A Study of
Revelation

By Ellis Forsman

Our intent is to provide this wonderful text in a format that is both easy to read, as well as informative and edifying. Paper and digital copies may be requested below.

Ellis has lost the original digital copies of this study, so the printed version he found is what we had to work with. We are grateful he has entrusted it in our care. It is our great pleasure, and work of love, to revive this lost treasure and present it to you.

The original paper documents were printed by both a dot matrix printer and letter quality printer from a personal computer some time ago. Ellis was kind enough to loan them to us for this conversion. They were scanned and then translated to digital text using OnlineOCR.com, then corrected, edited for spelling, grammar and OCR mistakes, and formatted for this publication. The original commentary and intent have been preserved. Please report any errors as soon as possible, using the contact information below.

Contact:

The Christian Courier
83985 S. 4737 Rd.
Stilwell, OK 74960

ChristianCourier1Cup@gmail.com

https://1CupHistory.Church [About Us] -> [Contact Us]

Legend:
Revelation verses being studied
Supporting scriptures
Some book titles
Greek and Hebrew words



The attached Table of Symbols in Revelations have been obtained from Mede, Elliott, Lange, Campbell, Archdeacon Lea, B. W. Johnson, Coffman, John Hinds, and others. They are all in agreement with their apparent meaning.

-Ellis Forsman

Table of Contents

Table of Symbols 3
Translations 7
REVELATION 1 8
REVELATION 2 13
REVELATION 3 19
REVELATION 4 24
REVELATION 5 27
REVELATION 6 31
REVELATION 7 37
REVELATION 8 40
  THE FULFILLMENT 42
  THE THIRD PART 44
REVELATION 9 45
  THE FULFILLMENT 46
  THE FULFILLMENT 48
REVELATION 10 51
REVELATION 11 54
REVELATION 12 59
REVELATION 13 63
REVELATION 14 68
REVELATION 15 74
REVELATION 16 76
REVELATION 17 82
REVELATION 18 86
REVELATION 19 90
REVELATION 20 94
REVELATION 21 99
REVELATION 22 104

Table of Symbols

Adultery - Idolatry or apostasy; especially the latter. As Christ is represented as a bridegroom and the church as a bride, apostasy, or unfaithfulness to Him, would be spiritual adultery, and a false church properly represented as a harlot.

Adultery - Idolatry or apostasy; especially the latter. As Christ is represented as a bridegroom and the church as a bride, apostasy, or unfaithfulness to Him, would be spiritual adultery, and a false church properly represented as a harlot.

Angel - Any agent or messenger of the divine will. The term may be a symbol of any movement of nations, or in history which carries out the divine purposes.

Ascension to Heaven - Exaltation in power and glory. Prosperity.

Babylon - The city which carried Israel into captivity. Hence, a symbol of any power that renders them captive, whether it be Pagan or Papal Rome.

Balances - A symbol of justice, but when used to denote the weighing out of food, a symbol of scarcity.

Black - The color of mourning; hence a symbol of calamity and sorrow.

Black Horse - The horse was not used as a beast of burden by the ancients, but for purposes of war. Hence it is a symbol of war, and a black horse is a symbol of calamitous war.

Blood - A symbol of the carnage of war.

Beast - The term rendered beast in the Revision means a savage wild beast. Hence it is a symbol of a cruel, tyrannical persecuting power. The term used in chapter 4, rendered beasts in the Common Version, is not the same. Instead of "Four Beasts" that should be rendered "Four Living Creatures."

Binding - This symbol means to restrain, to hold; also, to deprive of power and render helpless.

Book - The record of the divine will. To seal a book is to conceal its meaning, since ancient books were rolls and could not be read when sealed. To open seals is to disclose the meaning. To devour a book is to become master of its contents. The book with seven seals is the book of human destiny, an outline of the great events which connect themselves with the church until its final triumph. The opening of its seals is the revelation of future history.

Bow - The bow, a warlike weapon, when held in the hand is a symbol of war.

Bride - The spouse of Christ, the Church, the New Jerusalem.

Bridegroom - Jesus Christ.

Candlestick - A symbol of a church, which should be a light in the world. The seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches. A symbol of any light-giving agency.

Chain - A symbol of bondage or affliction. To chain is to render powerless. To bind Satan with a chain is to destroy his power.

Cloud - An emblem of power and majesty. To ride upon the clouds is to appear in glory and exaltation.

Crown - The symbol of royal majesty. To enjoy exaltation and honor. To receive the crown of life is to receive the honors of eternal life.

Darkness - The well-known symbol of calamity and affliction.

Day - "I have given you a day for a year." One revolution of the earth on its axis is a symbol of its annual revolution in its orbit. "Twelve hundred and sixty days" means as many years.

Death - A symbol of destruction.

Dragon - The old pagan Roman Empire. The dragon was originally a symbol of a monarch. In Revelation it means the persecuting monarchy of Rome.

Earth - The ancient, civilized world, which corresponded in John's time with the Roman Empire. Political powers.

Earthquake - Political and moral revolutions and convulsions of society. The shaking of the established order of things. The subversions of states and fortunes.

Eclipse - Or the darkening of heavenly bodies, means the obscuration of the glory of kings and potentates of which sun, moon and stars are symbols.

Egypt - The place of spiritual bondage. A condition of sinfulness. Opposition to Christ.

Euphrates - The symbol of the Turkish power. To be "bound by the Euphrates" is to be restrained at that river.

Elders - Probably princes of righteousness.

False Prophets - A false spiritual power which falsely claims divine authority for its teaching.

Fire - Fierce destruction. Never the symbol of a blessing, but of a curse.

Fire from Heaven - Divine destruction; but fire brought down from heaven by the two-horned dragon, means excommunication and anathemas of a false spiritual power.

Flood - Symbol of overpowering. Distress from persecution or any cause.

Forehead - A mark in the forehead means a public profession.

Fornication - Idolatry. See Adultery.

Grave - To put into the grave, signifies to consign to oblivion. "Not to suffer dead bodies to be put into the grave," means that they shall be remembered.

Hail - Ravages and destruction.

Hand - A mark in the hand means the manner of life, or practice.

Harlot - An idolatrous community. The great Harlot is the apostate church. See Adultery.

Heavens and the Earth - The world. The political and religious universe. A new heavens and new earth imply a passing away of the old order of things and the establishment of a new order.

Horse - Used only for warlike purposes by the ancients and hence a symbol of war. The color of the horse indicates the condition of his rider and the state of the war.

Horns - "The great horn is the first king;" Daniel. A symbol of kings, kingdoms, or power. Seven horns indicate enormous power.

Incense - The prayers of the saints.

Islands - European states. In the prophets the "isles of the sea" meant the countries in and beyond the Mediterranean; hence, Europe.

Jerusalem - The capital of Judea and the seat of the temple becomes a symbol of the church of Christ. The "holy city" is contrasted with the "great city," Jerusalem with Babylon, or the true with the false church.

Jezebel - An unholy woman is a symbol of an unholy influence in the church.

Key - A symbol of power to deliver or imprison, to open heaven or hell, or to shut them; of power to save or destroy.

King - Supreme power of any kind. A government; a kingdom.

Lamb - The symbol of a sinless, sacrificial offering. The Lamb of God is Christ slain as a lamb from the foundation of the world.

Lion - A symbol of kingly power.

Locusts - The locusts, a devouring pest bred in the deserts of Arabia, are a symbol of devouring Arabian armies. The Arabians under Mohammed.

Manna - The bread of life. The truth of Christ.

Measuring Reed - The standard by which the church is measured. The Word.

Mountain - Some person or power conspicuous among men. Highly elevated. A great prince or government. A burning mountain is a baleful, destructive power.

Moon - A symbol of powers, rulers and great men which are not supreme. A light which shines by reflecting another light.

Merchants - A symbol of those who make a gain of godliness and traffic in religious privileges.

Palm - A symbol of joy or victory.

Pale Horse - An image of desolating war, and a reign of death.

Red Horse - An image of cruel, bloody war, distinguished by awful carnage.

River of Life - Christ is the fountain of life. The abundant, ever flowing life that Christ bestows, is fitly symbolized by a river. The river, and tree, of life mean essentially the same.

Rod - The symbol of rule. The rod of iron is a symbol of resistless sway.

Scarlet - This color, the color of blood, symbolizes bloody cruelty. A scarlet woman is a persecuting church.

Seven - The perfect number. Completeness.

Stars - Shining lights in the world. Conspicuous men, whether in the church or the state.

Sun - As the great light giver, in one sense a symbol of Christ. Also, a supreme ruler. The moon and stars indicate great lights of society, but inferior to the sun.

Sword - A symbol of slaughter. Also, of conquest. A sword in the hand indicates conquest by carnal weapons. A sword proceeding from the mouth indicates conquests by the word of God.

Temple of God - The church of which the tabernacle and temple were types. The temple of God in heaven, open, is the abode of God, heaven itself, the church above.

Throne - A symbol of authority.

Trumpet - The blast of a trumpet signifies the forward march of armies, carnal or spiritual. Also, the proclamation of war or peace.

Time - Time, times and half a time is an annual revolution of the earth, a year, two years, a half year, or three and a half years. "Seven times" passed over Nebuchadnezzar, or seven years.

Wine Press - A symbol of an effusion of blood and of distress.

White - To be clothed in white is to be innocent, pure, and to be triumphant.

White Horse - Triumphant and glorious war. See Horse. Whore - Apostate church. See Adultery.

Winds - Symbol of commotion; of mighty movements. The "Four Winds" are four invasions of the Roman Empire.

Witness - The two witnesses are the two Testaments, for such is the meaning of the latter word.

Woman - The "woman clothed with the sun" is the pure and faithful church. The Great Harlot is the false, faithless, apostate church. The church is often symbolized by a bride, or a woman bearing children. A pure woman represents a faithful church; an adulterous woman, "a harlot," a false, apostate church.

Translations

Different translations of the term "shortly come to pass" (The Greek word "eggus" used here means "near", or "soon.")

