosed angels (v. 14).

- (1) These are not the same angels which held the winds in Revelation 7:1.
 - A. Those were good angels; these are evil.
 - B. Those were free; these are bound.
 - C. Those had no command to destroy men. These slaughter men. They only need be turned loose.

- (2) These angels are kept under restraint in the region of the Euphrates and are now let loose as instruments of wrath (Jer. 46:3-10). Perhaps Tartarus is in the region of Euphrates (II Pet. 2:4). Is the headquarters of the evil trinity?
- (3) These angels reserved to judgment (Jude 6) are being called out as God's reserves. Good angels are not bound.
- (4) The Euphrates is not a figure but a fact. It was one of the first four rivers mentioned in the Bible (Gen. 2:14) and after referred to a boundary line of Israel's inheritance (Gen. 15:18; Ex. 23:31; Deut. 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4; I Sam. 8:3; I Kings 4:24-26).
- (5) 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 the Antichrist will have his political capital.
- (6) The Euphrates is the longest river in western Asia, rising in Turkey, it flows 1780 on a south-western course through Turkey, Syria, and Iraq to the Persian Gulf.
- (7) 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 HORSEMEN (9:15-19).

1. The time foreordained of 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 God foreordains all. Nothing is accidental concealed from God.
- (3) To make sure the number is not misunderstood, John adds, "I heard the number."
- (4) There is a gradual intensification of punishment. The Trees and grass are first smitten; the sea; then the rivers and fountain; then the luminaries; then men are tormented, but not killed; and lastly, they are slain.
- (5) God has a program, and it is being carried out on schedule. He will bring his predetermined plan to pass in His own good time.
- (6) Some died under the earlier trumpet (8:10). Some die as martyrs. Earth's population is about 6 thousand million. The death toll would be about 2 thousand million. Over half the earth's population will be dead when this is over.

2. Two million horsemen (v. 16).

- (1) The greatest array ever amassed in human history.
- (2) Some make these a literal army which comes to Palestine (Rev. 16:12-16) which destroys one-third of the world's population when en route from the Orient to the Middle East. They are demon incarnations.
- (3) Others make them an infernal calvary of nightmarish animals indwelt by evil spirits. They say God specially creates their bodies for this judgment.

It would be better to worship the sun and moon which God at least made.
F. This age ends in a revival of idolatry. People wear idols around their neck, display them on the dashboards of their cars, and erect them in their front yards. Rome gets rich over the sale of these.

(3) Murder (6:4).

- A. The Devil is a murderer (John 8:44).
- B. Murder will become a way of life, a normal way of settling problems. It will be too common to report in the news.
- C. Not all murders today are by gangsters, but by fathers and mothers, by college kids, by young people, and even children.

(4) Sorceries or drugging.

- A. In the Greek it is *pharmakeia*, the source of our words "pharmacy" and "Pharmaceutical."
- B. Stupefying and hallucinating drugs have been associated with sorcery and witchcraft for ages.
- C. This makes people available for demon control by robbing them of their minds.
- D. This is a sin of commercial Babylon (Rev. 18:25).
- E. This means all kinds of enchantment by drugs and the dope habit.

(5) Fornication---spiritual and physical.

- A. The religious restraints of sexual freedom have been removed so that adultery, fornication, sodomy, lesbianism, and other forms of sexual perversions have become commonplace.
- B. The debasement of marriage will be complete---divorce will be the norm---the family unit a thing of the past---the rearing of children will become the work of the state.
- C. When I see the decline of the family in our day, I shudder to think of what is ahead for the world.

(6) Thefts.

- A. Like Satan, men will be thieves. The increase of these sins points to the approaching tribulation.
- B. Honesty and integrity will become rare, and theft will be approved.
- C. The repetition of the preposition "of" after the verb repent reveals that true repentance demands total deliverance out of society that pollutes by these sins.

- (4) These deadly horses are fire-breathing dragons and not the first on earth (Job 41:19-21).
3. Their description (vv. 17-18).
 - (1) Men will be consumed in the flames, suffocated by the smoke, poisoned by the sulphurous gases.
 - (2) It would seem they have three colors: fire-colored, dark blue (smoke), and yellow (brimstone).
 - (3) These lion-horses seek not to take flesh into their mouth, but breath fumes of death.
 - (4) Their riders are not said to carry any weapons. It is the horses that kill. This is a foretaste of Hell.
 - (5) Is this a picture of thermonuclear war? Is smoke radioactive fallout and debris? Is brimstone melted earth and building material?
 - (6) This army is Satan's attempt to deny Christ the sovereignty of the earth.
 4. The power of their tails and mouths (v. 19; Isa. 24:6; 28:49-57; Jer. 6:22-25; 8:13-17). Is this front and rear gunners on tanks and airplanes?

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

1. "The rest of the men" are those who remain after the judgments of the seals and trumpets.
2. Those killed by the infernal cavalry are evidently the unsaved who receive the mark of the beast. Christ is killing off the world's unregenerate population.
3. This is an awful picture of human depravity. These people are like Pharaoh. The wrath of God does not bring them to repentance. These people prefer demons to deity, stones to the Savior, and mammon to the Master!
4. Six sins are specified: two against God and four against man. There is a rejection of God, and then a turning to idolatry, and finally moral decay and crime of many sorts.
5. The sins that 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 worshipping Satan they can become gods (Gen. 3:5).
 - (2) Idol worship.
 - A. "Works of their hands" demands the meaning of idols (Deut. 4:28; 31:29; Ps. 115:4-7; 135:15; Isa. 2:8; Jer. 1:16; 25:6,7,14; Acts 17:29).
 - B. This is the idol of the image of the Antichrist (Rev. 13:14-15; 19:20).
 - C. This is the worship of demons (I Cor. 10:20).
 - D. Despite scientific training and advancement in education, people are turning more and more to occultism, astrology, and spiritism.
 - E. Those who reject God turn to idols. The worse idol of all is a man-made one.