The Basic English: "Things which will quickly take place." (1:1)
"The time is near." (1:3)

The New English: "What must shortly happen." (1:1)
"The hour of fulfillment is near." (1:3)

Moffatt: "What must come to pass very soon." (1:1)
"For the time is near." (1:3)

Wuest: "Things which...must come to pass in their entirety shortly." (1:1)
"For the...epochal season is imminent." (1:3)

C. K. Williams: "The things that soon must happen." (1:1)
"For the time is near." (1:3)

New American Standard: "The things which must shortly take place." (1:1)
"For the time is near." (1:3)

J. B. Philips: "What must very soon take place." (1:1)
"For the time is near." (1:3)

Goodspeed: "What must very soon happen." (1:1)
"For the time is near." (1:3)

Spencer: "Things which must speedily happen." (1:1)
"For the time is near." (1 :3)

Authentic N.T.: "What must shortly transpire." (1:1)
"For the time is at hand." (1:3)

20th Century: "What must shortly take place." (1:1)
"For the time is near." (1:3)

C. B. Williams: "What must very soon take place." (1:1)
"For the time is near." (1:3)

F. Fenton: "What must speedily happen." (1:1)
"For the time is at hand." (1:3)

W. Barclay: "Things which must soon happen." (1:1)
"For the time is near." (1:3)

N.I. Version: "What must soon take place." (1:1)
"The time is near." (1:3)

R.S.V.: "What must soon take place." (1:1)
"The time is near." (1:3)

REVELATION 1

This is not a simple book to understand and can be overwhelming to the average reader. Yet it has been placed here for us to read. It is not history like the gospels and Acts, nor practical instructions like the epistles. This is a book of prophecy as the Apostle John had recorded it from the symbolic visions he had received from God while exiled on the isle of Patmos.

REV 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave, unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

It is important to observe in this verse the statement "which must shortly come to pass." There are some people of the likes of Lindsey who would say, "No, John, you are wrong. Those things were not fulfilled until nearly 2000 years later." This is one of four times that John says that these things would soon happen. Lindsey, for example, sees fire and brimstone as nuclear explosions, locusts as Cobra helicopters, and swords and shields as tanks and missiles. What would you think if John came here right now with a scroll in his hands and said, "I have a revelation here for you about things which must shortly come to pass."? Could your mind even begin to think 20th century? Wouldn't you think it was something close to happening? If he said again to you, as he does in the 22nd chapter, "Don't seal up that book for the time is at hand!", would you not be more than ever convinced that what he meant was "soon"? Common sense tells us that is so. Something interesting to note is that Daniel received a vision of the ram with two horns and the goat in the year 558 BC, which is found in the 8th chapter of Daniel. In this chapter in the 20th and 21st verses it tells us the ram having two horns was the kings of Media and Persia, and the goat was the king of Grecia. Noted biblical historians say the events concerning these nations took place in 164-165 BC. This was less than 400 years after Daniel received the vision. In the 26th verse of the 8th chapter of Daniel, he was told to "shut up the vision; for it belongeth to many days to come." Here is a vision fulfilled in less than 400 years after it was received and God says, "seal it up for its fulfillment is a long way away." John is told exactly the opposite! "Don't seal it up for the time is at hand" in the 22nd chapter of Revelations. In the light of this, "things which shortly must come to pass would have to something less than 400 years. So we want to study Revelations with this in mind. Did the events in these visions happen during this time frame? Many noted biblical scholars (among whom was Alexander Campbell) claim this to be so.

REV 1:2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

John, being an apostle of Jesus Christ, knew firsthand the nature of Christ, knew that He was the Son of God, and recorded such in his writings. He now was to record the things he saw in the visions given him by God and Christ.

REV 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Copies of the word of God in the beginning were few, and there was a custom in the church in the first century of someone reading the scriptures. Blessing was to be upon not only the person reading the word, but also upon those hearing and keeping those words. In this case he was referring to the prophecy about to be given to them, cautioning them the time of these things is close.

REV 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come' and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

The letter was written to seven churches in Asia. Asia then did not cover the same territory that it does today. It refers to the Roman province, which was at that time called Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital. Why seven churches? There were more than seven in Asia at that time. Besides those mentioned we know of Colosse, Miletus, Troas, and Hierapolis being named in the New Testament scriptures. Since the number seven throughout the Old and New Testament is looked upon as meaning completeness, it is thought possibly these seven represent the entire church. It is obvious that other churches were to take note of these sayings also because it was repeated, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth to the churches."

"The seven Spirits which are before his throne" Generally referred to as the Holy Spirit, or the fullness of the Spirit, since seven is used.

REV 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Everything that Jesus says is faithful and true. He was the first begotten of the dead, and the time is coming when his followers will also be raised victorious.

Christ is prince of all kings, ruler of all rulers, and king of all kings. He has all power. "…All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18).

"Unto him that loved us." He has proven his love by the cross. Not only did he love his people then, but he also continues to do so. The effects of the cross are far reaching, loosing us from our sins even today. Our sins were taken away by the shedding of his blood.

REV 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Several translations render this as "made us to be a kingdom, to be priests." Ex. 19:6 says, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests…" We are united into one body by Jesus Christ, and each of us is a priest unto God. The Jews needed a priest to offer incense or sacrifice for them, but we, being priests, can go directly to our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ. But no matter our state and standing we are always to recognize God as supreme, and to give him the glory, and to allow him to have his way in our life.

REV 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Who cometh? Jesus Christ. He who is our King, and Saviour. Will only a few see him? There have been times in history where people have prophesied that Christ would return on a given date. The time would come and go, and the world continues. Some would claim that Christ did appear, but to only a few. Here we are told that every eye would see him; even those who pierced him. All generations will know the moment of Christ's coming, even the dead. People all over the earth will wail when He comes, because then they will know of the surety of His being, knowing of their own state and standing. Their grief will be for themselves, not for Christ, because He is victorious.

REV 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which has the same meaning as the beginning and the end. Some think he is referring to God, and others think he is referring to Christ. It makes no difference. They were both present when the earth was created, and they will both be present at the last day.

REV 1:9 I John who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

John refers to himself as our brother, as we all are to each other in Christ today. "Companion in tribulation" - He suffered in the work of the church as did most of the early Christians. It is generally believed that he was banished to the Isle of Patmos because of his preaching. At that time Patmos was a lonely, rocky island which was only about 5-6 miles wide and ten miles long. It is volcanic and bare, rising to an altitude of 800 feet with a deeply indented coast. In the 1950's the population was 2613; but in John's day, it is said to have been principally a rock quarry and used as a place of banishment for certain types of offenders.

REV 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day; and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet,

That is, the state of mental capacity he was placed in by the Holy Spirit when he received the divine revelation.

"The Lord's Day" - the day of the Lord's resurrection, the first day of the week. In the earlier apostolic writings, the day was called "the first day of the week", but by the close of the century it began to be called "the Lord’s Day", as here.

John "heard a great voice, as of a trumpet" He did not see this person but heard. The voice had to have been loud and clear like the sounding of a trumpet. But it was a voice, and not a trumpet. Such a voice would command instant attention.

REV 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

John was told to write down what he saw, and to send it to the seven churches named. It is suggested in a number of writings concerning the number of churches that these seven represented a diversity of conditions that prevailed in congregations throughout history.

REV 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

Israel was represented by a single candelabra with seven candles. Now the churches are represented by seven separate standing candles; representing each local congregation as being separate in its organization from each other.

REV 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

In the midst of these seven candlesticks is Christ. Even though we are separate from each other in organization, we all look to Christ for our authority. He is our King. Some look upon the garments that Christ wore here as being priestly, while others are probably more correct in saying these are the clothes of royalty, not that of a priest. Girdles were then worn around the body to fasten down their flowing robes, but one richly ornamented with gold indicated royal dignity. Since the seven candlesticks were placed about Him would also indicate this to be true, in that we look to him as our king.

REV 1:14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes, were as a flame of fire.

White is the symbol for purity. This is not saying that Christ actually had white hair but saying that He is pure. Remember, only a pure lamb, without spot or blemish could be sacrificed. Christ died for us having no spot, or blemish. He was sinless. So, the symbol of white for his purity. "his eyes, were as a flame of fire." - This indicates that Christ has the ability to see things as they truly are, his gaze penetrates whatever disguises men put up in trying to hide his true nature.

REV 1:15 And his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

Brass has a different look to it after it has been placed in the intense heat of an oven than when it is cold. It shines with splendor after it has been fully refined. After what Christ went through for us, certainly he would look beautiful and pure to us. Brass has excellent corrosion resistance and is used extensively on ships for this reason. The steps of Christ are sure and true. There is no corrosion, or corruption in him. He knows his direction, and nothing will sway him from his planned course. He figuratively walked through coals of fire for us. His voice carries the same power as his heavenly Father. Hard to hear someone else talking at an ocean beach when the surf is wild.

REV 1:16 And he had in his right, hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

The seven stars are mentioned later in verse 20 as being the angels of the seven churches. We speak of individuals as having guardian angels, it appears maybe churches do also. The two-edged sword out of his mouth would be his words. Heb. 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." This implies his coming in executing judgement upon the world according to his word.

"his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." - This description presents the majesty of Christ. A sun shining in its strength would happen in a cloudless environment, and full of power.

REV 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

John was fully struck with awe and terror at what he saw. So much so that he may have actually fainted here. This would be quite a shock to anyone. Jesus calmed him down by placing his hand on him and telling him to fear not. This was telling John in two different ways that he need not be afraid; by his voice, and by his touch. John in this vision did not recognize this white-haired man as the Christ.

Christ is the first and last, just as his heavenly Father. At this point Christ may be revealing to John who he really is. John knew that God was from the beginning, and probably knew also that Christ was there also, since Paul had stated in Colossians that he was. John 1:1-2 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."

REV 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

This should have been the clinching clue to John as to who this being was. John knew as well as anyone at that time of the story of Jesus as to how he lived, was dead, then arose again. He was sent to the isle of Patmos because he was preaching this.

The word "hell" here refers not to the final place of the ungodly, but to the unseen place a person resides after death and awaiting judgement. When Christ died, he had the keys to return back from the place he resided those three after his crucifixion.

REV 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen and the things which are and the things which shall be hereafter;

John is told to write down everything he had seen to this point and all during this "in the Spirit" state he was in.

REV 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Once again, the explanation of the seven stars as being the angels of the seven churches which were represented by the seven candlesticks. An additional note, Christians are told to let their "light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The fact that churches are represented as candles here would also indicate they are to be visible before the world. Many early Christians lost their lives holding this flame high. And the example here of John being exiled because he preached Jesus. He did not lose his life, but he fulfilled another purpose in God's plans in writing this book for us to read today.

REVELATION 2

REV 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write. These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

(From the Diaglott) "By the messenger of the congregation in Ephesus, write; These things say he who holds the seven stars in his right hand, he who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands;"

"Angel" means "messenger", both in the heavenly and human realm. This would refer to the humanly messenger, as it would seem highly unlikely that Jesus would give the message via the Holy Spirit to John to a heavenly angel to deliver to the seven churches. Did the early church use such messengers? Yes, they did.

Note 2 Cor. 8:23, "Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ."

Also note Phil. 2:25, "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants."

Also Tit. 3:12-13, "**12** When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. **13** Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them."

And Eph. 6:20-22, "**20** For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. **21** But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: **22** Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts."

And Acts 10:17-20, "**17** Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, **18** And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. **19** While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. **20** Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them."

So, it is highly probable the angels mentioned were earthly messengers sent to the seven churches with the message revealed to John.

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia, and the greatest city. At this time the city of Ephesus was about a thousand years old. It was thoroughly a Roman city, but its culture was colored a lot by paganism, their principal deity being Diana. A quarter of a mile in all directions of this temple was designated a sanctuary area, thus becoming one of the vilest collections of thieves, murderers, and lawless persons anywhere at that time. This temple stood until the year 262, when it was destroyed by the Goths. At this time though it was one of the seven wonders of the world. The church there was founded by the Apostle Paul, who also laboured there three years (see Acts 18:). Afterwards he wrote the epistle of Ephesians to them. At a later time, he sent

Timothy there and then addressed two letters to him. This particular church was quite prominent in the early church.

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

Note 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

The church at Ephesus was praised for its battle against evil and false teachers.

REV 2:3 And hast borne and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

They did not become weary in this battle but were steadfast.

REV 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love.

Some say they should have manifested their love instead of fighting against those false teachers. They were correct in their fight against error, and were praised in this, but there was something missing. They had left their first love. They had departed from loving Jesus and the brotherhood as they should.

Read Acts 19:1-20 for the history of the beginning of the Ephesian church.

REV 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

To remove the candlestick would indicate the death of that congregation. The city of Ephesus that was known at that time does not even exist today but is in total ruins. The nearest city today is four miles away. Because of the silt brought into the bay by Cayster River it became too shallow there for ships to use it as a port, thus the entire city died, and another arose. But this statement refers to the church at Ephesus, not the city.

REV 2:6 But this thou hast that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

Early historians, Irenaeus and Hippolytus, identify the Nicolaitans as a sect which grew out of Nicolas (Acts 6:5) who apostatized from Christ. However they originated, they were known as perverts and decadents. Loose thinking, loose living and just overall "loose" were their characteristics. They taught that it was a matter of indifference to commit adultery or eat things sacrificed to idols. The Ephesians couldn't bear them.

REV 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

"To him that overcometh" is a term that John liked to use. Luke used it once and Paul used it four times. John used it seven times before Revelations and eleven times in Revelations.

"Tree of life" is mentioned in Genesis 2:9 and Revelations 22:2, 4 and 19.

REV 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write. These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Smyrna was also a harbor city about 40 miles north of Ephesus. It had a high Jewish population, but it was also had its idol worshippers. It was under the power of the Roman Empire. This city was also about a thousand years old at this writing. It was utterly destroyed by Alyattes of Lydia in 600 B.C. and was laid dead until 301 B.C. when it was rebuilt by Lysimachus. It then flourished and became a competing city with Ephesus for importance in Asia. Note the comparison to this city and to that of Christ. Smyrna still exists today, but with the Turkish name of Izmir. Today, as then, it is one the most important cities in that region. In 1955 its population was 286,000.

REV 2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say, they are Jews and are not but are the synagogue of Satan.

The early Christians here had a rough time. This was the center of Caesar worship. Smyrna built a shrine to Roma as early as 195 B.C., and as the republic spread the worship of Rome became more widespread. A priesthood was formed to serve in the emperor's worship, and it became necessary that the citizenry show their loyalty to the state by the worship of the emperor. The servants of Rome brought down punishment upon the heads of the Christians for not submitting to these gods. It is no wonder the Christians here were poor with the tribulation they had to suffer.

"and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."

See Rom. 2:28-29, "**28** For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: **29** But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart ..."

The Christians are the Jews of the new dispensation.

Nevertheless, these Jews were not even Jews outwardly. According to early writings of history the Jews at Smyrna caved in to the pressure of Rome and was involved with emperor worship. Ignatius wrote later when Polycarp, a Christian, was martyred in Smyrna in 155 A.D. that many spoke against him saying, "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the overthrower of our gods who has been teaching many not to sacrifice, or to worship the gods...The multitude gathered wood and fagots, the Jews especially eagerly assisting in it."

REV 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.

There is no conclusive agreement to the understanding of the meaning of "ten days"; whether it is literal 10 days, or means ten years, or ten persecutions.

REV 2:11 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

REV 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write' These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Pergamus was also a center of Roman emperor worship, having three temples erected there by Roman emperors. There were also temples there to Zeus, Athena, Dionysius, and Asklepios.

REV 2:13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied faith even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth.

Nothing is known in history of Antipas, or elsewhere in the Bible, but it is obvious he was known back then and was found faithful but lost his life as a Christian.

REV 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

The term "the doctrine of Balaam" was used because of their teaching in advocating participation in pagan worship, eating things sacrificed to idols, and committing fornication, which were all ingredients in pagan worship.

REV 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

Whereas the church at Ephesus fought against the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, the church at Pergamos had them in their midst.

REV 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

REV 2:17 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

"eat of the hidden manna" - the joys of heaven will satisfy our eternal wants as bread satisfies hunger.

"white stone" - Among the Greeks a white stone was a symbol of acquittal, as a black stone was of guilt.

"a new name written" - unknown. Rev. 19:12-13, "**12** His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. **13** And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."

REV 2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.

Thyatira is a town on a fertile plain, which today is an important cotton industry. Apollo, the sun god, was their principal deity.

REV 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Here Christ has a glowing compliment to the church at Thyatira in several areas; and their works had increased from the time the church started.

REV 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

This glowing praise is now diminished. It appears they had a woman teaching in the church at this time. The original Jezebel was involved in whoredom and witchcraft (2 Kings 9:22). "To commit fornication...eat things sacrificed to idols..." This identification of the sins of Jezebel identifies her and her followers with the followers of Balaam and with the Nicolaitans, It is quite evident that the three churches of Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira had basically the same problem in the type of wickedness: (1) the conduct of a few at Ephesus, (2) the justification of it by a body of teaching at Pergamos, and (3) the leadership of the church by a woman having been thoroughly corrupted by it.

REV 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

This is an indication that this woman had been warned before but was still continuing in this doctrine and practice.

REV 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Sickness and a bed are symbols of affliction and punishment. Unless there was repentance by this Jezebel, or those who were active in this sin, they were to suffer great physical suffering before they died. I am reminded of the diseases prevalent today brought about by sexual sin, especially AIDS.

REV 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Her children are her followers, not her literal children. There were those who shared with her in spreading her false doctrine, and they would die a physical death that would not be because of old age, but from the hand of God. And by reason of the judgements inflicted upon these people all the churches would know about it, and thereby be warned.

REV 2:24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

Not everyone at Thyatira followed the doctrine of this Jezebel. "To the rest...I will put upon you none other burden." None other than to avoid, themselves, of following this doctrine. They were alright except for allowing this faction in the church in the first place. "Which have not known the depths of Satan", or "who know not the deep things of Satan." Those in error here probably were no different than those of today who teach error, calling those things "deep things" of God, but here is a reference as being of Satan.

REV 2:25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

Of the things they were praised about earlier they were to hold fast till Christ comes. They were to remain faithful until death, which, so far as they were concerned, would be the same as if he had come in their lifetime. (Matt. 24:13) "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

REV 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

See Matt. 19:28, "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

See also 1 Cor. 6:2-4.

But the thought here is that those who overcame and remained steadfast would crush the influence of paganism in the church.

REV 2:27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

A rod of iron indicates a firm, sure, and unbending rule. The Greek word for rule means to "shepherd." His law against the wicked will be as inflexible as a rod of iron, and its effect will be that of a rod of iron breaking a potter's vessel.

REV 2:28 And I will give him the morning star.

See Rev. 22:16, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." That star is Jesus himself. He will give those who overcame of himself.

REV 2:29 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

What has been written to each of the seven churches is intended for all churches of all times to hear.

REVELATION 3

REV 3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write. These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Sardis is today only a small village named Sart, with only a few huts. Sardis was at one time the capital of the Lydian monarchy around 1200 B.C. This city was strategically located on top of a plateau on the slopes of Mt. Tmolus. It was protected on 3 sides by almost perpendicular cliffs overlooking the Hermus river valley, giving the city strong military protection. Despite this, however, the city was twice destroyed by their enemy scaling the cliffs and taking them from their unprotected side. This was done in 546 B.C. by Cyrus, and in 218 B.C. by Antiochus. They had here during the first century a temple of Cybele, which was a pagan temple and a center of immorality. The ruins of this temple now lie in the valley below the cliffs. Emperor worship was also strong there; and, out of gratitude to Tiberius who had aided financially in rebuilding the city after an earthquake in 17 A.D., they competed for the honor of building a temple to him; but lost out to Smyrna. The city was completely destroyed by Tamerlane in 1402 and was never rebuilt.

It is believed that the church here was not started by Paul, but by some of those whom he had sent out.

It is thought that the majority had so fully compromised with the pagan environment that they were Christian in name only.

REV 3:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

"Be watchful" should have some meaning to those of a city that was completely wiped out because they were not watchful. There were a few Christians left still trying to do the will of God. But indications are that they were growing weak and about to die unless they were strengthened. Whatever works that were done evidently were not according to the will of God for He was not pleased with them. They may have thought their works were all right, but God and Christ said their works were not perfect.

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

Usually, we think in terms of what we should remember when we first believed, but these were told to remember "how" they received and heard the word. This may have reference to their sincerity and enthusiasm with which they accepted the gospel. This church is not charged with tolerating any wicked doctrines, as in some of the other churches, but rather with slowly dying from loss of interest in what was accepted. In this they were told to repent.

"Come as a thief" - No man knows when Christ will come so we are to be always watchful that we are ready.

REV 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

"A few names" means a few persons. Christians, who despite the prevailing wickedness and deadness of the church were still faithful, but in danger of being overcome by the majority.

"They did not defile their garments"..." This indicates that the pagan culture was probably invading the church at Sardis. The garments of Christians are to be white spiritually. Committing immorality, as with idolatry, would have this effect. There were a few still clothed in white.

REV 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

If they overcame in this life, they would wear white in heaven. Their names would not be blotted out of the book of life. Our names are recorded there when we become Christians.

REV 3:6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Same reference made to everyone.

REV 3:7 And to the Angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Philadelphia means "lover of his brother". This city was founded between 189 B.C. and 138 B.C. by either Eumenes or his younger brother Attalus. The city was a commemoration of the loyalty the two brothers had to each other. Eumenes was king of Pergamum at the time. A false rumor of Eumenes' assassination led to Attalus' acceptance of the crown, which he relinquished when his brother returned to Greece. There was Roman pressure on Attalus to overthrow his brother and become king after this, but he refused and kept his loyalty to his brother. Another term referred to this city was "city of many earthquakes" for it lies very close to a fault line. This city has been destroyed a number of times by earthquakes but has always been rebuilt. It has had numerous name changes over the years, having been named after heads of different dynasties. The present name is Ala Sheher, "the Red City", so named because of the red volcanic earth of its location.

"Holy... true..." These attributes of Christ are clearly appropriate for a church maintaining their love and faith in Christ in the midst of pagan culture. Their main opposition, though, was Jewish. Christ was saying that the church at Philadelphia was the true spiritual Jews. That they had the key of David. They were the new Israel of God.

REV 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

"An open door". Perhaps a door to blessings. He was certainly pleased with them. "A little strength". Does not mean they were weak, but that they were few in number, but they were all loyal to Him. They did not deny Christ as so many of the early Christians were put to the test.

REV 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

The Jews were once the chosen people of God. The Gentiles had to pay homage to them by bowing down to them (Isaiah 60:14). The reverse will be made true now. Not in a physical sense, for man is not to be worshipped. But the Jews at Philadelphia were to be shown by God somehow that this little church of Christians was loved by God.

REV 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.

As they had the promise to be kept in their temptation because they were keeping the word of God, so we have the same promise. "I can do all things in Christ who strengtheneth me." We will never be tempted more than we are able to bear. The millennialists look upon this verse as there being some specific hour in the future wherein Christ will come and take all the Christians from off the earth, while the rest are tried in their temptations. No such thing implied here. Simply, we are all tempted, but Christians can withstand temptation because of their strength in Christ. "In the hour of trial" means "in any hour of trial".

REV 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

"Quickly" may also mean "suddenly", or "unexpectedly". Once again, no man knows when Christ will return. But we are to always be ready.

REV 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of mx God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of mv God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

"He that overcometh..." That is, the conquerors of this life's temptations. "A pillar in the temple of my God..." Promise of eternal life. There will be no need to go out of that city for any reason. In fact, there will be a great gulf fixed where it will be impossible to go where the lost were cast. As we bear the marks of a Christian in this life, we will also bear the marks of Christ in heaven.

REV 3:13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Message is to all the churches, and to all its members.

REV 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

Laodicea was founded by Antiochus II in 261-246 B.C. after his wife Laodice. This city was situated on the great Roman road to Syrian Antioch. It had a small fortress because of the vulnerability of their water supply which came through an aqueduct a distance of six miles. This city would not be able to withstand a determined siege.

Laodicea was a banking center with a great deal of wealth. Its greatest industry was wool, especially black wool from Phrygian sheep. They were noted for their clothing industry. It also had a medical school at this time.

To indicate the wealth of this city, when demolished by a great earthquake in 60 A.D., they rebuilt the city at once from their own resources, declining aid by the emperor. Today it is called Eski-Sheher with a population of around 123,000.

One other notable fact of the environment is that of the hot springs there, which were not really hot, but slightly warm. Not hot enough for a comfortable bath, and lousy to drink.

Col. 4:16 makes note of the letter to Colosse that it was to be read at Laodicea, and of another letter of which we have no record of today.

REV 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

This church had lost its enthusiasm and zeal concerning their religion. He would rather we not be a Christian, than to be an apathetic one. Still better would be an enthusiastic Christian.

REV 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot I will spue thee out of my mouth.

This may seem distasteful to us, but an apt description of His feelings. After what Christ did for them, then for them to act indifferent about Him, He said they would be cast away.

REV 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

How strange a saying for a city so rich. But He was not referring to their physical wealth. They were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked spiritually. There was healing in their medical school, but they were sick. There were clothes from their garment factories, but they were naked. It is sad because they did not even realize it. They had mistaken the "good life" for the "righteous life". They boasted of their riches, and stated their claim to need nothing, yet they were the neediest of all.

REV 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the Fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Of all the treasures they had they were told to buy gold tried in fire which is a reference to Christ himself. Instead of wearing the fine clothes from their garment factories, they should wear a white raiment, the symbol of Christian purity, or the wearing of Christ Himself. Instead of looking to their medical school to see, they should obtain the eyesalve from Christ so they can see. (Psalms 19:8) "…the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." This refers to their spiritual blindness.

REV 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Rebuke and chastening are evidence of genuine love when they are properly given. They were not only told to repent, but to also be zealous.

REV 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

His invitation is always extended to us. If we but only will hear his knocking and calling, we can share not only a communion with Him, but we can share everlasting happiness with Him.

REV 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Once again, the term overcome is used. Whatever trials the early church had to go through; whatever trials we have to go through today, we must overcome. When we share Christ in our life and doing His will on earth, then we can also share with Christ the glories of heaven.

REV 3:22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit unto the churches.

The seventh time this expression was used, once for each of the seven churches covered. We all have ears, and we all should listen to what Christ has to say about the seven churches.

REVELATION 4

Chapters 4 and 5 are preparatory visions, giving us a view of the throne of God and of the Lamb (one combined throne). Actual predictions of future events do not begin until chapter 6.

REV 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me: which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

"After these things...". After the visions concerning the seven churches. Not "after the fulfillment", but "after John's having seen them." Millennialist's see the "rapture", or the coming of Christ here; but there is no justification for assigning what follows to a time after this world.

'I saw, and behold a door opened in heaven..." The door was open for possibly two reasons: 1. It was standing open for John to see into it. 2. It stood open to indicate man's opportunity to enter into heaven.

"And the first voice that I heard..." The belief is that the first voice was that of Jesus Christ, the same that spoke concerning the seven churches.

"Trumpet..." A commanding voice.

"Come up hither..." Not in the physical, but John was in the Spirit. He was seeing and acting out a vision.

"I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." The prophesies coming up in the next few chapters were all future happenings at the time of this writing. Some of them have already happened before our lifetime; the things in reference to Christ's second coming and of the judgement are obviously still in the future.

REV 4:2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

John was in the Spirit before he received the vision concerning the seven churches. Now the phrase is repeated. Two possible explanations: 1. Either John was given a break after the vision of the churches, or 2. John went into a higher level of vision to be able to see heaven. (Which is more plausible since John was told to "Come up hither".) The things he saw before were physical things, easy for him to understand. Now he was to see greater things: things of heaven, and spiritual.

The first thing John saw when looking into heaven was the great throne of God, and someone sitting on the throne. The great throne indicates supreme authority and power.

REV 4:3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

The one on the throne is described. Jasper is a stone of dazzling brilliancy, a mountain of light, clear as crystal; a diamond. Sardine stone, or sardius is a fiery red stone.

These were a part of the stones that were put on the high priest's breastplate (Ex. 28:17).

"Rainbow round about the throne..." Our imagination is teased. We know of course God's purpose of the rainbow as a promise that he would not destroy the earth by water again; but it is unclear the purpose of the description as it is used here.

REV 4:4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

Who were these twenty-four elders that sat upon the twelve seats about the throne? The fact that they had crowns on their heads would indicate that they had some ruling authority. Much argument is about concerning who these were men were. Some think they are simply angelic authority figures. Some think they refer to the "raptured" church which allegedly had already happened. The majority of commentators think they signify the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles.

REV 4:5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

"Thunder and lightning, etc...." These announce the presence of God, as at Sinai (Ex. 19:16). John tells us that the seven lamps of fire was the seven Spirits of God, which was discussed in chapter 1. This is generally referred to as the Holy Spirit, or the fullness of the Spirit, since seven is used.

REV 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

"A sea of glass..." If the sea represents populations of the earth, as in later chapters, the calmness of it here would indicate the tranquility and peacefulness of souls in the service of God.

"The four beasts full of eyes..." The eyes before and after give the impression the beasts can see everywhere. These are the cherubim. They are the defenders of God's holiness. They are his chariot on which he rides to judgement. 1 Chronicles 28:18 calls them just that, the chariot. Psalm 18:10 speaks of God riding on a cherub. Ezekiel, chapters 1 and 10, speak at length of the cherubim as God's war wagon. They stand between Adam and the way to the tree of life. They are standing over the ark of the covenant. They are servants to God.

REV 4:7 And the first beast was like a lion and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

These beasts, or creatures, or God's chariot, are represented as animals that we can identify with. Not that they actually were these animals, because they are spirit. But we can see traits of these animals in these creatures. Lion, calf, man, and eagle.

REV 4:8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him: and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

"Six wings..." The use of these, as indicated in Isaiah 6, was: "two covered the face (reverence), two covered the feet (humility), and two were used to fly."

They have already been referred to as having many eyes. Here, they are said to be sleepless, having no rest day or night. Their praise and worship of God goes on unceasingly.

REV 4:9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever

REV 4:10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

REV 4:11 Thou art worthy, 0 Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

The 24 elders cast their crowns before the throne. They enjoy their kingly authority, but they recognize who gave it to them and declare their own servitude to God by this action. They do not stand next to God and declare their power, but declare their power is nothing before God, who gave it.

"Thou art worthy, 0 Lord." Well worth singing. The song of the elders is one to a creator who created for his pleasure.

REVELATION 5

REV 5:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

The book is in the right hand of God. Books at the time of this writing were made of papyrus pith sliced very thin and bonded with glue and water. They were pressed flat and sandpapered for smoothness, giving a sheet of "paper" similar to ones used today. These were made into a scroll by piecing many of these sheets together, side by side, to form the roll. In reading, the roll was transferred from the roller in one hand to another roller in the other. The book of Romans would have required a roll of 11 1/2 feet long. Scrolls were normally written only on the front side. This one used both sides.

This book, or scroll, was sealed. A sealed book is one that is not yet read. It is of the future. Whether short future, or long future depends on following scripture.

REV 5:2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

"Strong angel..." Unimportant; no supporting information.

"Who is worthy..." The key to unlocking the mystery written in the scroll was not power only, but morality, righteousness, holiness, and justice - in a word, worthiness. "…that he might be just and the justifier of him that is of the faith of Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

REV 5:3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

We are being introduced to the Lamb in this vision. Notice the vivid way in which it is happening. The all-important scroll. The challenge ringing forth. The waiting and the silence. John envisions that no one is worthy to open it. No angel is worthy; no living servant of God is worthy; no prophet of former days is worthy.

REV 5:4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

Why did John weep? Because he was promised a look into the future, and now cannot because no one was worthy to open the book? No, this would be a selfish response, unlike the true character of John. It was because he believed that no one was found to be worthy. Of all the people in the world and in heaven, and no one was worthy? What of our beloved Christ? Did he die in vain?

REV 5:5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof.

"One of the elders..." One of the 24 elders spoke of before.

"Weep not; behold the Lion..." This is the title that can only be attributed to Christ. John's anxiety was premature. There was one who was worthy. And it was this same person in whom he had given his very life for; this very person in whom he thought if anyone was worthy, surely Christ was. "…In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33).

"The Lion of the tribe of Judah..." "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he crouched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" (Gen. 49:9).

REV 5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

"A Lamb standing..." The Lamb is Jesus Christ. He appears in symbolic form, as a Lamb, the Lamb of God slain for sins; a sacrificial Lamb bearing wounds, the marks of having been slain.

"Having seven horns..." Horns were familiar symbols of honor, power, and authority. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18).

"And seven eyes..." These are the seven spirits of God, or the Holy Spirit, himself.

REV 5:7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

This has already happened. It is now obvious that what John has seen so far was past tense. Read Heb. 1:3,8; 2:9.

REV 5:8 And when he had taken the book the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

"Having every one of them harps..." The harp is purely symbolical, not mechanical instruments in heaven, as heaven is spiritual, and the harp is physical. John was seeing things in heaven, not on earth. This does not show support for instrumental music in church worship. The next verse indicates they represent the singing of the elders.

"Golden vials full of odors..." These are the prayers of the saints brought to God by the 24 elders. These elders were not earthly beings but carried the prayers of the saints to God.

REV 5:9 And they sung a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the books and to open the seals thereof: for thou hast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

"A new song... Both songs: Rev. 15:3. "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." This new song has reference to redemption. Read Isaiah 42:8-10. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28).

REV 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

We are "kings and priests...reigning on earth."

1 Pet. 2:9. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"

Mat. 3:2. "...Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matt. 16:27-28. "**27** For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. **28** Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Col. 1:12-13. "**12** Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: **13** Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

John 18:36. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

John 3:5. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Rom. 14:17. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." We are priests now.

1 Pet. 2:5. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The saints on earth, but under Christ, reign through the teaching and living of Christ's law; they exercise a leading, directing, and restraining influence.

Matt. 21:43. "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

REV 5:11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

The number of angels about the throne was countless. Heb. 12:22. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,"

REV 5:12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Sayings of the host of angels about the throne. Probably singing it (see verse 9).
Luke 2:12-14. "**12** And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, **14** Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

REV 5:13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Not just men, but the whole of creation reflects the worth and power of Jesus. It is by his word that all things hold together Heb. 1:2-3. "**2** Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; **3** Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:" The lower creations (animals, plants, fish, birds, etc.), in their proper way, honor and praise God through their continuity as he directed them. Psalms 19:1. "The heavens declare the glory of God." Acts 4:24-28. "**24** And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: **25** Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? **26** The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. **27** For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, **28** For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

REV 5:14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

"Amen..." The four beasts show their agreement of this. The 24 elders fell down and worshipped God also in assent.

All of these ascribing to Christ authority and power was an impressive way of showing him to be able to break the seals and reveal the future. This feature John introduces in the next chapter.

REVELATION 6

We want to make note of the scene here. The Lamb, Jesus Christ, has just taken the book, or scrolls, as He was the only one who was worthy. As the Lamb will open each of the seven seals John will have a symbolic look into the future, so he could give a written description of them. The seals were opened in succession, and with the opening of each seal John sees a different scene which happens in succession. Since Rev. 1:1 declares the revelation to be of things which must shortly come to pass, then these things started happening shortly after John received the revelation. John does not name names, places, nor periods in plain and definite terms, which makes the task of figuring it all out more difficult. But clues are given to us concerning these.

REV 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

"Come and see". Attend closely to the vision.

REV 6:2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

John saw: a horse, its white color, the armed warrior, his crown, his bow, his mission. What do each of these symbols mean?

The horse. He was never used by the Jews or Orientals as a beast of burden. The ox and the ass (donkey) were used for this purpose. The horse was reserved for war. Whenever the horse is mentioned by the prophets it is used in connection with war. So, this symbol points to a period of war.

The white color. As there are three more horses in succession under the three following seals, each of different colors, the color must have a meaning. White must have a different significance from red, or black, or pale. What is indicated by the color of the first horse? In the context of war white is the color of prosperity, of happiness, and of triumph. Whenever a Roman general won a victory, his chariot was drawn by milk white horses.

The rider. His significance is due to his arms, his crown, and the white horse he rides. He represents either some conqueror, or a conquering age.

The crown. This crown is the *stephanos* crown: the garland, or victory crown. The rider, Jesus, of the white horse in the 19th chapter of Revelation wore a *diadema* crown. The crown this rider wore was given as a reward for victory in battle, for great achievements, or for victory in the games.

The bow. The rider is armed with a bow. It was anciently used as an implement of war or for hunting (Gen. 27:3; Gen. 48:22; Isa. 7:24).

In the setting of this vision shows the bow to be that of a tool of war.

Many think the rider to be that of Jesus Christ and His victory over the cross; but I am more inclined to think it be something else. These were to be things of the future; the cross at this time had already happened. The horse was a symbol of war; and the other three horses were obviously of carnal powers, implying that this one was also. Christ's

warfare was not carnal. The description of the rider of the white horse in the 19th chapter was different than here and more elaborate, making no doubt that the rider there was Christ. Christ was never depicted with a bow; a sword proceeding from his mouth, yes, but never a bow.

For these reasons I believe this represents a period of events starting near the opening of the second century involving the Roman Empire. Beginning in the reign of Nero (AD 64), the church suffered several persecutions before the close of the third century. Since the vision indicates successful warfare, the persecutions of the church during this period would seem to indicate that it applies to Rome. Few Christians had much chance against this empire during this period. The period AD 96 - AD 180 is described by historians as one of prosperity and triumph for the Roman Empire. In the book The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire this is called a "happy period" when five "good" emperors ruled - Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonine's.

The man upon the white horse may refer to the Roman emperors throughout this period. Nerva was one of the best of the emperors, but he ruled only two years. Trajan was especially noted for his extension of the empire by conquering other kingdoms. His success was "rapid and specious", and that "every day the astonished senate received intelligence of new names and new nations that acknowledge his sway." This age of Roman prosperity and dominance lasted through the Antonine periods. These emperors were entitled to wear the garland crown of victory. This fulfillment is within the scope of prophecy, which embraces the Roman Empire. The bow itself may have a special significance. Nerva, the founder of a new line of six Caesars, was a Cretan, who were a race of bowmen, the most famous of the ancient world. The bow during this period was a national emblem.

REV 6:3 And when he had opened the second seal. I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

REV 6:4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

Now John sees a red horse. Upon the horse sat one with a great sword in his hand to "take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another." The horse is the symbol of war, but the changed color indicates that the conditions of war are entirely changed. It is no longer triumphant war over their enemies, while within all is peace, but the land is drenched in blood. During the period of the first seal the fertile provinces of the Roman Empire never saw a hostile soldier unless brought as a captive from a distant war. All was peace within. But now a period of internal war is indicated. The "earth" would be the Roman earth, or empire. From it peace was to be taken away.

During the next 92 years the Roman Empire was constantly torn by bloody contests between rival competitors for power. The history of this is told by Sismondi, "With Commodus commenced the third and most calamitous period. It lasted ninety-two years, from 192 to 284 AD. During that period thirty-two emperors, and twenty-seven pretenders alternately hurled each other from the throne by incessant civil warfare. Ninety-two years of almost incessant civil warfare..."

These emperors were known as tyrants. Of these all but two died violent deaths. This period in succession fits the description of the red (blood) horse and its rider, "to whom was given a great sword, and the power to take away peace, that men should kill one another."

REV 6:5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

REV 6:6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

Again, there appear a horse and a rider. Again, the color of the horse is changed, as well as the instrument held in the hand of the horseman. Because of the use of a horse, this is another period of war. The black horse along with the following description indicates a period torn by calamitous war, and is filled with sorrow, mourning, and despair. Black is the color of mourning. The prophet (Jer. 14:2) says: "Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up." The balances used for weighing food are a symbol of scarcity and famine. "Bread by weight" has always been a sign of scarcity and famine. (Lev. 26:26) "And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight:" (Ezek. 4:16-17) "**16** Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: **17** That they may want bread and water, and be astonied one with another, and consume away for their iniquity." The prices named also indicate scarcity and famine. The measure was about a quart, and the penny about sixteen cents, which would make the wheat worth about $5 per bushel: or, about $25 per bushel in today's modern currency. Despite all that, whatever else was going on in the country, care was to be taken to preserve the oil and wine, which were normally in great abundance.

This could apply to many periods of time when there was famine during a time of war; but the period of AD 211-217 of the Roman Empire (the next successional period) would naturally fit this prophesy. During the rule of Caracalla, a bloodthirsty tyrant, there was a reign of terror. According to the book, The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire, "The most wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiscations! and the great body of his subjects oppressed by ingenious and aggravated taxes. ... In the course of this history, we shall be too often summoned to explain the land tax, the capitation, and the heavy contributions of corn, wine, oil, and meat, which were exacted from the provinces for the use of the court, the army, and the capital." In such conditions all the provinces would suffer.

REV 6:7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

REV 6:8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death and with the beasts of the earth.

Again, a horse. Still a time of war. The horse is now pale (*chloros* - yellow green), the bloodless color of the dead. Upon him sits a figure called Death. The means employed to destroy men are described: the sword, or war; hunger, or famine; death, or pestilence; destruction caused by wild beasts of forests and field.

During the period of Gallienus, AD 260-268, the Roman Empire was attacked on every side by the "blind fury" of foreign invaders. Famine came in, then followed by epidemical diseases. There was a furious plague raging uninterrupted in every province, city, and almost every family of the Roman Empire. During part of this period some 5000 persons died daily in Rome; and many towns that had escaped the hands of the Barbarians, were entirely depopulated. Above half the population of Alexandria had perished. John reveals that one-fourth of the people would perish. The scourge of ravenous wild beasts had multiplied because of the depopulation of great provinces.

The main idea of the first four visions was war. The first was victorious, the second disastrous, the third and fourth picture various calamities that came as a result of internal strife and enemy invasion. But all these refer primarily to the Romans. Since the church was mainly in Roman provinces, it also was affected by whatever befell the empire. Yet during these two centuries the government was so much concerned with political and economic conditions that the church enjoyed religious freedom more than otherwise would have been possible. This would help explain the great growth of Christianity during this period. Their faith and courage were strengthened following a Saviour who had been crucified. This made them able to suffer more easily.

With the fifth seal the scene changes and the horses and riders disappear. The experience of the church now is the primary thing.

REV 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

REV 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, 0 Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

REV 6:11 And white robes were given unto every one of them. and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

"I saw under the alter the souls of them that were slain for the word of God..." These are clearly Christians who had suffered martyrdom. They had died "for the word of God." They were under the altar. This is a symbolic reference to the type of the Old Law. (Lev. 4:7) "And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." This points out that their own blood was poured out for Christ.

"They cried out with a loud voice." Their cry indicates that the church had suffered long and severely, and they cry for deliverance.

"And white robes were given unto every one of them..." The robes of justification and victory. They are assured that the day when "they will be avenged" will come soon, but that they must wait a little season. Others must be added to the number of the martyrs. It is a time of persecution. The fulfillment is to be sought in a war of extermination waged against Christianity.

In AD 284, after the death of Commodus, Diocletian ascended the Roman throne. It was in his reign that the most terrible and general persecution was known in the history of the ancient church. The emperor was not by nature a prosecutor, but others in the Empire, especially Galerius, were alarmed at the astonishing progress of the new religion and demanded its extermination. At last Diocletian yielded and became the leader in the effort to root out the religion of Christ everywhere.

In AD 303 secret councils were held in Nicomedia, concerning the destruction of Christianity. On the 21st of February, the first blow was struck. An armed force was sent to destroy the church of Nicomedia, and to burn all their books. In The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire, "The resentment, or the fears of Diocletian, at length transported him beyond the bounds of moderation, which he had hitherto preserved, and he declared, in a series of cruel edicts, his intention of abolishing the Christian name. By the first of these edicts, the governors of the provinces were directed to apprehend all persons of the ecclesiastical order; and the prisons, destined for the vilest criminals, were soon filled with a multitude of"...Christians. ... "By a second edict, the magistrates were commanded to employ every method of severity, which might reclaim them from their odious superstition, and oblige them to return to the established worship of gods. This rigorous order was extended, by a subsequent edict, to the whole body of Christians, who were exposed to a violent and general persecution." The persecution had such fury that sometimes church buildings were surrounded by soldiers, the doors barred, and the congregations burned in them, this continued for over ten years.

REV 6:12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair and the moon became as blood.

REV 6:13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

REV 6:14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

REV 6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

REV 6:16 And said to the mountains and rocks Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

REV 6:17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

"There was a great earthquake..." An indication of some great disturbance. Many have attributed this to the second coming of our Lord, but this cannot be for it is followed by

a period in which a multitude of the redeemed will be sealed, and the opening of the seventh seal under which the seven trumpets are to be sounded. Although the language of the great Judgement is similar, this type of language has been used in the Old Testament in several places in judgements on Assyria, Egypt, Edom, and Judah. There is often burning fire and brimstone (Isaiah 34), the blackening-out of the sunlight as in the judgement on Egypt; the staggering of the earth and the mountains as on Judah (Jer. 4:23-25); the removing of the heavens as in judgement on Edom (Isaiah 34:4-6). Figurative use of the words sun, moon, and stars is clearly evident in such texts as Joel 2:10; Isa. 13:9-10; Jer. 4:24. The sun, moon, and stars are symbols of earthly dignitaries, great lights in the political or religious heavens. In the dream of Joseph these terms are used in this meaning, as well as by the ancient prophets. The blackness of the sun and the bloodiness of the moon point out scenes of mourning and bloodshed among rulers and princes. The falling stars would indicate the downfall of those who had high places on the earth, or rather within the Roman Empire.

The heaven was removed as a scroll..." The old religions, supposed to be of heavenly origin, pass away.

"Every mountain and island were moved..." Mountain and island are used to denote earthly rulers and kingdoms. The kingdom of Christ was prophetically described as the "mountain of the Lord's house." (Isaiah 2:2) "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountains of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Mountains and islands being moved out of their places, therefore, refer to radical changes in forms of government. No small changes would be represented by such a breaking up of the material universe.

"The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, ..." ... "said ... hide us ..." The language shows that all classes - high and low - would be equally distressed. The classes mentioned are representative; it means that the disturbance would be so great that none would escape from the terror. As a radical change in government would disturb them, they would be trying to avoid persecution and death.

The period immediately following the great persecution of the 5th seal (which was about AD 311) started a period of national mourning. This was the start of a period of mighty revolution. Constantine, leaving Britain, marched through Gaul, launching his armies against Italy. Maxentius, a pagan ruler of Rome, was defeated and slain. Constantine then took power over Rome. In the East another pagan emperor, Licinius, still held power. Wars and battles followed until AD 324 when he was finally crushed and put to death. In this period of conflict six emperors in all, strove for power, of whom Constantine remained the sole survivor. In the end the leaders of the old paganism felt that theirs was a doomed religion then rallied behind Constantine. In AD 331 he decreed that the pagan religion should no longer exist, and their building be converted into churches, or be leveled. Old Roman laws were rewritten taking in the precepts of the Christian religion. Surely the old heavens were moved away as a scroll is gathered together. He also moved the capital of the Roman Empire from Italy to the banks of the Hellespont. The mighty mountain of the West, which had existed for 11 centuries, was moved from its place.

REVELATION 7

REV 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

"After these things..." After viewing the scenes revealed from the sixth seal continuing here.

"...angels standing on the four corners of the earth, ..." The vision that appears before his eyes is that of four angels at the four points of the compass, holding four winds to prevent them from rushing in destruction upon the earth. This is a destructive wind. Such winds lash the seas and uproot trees as in a hurricane. This is the picture John saw, but it represents some else. It indicates that four destructive powers would be restrained for some time, and then be released and come like a fierce wind.

REV 7:2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

"...another angel..." The picture is that of another angel having the seal of God, which is a mark of ownership, coming to tell the four angels what not to do.

REV 7:3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

The destructive forces were to be restrained until the servants of God would be sealed - that is until they would become servants of God by believing and obeying his word. To have the seal of God on their foreheads would indicate an ownership of God. To have this placed on their foreheads could indicate that possibly the gospel of truth was received in their minds. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. 1:13). Most commentators agree that the sealed are Christians. The appearance is that the destructive power was not to be turned loose until after the events of the seventh seal. During this time, then, the church was to gain a large number of followers of Christ, then the destructive force would be released. This was to be a time of relative peace for the church to grow.

REV 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

REV 7:5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

REV 7:6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

REV 7:7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

REV 7:8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

REV 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great, multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.

Who were the 144,000? Much speculation here. Some say they are the saved from the Jewish dispensation, but this cannot be, for Christ put away that dispensation. If the sealed are Christians, then why the reference to the twelve tribes of Israel? and 12,000 sealed from each? Some think the 144,000 thousand in verse 4 is the same group as the great, uncountable number in verse 9. But note the wordage - 'after this", that is, after the 144,000, there was then a "multitude of all nations". A logical thought would be, since the sealed were Christians, then the 144,000 could represent those who had converted from Judaism to Christianity, and the greater multitude as that of those who were Gentile converts to Christianity. The picture is of this large group standing before the throne dressed in white gowns. Clearly, they are those who have died as a Christian, but not necessarily as martyrs as some believe. The palms in their hands indicate they were joyful. The palm is a symbol of joy. It was used at the feast of Tabernacles and at the feast of thanksgiving. Several commentators speak of the feast of Tabernacles as being a very "festive", or "jubilant" time.

The twelve tribes: Genesis 49: lists the twelve as follows: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, and Benjamin. Besides the difference in sequence note the difference in the names listed. The original Dan is missing and replaced by Manassas in the list of the 12 tribes. The reason is thought to be because the tribe of Dan became idolatrous. One prophecy concerning Dan was that he "…shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." (Gen. 49:17) (Judges 18:29-30). "**29** And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first. **30** And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land." Concerning Manasseh and Ephraim (Joseph's second son) read Genesis 48:8-20. In some lists in the Bible of the 12 tribes Ephraim is sometimes named instead of his father, Joseph. Manasseh is sometimes listed instead of Dan as his descendants took over the priesthood of that tribe.

REV 7:10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

REV 7:11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

REV 7:12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

REV 7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

REV 7:14 And I said unto him Sir thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, ..." Because of the wordage some commentators say this refers to any great tribulation, but others note the article "the" appears in the Greek as "out of the great tribulation...", pointing evidently to a specific period of time.

"washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Washing their robes is figurative of their conversion to Christ. In doing this one becomes "white", or, having had his sins washed away.

REV 7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

Christians serve God in this life and will continue to serve Him in a different form in the life to come. He will also "dwell among them."

REV 7:14 They shall hunger no more neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat.

REV 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The troubles, pain, worry, hunger, and burdens of the flesh here will all be gone when the redeemed dwell with God.

The meaning of this chapter. What do the symbols of this vision signify? Winds, here, are generally accepted among commentators as powers. These powers were to be checked, or restrained, until the church had a chance to gain strength. There is revealed two groups of Christians in heaven (a distinction made only because one represents the first-fruits of the church, as there is no Jew nor Gentile in heaven, but Christians). In the 14th chapter of Revelation, we find again a company of 144,000 with the Lamb upon Mt. Zion. We are there told that they were "virgins", a term meaning they had not followed other gods, but were loyal to Christ, and that they were "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." This, plus the statements that they were of the tribes of Israel, identify them as the early Jewish members of the church. The Jews were the original first fruits when the gospel was being preached. Pictured with them are the great multitudes of others who were also wearing robes of white. There is a picture of triumph and happiness among them before the throne. These were they who had lived during the great tribulation period of the first three centuries in the history of the church.

Now before the four winds, or powers were to be released the church would enjoy a period of peace. The next chapter deals with the events of the four winds.

REVELATION 8

In the opening of the 7th chapter, we are told that four angels were holding back four hurtful winds, or destroying agencies, until a great work was done for the church. The church enjoyed a peaceful period of about 78 years void of war-torn strife. That work accomplished; the 8th chapter describes how four angels let loose four terrible agencies to a work of destruction. The 9th chapter finishes out the seven angels with three woes.

REV 8.1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

The text gives no hint why there was a pause in heaven after the 7th seal was made known. Often there is a brief calm before a storm in material elements. Perhaps this shows a hush of awe before the awful destruction was about to take place.

REV 8:2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God. and to them were given seven trumpets.

All of the events under the seventh seal are divided by the sounding of the seven trumpets. The trumpets were given them by God, thus what was to happen had the full authority of God.

REV 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

REV 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

The verses of this paragraph present a vision of worship after the manner of the Jewish tabernacle service. (Lev. 16:12-13). "**12** And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: **13** And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:" The was a picture of the "true tabernacle" as told in Heb. 8:1-2: "**1** Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; **2** A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

"and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden alter..." In Rev 5:8 the golden bowls of incense were said to be "the prayers of the saints," indicating that incense represents prayer. This is a similar worship scene, but it is said the angel should "add it" unto the prayer of all saints. Incense was symbolically represented as bearing their prayers up to God. While the priests were inside the temple burning incense, the people were outside praying. (Luke 1:9-10), "**9** According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. **10** And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense." This gives us the impression that there was a continuum of prayers added unto previous prayers unto the Lord. The Diaglott and some other translations along with several commentators' notes say this

should have been translated "for the prayers" and not "with the prayers", in the two verses. God has remembered the pleadings of the saints and is now about to do something about it.

REV 8:5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the alter and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Here the angel used the censer, which previously held the incense of prayers, and filled it with fire from the altar and cast it upon the earth. This was to show God answering their prayers by the use of the censer to return destruction upon those who hurt His people. The thunderings, lightnings, and earthquake is symbolic of what was to happen to the Roman Empire for what they did to the Christians.

REV 8:6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

REV 8:7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

Trumpets were often used to give warning or announce some events. (Jer. 4:5). "Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities." Read also Ezek. 33:1-6. (pg.795).

Hail and fire are evidently used to indicate punishment or destructive forces, fire probably meaning lightning when joined with hail. (Ex. 9:23). "...and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt." (Psalms 78:48). "He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts." (Psalms 105:32). "He gave them hail for rain and flaming fire in their land."

"Mingled with blood..." There would be much loss of life.

"and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." With the heavy loss of life, a third of the land (Roman Empire) would also be destroyed.

REV 8:8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

Now a great burning mountain is cast into the sea. The sea becomes the theatre of destruction. There was to be much loss of life and ships in the sea.

REV 8:10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

REV 8:11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

As was mentioned in earlier studies of the Revelation, stars refer to a ruler, princes, or persons of rank. This person was called Wormwood, and he was to bring destruction

upon the rivers. Wormwood is a plant that is very bitter, and it used to be used as a vermifuge, which served to expel worms or other animal parasites from the intestines, as a medicine. So, this person, then, was to aid in expelling the worm called the Roman Empire. The waters of the rivers themselves became undrinkable because of him.

REV 8:12 And the fourth angel sounded and the third part of the sun was smitten and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

Now the third part of the sun, moon, and stars would be darkened. The sun is a symbol of the supreme ruler, the moon, and stars of lesser dignities. If the Roman emperor, ruler of the world, should be cast from power, his empire overthrown, the consuls, senators, and great men who supported his power be cast down, then a period of intellectual and moral darkness should follow.

REV 8:13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

This shows one period has passed, and another about to begin. There are three woes which take place in the 9th chapter.

THE FULFILLMENT

Peace came upon the Roman Empire in 331 A.D. when Constantine took over, and threw out Paganism, replacing it with Christianity. This peaceful period lasted until around 409 A.D., about 78 years. At that time the Goths from the north were fed up with Roman rule. There had been much discontent against Rome for some time, and the people finally decided to do something about it. The Goths left their farms and other places of work and gathered up their arms at a predetermined signal - a trumpet call. They came south and crossed the ice-frozen Danube River with their armies and wagons led by their King Alaric. To quote "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", ...the fertile fields of Phocis and Boeotia were instantly covered by a deluge of barbarians, who massacred the males of an age to bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females, with the spoil and cattle of the flaming villages. The travelers who visited Greece several years afterwards could easily discover the deep and bloody traces of the march of the Goths..." ...the whole territory of Attica, from the promontory of Sunium to the town of Megara, was blasted ..." Corinth, Argos, and Sparta yielded without resistance to the arms of the Goths." The woody and mountainous country of Arcadia became the scene of a long and doubtful conflict between two generals..." The Goths eventually were turned back, only to reinforce their armies. Rome was found to be a defender of the homeland because of their losses, rather than to chase after the Goths. Subsequent attacks came. The Goths "boldly resolved to break through the unguarded passes of the Apennine, to spread desolation over the fruitful face of Tuscany, and to conquer or die before the gates of Rome", but this attempt was unsuccessful. The Goths "had resolved to occupy the important city of Verona, which

commands the principal passage of the Rhaetian Alps; and directing his march through the territories of those German tribes whose alliance would restore his exhausted strength, to invade, on the side of the Rhine, the wealthy and unsuspecting provinces of Gaul." These mountains, unknown to him, were already occupied by Roman soldiers. He was attacked in the front, on his flank, and in the rear. The slaughter was great, but King Alaric fled on horseback, but is thought to have eventually died. Meanwhile, Italy was quite torn up over what Alaric had started. The desolation of the trees and grass was great during these marches and battles. This was previously very rich and fertile land with many orchards and gardens which was devastated. "Blood and conflagration and the burning of trees and herbage marked their path." Here is a remarkable likeness of the symbolism that follows the first trumpet.

The second trumpet implies a warfare upon the sea. Let us turn to history from the period starting at 419 A.D. and lasting to 422 A.D. A horde of barbarians came south that were called Vandals (where we get the term vandalism). They came down through Gaul, swept through Spain, crossed the straights of Gibraltar, and fought and won all the land away from Roman control in North Africa from Tangier to Tripoli. Led by Genseric, the Vandals then went to the forests of the Atlas Mountains for timber. The Vandals were skilled in the arts of navigation and shipbuilding. They then threw themselves like a burning mountain upon the sea and filled it with fire and blood. Fleets met in the shock of battle; the sea is reddened with the blood of the slain; the Roman ships go down; the islands of the Mediterranean Sea fall into the hands of the Vandals. In the year 422 A.D. the Vandal ships invade Italy, and they rush upon Rome. The city is besieged, falls, and for 14 days the Vandals spare neither age, nor sex. Rome was rich with spoils of many centuries; now being gathered by the Vandals, and being carried away, leaving Rome reeling from their destruction. This has a striking similarity to the description of the destruction by sea.

The blazing meteor that follows the sound of the third trumpet implies some mighty leader who suddenly appears and wreaks havoc. Is there such a leader? We'll look to the period starting in 440 A.D. Before this time the Romans knew nothing of the Hungarian nation. About that time there suddenly appeared, as a meteor would flash in the sky, 800,000 warriors on the bank of the Danube. They had come from the depths of Central Asia, marched north of the Black Sea through Russia, and now knocked at the river boundary of the Roman Empire, led by Attila, the Hun. Overcoming opposition to their passage of the Danube, they rushed westward, crossed the river Rhine, and on the river Marne were met in conflict by the armies of Rome. History says that the blood of slaughter made the river run with blood, and that up to about 388,000 people were killed in that battle. Then they desolated the river Rhine to its mouth. Turning southward, on the banks of the river Rhine, they met again in fury. Then, descending from the Alps, they battled on the banks of the river Po. Victorious, he marched southward to seize Rome in 452 A.D. Rome sent an ambassador to meet him to persuade him not to go against Rome. (Rome was very weak by now). They bribed him richly and played upon his superstitions. This worked and he retired to the plains south of Czechoslovakia where the Danube River flows and founded the Hungarian nation. He demanded that his captive wife be returned to him, or he would come back more dreadful. Meanwhile, Attila added another beautiful maid to his list of innumerable wives, and on their wedding night after he had much wine and had retired to the nuptial

bed, an artery had burst. When he died his followers diverted the river from its course, buried him in its bed with three coffins of gold, silver, and iron, and then let the river return to flow over his grave. He was buried in the night secretly because they didn't want anyone looting his grave. Beneath the waters of the river Danube somewhere possibly still lie the bones of the star called Wormwood, that fell upon the rivers.

The fourth trumpet. In 476 A.D. Odoacer, king of the Heruli, a northern race, encouraged by the apparent weakness of the falling empire, besieged, and took the almost helpless city. Augustulus, the feeble emperor, was hurled down, the Roman Senate that had met for 1228 years, was driven from the Senate chambers, the mighty Roman Empire fell to the dust, and the great men were humbled never to rise again. The sun, moon, and stars (emperor, princes, and great men) lose their power, and cease to give light. This now began the period in history known as the "Dark Ages." It was during this period that the Bible was gradually taken from the people and controlled by a spiritual leader with the title of Pope. Spiritual darkness began to be spread.

THE THIRD PART

The first falls on a third part of the earth, the second on a third of the sea, the third on a third part of the rivers, and the fourth on a third part of the sun, moon, and stars. This was fulfilled in the Roman world (1) upon its land provinces, (2) upon its seas, (3) upon its river systems, and (4) upon emperors and rulers. Thus, the fall of the Roman Empire.

REVELATION 9

It has already been seen that the trumpet angels are divided into two groups. There remain the three who have been called the woe angels, on account of the language applied to them in chapter 8:13. It is seen that the first four have completed their work, and that the others are devoted to another and a distinct work, which shall be the source of great woe to a part of the inhabitants of the earth.

REV 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

In his vision John saw a star fall to the earth. A star, if understood correctly, is a symbol of a leader. Note also the phrase "and to him." Some think this is Satan, but Rev. 20:1-3 indicate that when Satan was bound and cast into the bottomless pit, an angel had the key, and not Satan. This is an entirely different scene, and the person involved had the power to turn loose a hellish work on the earth.

REV 9:2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

This shows that this person had an evil nature, possibly even spurred on by Satan, and that by him came forth some influence, symbolized by smoke, which darkened the earth.

REV 9:3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

John saw these locusts upon the earth coming out of the smoke. The destroying locusts if understood correctly symbolize destroying armies. Nahum 3:14-15, "**14** Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strong holds: go into clay, and tread the morter, make strong the brickkiln. **15** There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locusts."

Power to hurt is implied, since they are compared to scorpions. The sting of the scorpion is extremely painful, indicating the terrible damage and distress to be accomplished by the powers they represent.

REV 9:4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree. but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

Real locusts devour every green thing. These, however, were to seek to preserve trees and vegetation, so they were symbolic of something else. Their special hurt shall be directed against men who are not sealed as God's own.

REV 9:5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

They were to be hurt, but not killed. Their purpose, then, was not to wipe out the races they attacked, as was the case in some of the earlier wars against Rome. This does not

mean that no individuals were to be killed, but that their purpose was not general slaughter.

They were to be tormented 5 months. If we correctly apply the prophetic "day" of Ezek. 4:6 ("...I have appointed thee each day for a year. "), then this torment would last 150 years.

REV 9:6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it. and shall desire to die, and death shall flee, from them.

So terrible will be their torment that death will be desired.

REV 9:7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

The appearance of the locust is described. They represent armies of horsemen. Crowns like gold: There was an appearance like golden crowns. An array of men wearing yellow turbans would have such an appearance. Faces of men: Faces covered with beard. Roman soldiers wore no beard, so it was someone else.

REV 9:8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

Wearing long, flowing hair. Teeth of lions probably signifies fierceness.

REV 9:9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

There was something that seemed like an army clad in iron coats of mail. They gave a sound like the rush of chariots and horses rushing to battle.

REV 9:10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

They stung terribly and left a sting in their path.

REV 9:11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

Abaddon and Apollyon both mean "destroyer".

THE FULFILLMENT

The locust, the horse, the horsemen, and the scorpions are all symbols that point to Arabia. It is believed by many that the uprising of the Mohammedan, or Saracen, power is meant. The Western Roman Empire had fallen in 476 A.D. There yet existed the Eastern Roman Empire, with Constantinople for a capital, called the Greek Empire. Against it the Saracen effort was especially directed. Let us see how that movement corresponded to the symbols: It was at the right time, after 476 A.D., and in the right place, directed against the eastern part of the Old Roman world. Not only the facts just

mentioned, but the description of the men symbolized by the locusts, point to Arabia (Ex. 10:12-15). The locusts "were like unto horses prepared for battle." The Arabians, unlike the Goths, Vandals, and Huns, were an army of horsemen, and moved over a country almost with the swiftness of the locust. Note the following facts concerning the Arabs: 1. They came forth from the home of the locust. 2. They all fought on horseback. There was not a foot-soldier in the armies which in 632 A.D. assailed the Eastern Empire. They wore upon their heads something like crowns of gold. The historians speak of them as the "turbaned Arabs" Ezek. 23:42, speaking of the Sabeans, which were an Arabian tribe, says, "The Sabeans of the wilderness who put upon their heads beautiful crowns." The yellow turbans of the Arab horsemen, at a little distance, would strikingly resemble "crowns of gold." 4. The locusts had "the faces of men." The Jews and Arabs wore long beards. The Romans and northern races shaved their faces. 5. To the faces is added "the hair of women." The female distinction is long hair, and evidently John beholds, as the rider's rush by, long hair flowing from their shoulders and streaming in the air. Did the Arabs in the 7th century wear long hair? Pliny says (Nat. His. 7:28) of "the turbaned Arabs with their uncut hair." Marcellinus and Jerome each speak of the long-haired Arabs. 6. The locusts had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron. The historians of the Arabian wars constantly speak of the iron coats of mail. Mohammed, in the Koran, says: "God has given you coats of mail to defend you in your wars."

Other details. 1. Mohammed was literally a fallen star. He was a prince by birth, the heir of the rule of Mecca, but his grandfather and father dying while he was young, he was pushed aside and became a servant. 2. They had literal orders in their invasions not to destroy vegetation. In "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", Vol. V, pg. 189, "Cut down no palm trees, nor burn fields of corn. Destroy no fruit trees." 3. Five months, or 158 years. Though Mohammed's work began earlier, it was in 632 A.D. that the Arab hosts burst forth from their deserts to assail the world. Within a hundred Years Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, the north of Africa, and Spain had fallen beneath their sway. In 762, the capital of the Saracen Empire was placed at Bagdad and their rulers began to cherish peaceful ideas. In 781, the Caliph Haroun Al Rashid was their ruler. This is the golden age of the Saracen power. This is the era of the Arabian Nights. Bagdad was called the "City of Peace." How long is this from the time when the torment that had striken half the world began? 150 years. Did the torment last any longer. No. He was engaged in friendly correspondence with the Christian rulers of Europe. They had ceased their efforts to make the world Mohammedan.

REV 9:12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

REV 9:13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

In the temple the golden altar was the altar of incense before the veil.

REV 9:14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

This represents four agencies which had been restrained and kept from advancing. The river Euphrates will be explained in the fulfillment.

REV 9:15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

This adds up to 396 1/3 days. Using Ezekial's prophetic "day" this adds up to 396 years and 4 months.

REV 9:16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

200 million. With such an immense number it can only mean they were countless.

REV 9:17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

Bright red, blue, and yellow were the colors. Horses were as the heads of lions probably means strength and fierceness.

REV 9:18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouth.

Fire from their mouths. This is a destructive power. It might well describe the use of gunpowder. From a distance, one looking would see the flash of fire, and the smoke, apparently coming from the horses' heads, would smell the brimstone odor, and would see the destructive effect.

REV 9:19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

How the power was also represented by their tails is not so evident. Most commentators skip over the tails with no remarks. Others say they don't know the meaning.

THE FULFILLMENT

The Arabian scourge had fulfilled its work by 782 A.D. It had taken from the Eastern Empire its provinces in Africa, and most of its possessions in Asia. The world, according to Gibbon, was at this time divided into three parts. Two of these had fallen before five destructive agencies. One still remains to be destroyed by the angels bound at the river Euphrates.

A few years before the 1000th year of the Christian era, a fierce Tartar race, formidable by numbers and bravery, left their seats east of the Caspian Sea and moved southwestward, until they rested upon the river Euphrates. A vast region of country east of that river fell before their arms. Persia became one of their provinces, and India, as far as the ocean, was subjected to their sway. But for two generations they "were bound by the river Euphrates," and lying upon its eastern banks, their armies were restrained by the river from ravaging the countries that lie to the west. For more than half a century, in some mysterious way, they were restrained at that river. At last, in the year 1057, 60 years after their appearance upon the east bank of that stream, after being bound for two generations, they crossed the Euphrates and marched upon the

eastern Roman Empire. This people were called the Turkomans or Turkmans; we call them Turks.

There were four angels. This would imply, in some way, four powers. It is remarkable that this people were divided into four bodies, which formed four kingdoms, under the four grandsons of the leader who established the empire of the Turks in western Asia. The prince who was commissioned by the Caliph to attack the Greek Empire was named Toghrul, but dying, his son, Alp Arslan, led the Turks across the Euphrates, and when he was slain in battle, he was succeeded by Malek Shah. The empire of Malek Shah was divided into four principalities, under his four sons, which are described by Gibbon under the names of Persia, Kerman or India, Syria, and Roum or Asia Minor, extending from the shores of the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean.

Observe. 1. They were bound at the Euphrates. 2. There were four commands. 3. Their armies were of horsemen, apparently countless. 4. They numbered their horsemen by myriads instead of thousands. Gibbon often speaks of the myriad of horses. (chapter LVII). 5. The Ottomans until a very recent period wore warlike apparel of scarlet, blue, and yellow." 6. The first time that gunpowder and firearms were employed in war was in their campaigns. Constantinople was taken by cannon. (See Gibbon chapter LXVIII). 7. There was power in the tails of the horses. One source of information says that among the Turks the horses' tail is an emblem of power. The number of horses' tails determines rank. A Pacha of 3 tails is a great officer. The emblem of the rule of the Pachas, a very wasteful, oppressive, and unjust rule, is the horses' tail.

The time. The prophetic period is 396 years and 4 months. It was in the year 1057, that the Turkish armies crossed the river and assailed the Empire. By the beginning of the next century their conquests extended to the Hellespont and embraced all that portion of the world now portrayed upon the maps as Turkey in Asia. Then came the mighty uprising of Europe in the Crusades, which for the time beat back the torrent of Moslem invasion and recovered a portion of Asia. Between Europe and Asia, the contest continued for two centuries, when Europe, weary of the fruitless struggle, abandoned the attempt, and the Turkish Empire, re-organized with the Ottoman Turks in power, passed over into Europe. The Eastern Empire was soon shorn of all its territories and reduced to the city of Constantinople. In the year 1453, assailed by two hundred thousand Turks, its walls battered down by the first cannon ever used in a siege, one hundred thousand of its citizens lying dead upon the ramparts, it was stormed by the Turks, and the last relic of the mighty empire which had existed for 2200 years was swept away forever. The work was done. The Empire fell in 1453. The interval was 396 years. According to Arabian historians, the Turks on January 28th, 1057, marched from Bagdad. Constantinople fell on May 29th, 1453. Exactly 396 years and 4 months.

REV 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

REV 9:21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

It is implied that these woes were sent as judgements. The Christianity of the East overthrown by the Saracens and Turks had become utterly corrupt. The rest, that is,

those in other countries not conquered by Turks, continued their sins. That they should not worship devils and idols. Images had been introduced into the churches everywhere and were worshiped. They repented not of their murders. In the Crusade against the Albigenses, conducted by Rome in the 13th century, it is estimated that one million martyrs perished. Sorceries. Tricks to deceive, so characteristic of the priests. Fornication. This term may mean spiritual fornication or apostasy, and it may mean literal fornication. In either sense it is true of the religious features of the 15th century. Thefts. Thefts in resorting to deceptions to extort money from the people. Instead of repentance after the great judgement on the Eastern Church, the Western Church grew worse and worse.

REVELATION 10

The 10th and 11th chapters relate to one series of events. After the fall of the Roman Empire, Papal Rome took over during the Dark Ages and suppressed The Word from the hands of the people. Departures from the true teachings of The Word grew rapidly and was widespread over the world. The selection of a universal bishop (pope) in the 6th century made a complete apostacy. The book called the Bible was taken from the people and placed in the hands of the pope. Although the true church existed down through the centuries, it was kept very weak because of the Catholic church. The 7th trumpet has not yet sounded. That will happen in the 12th chapter.

REV 10:1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head and his face was as it were the sun and his feet as pillars of fire:

REV 10:2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea and his left foot on the earth,

REV 10:3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

In this vision John sees an angel coming down from heaven to earth. This is a "strong" angel, probably indicating the greatness of the work he was to do. It is believed that he signifies some great movement that had the approval of heaven, whatever may have been the agencies by which it was accomplished. Clothed with a cloud is thought to indicate glory. (Ex. 16:9-10) "**9** And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings. **10** And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud." The rainbow upon his head was a symbol of peace and mercy pointing to the character of the work to be accomplished. The shining of his face and feet indicates that he shall spread light and intelligence. The work he is to do is thought to be the returning of the Bible into the hands of the people. The angel holds in his hand an open book. The roll is not only unsealed, but it is in an open state so it can be read. This book occupies a very important part of his work. Some think this little book was a personal message to John, some think it is the book of Revelation that was written by John, but many think it is the New Testament, or possibly even the entire Bible. Nevertheless, the book is open. John saw the angel with one foot on the sea and the other upon the earth when the angel cried with a loud voice. The effects were to be felt over the entire world. What the angel cried is not mentioned. Since this work has mainly to do with an open book most of the historical commentators believe this event has to do with the Reformation movement.

Beginning in the early part of the 16th century was such a movement, mostly because the Bible was once again in the hands of the people. Whatever the Romish clergy may pretend now, there is no doubt that before the Reformation they had taken the Bible from the people. The whole influence of the Catholic Church was opposed to its circulation, and in many instances, persons have been burned for no other crime than having the Bible in their houses. The book was left sealed up in dead languages, and it

was impossible for it to be read in the native tongue of any European people. This radiant angel, however, has in his hand a book open, calling out unto the world.

REV 10:4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

The seven thunders uttered their voices when the angel cried in a loud voice. John was forbidden to record what they uttered. Certain facts will help us to understand what is meant. 1. The apostate power which had taken away and closed the book (New Testament) was called the seven-hilled city and is alluded to in Rev. 17:9 as the woman that sat on seven mountains. 2. The word thunder has been constantly used to describe the threatening, blasphemous, and authoritative fuming's issued by the seven-hilled power against its enemies. To illustrate this, Le Bas says in his book, The Life of Wiclif, page 198: "The thunders which shook the world when they issued from the seven hills, sent forth an uncertain sound, comparatively faint and powerless, when launched from a region of less devoted sanctity." These thunders derived their power from the fact that they were hurled from the seven-hilled city. Very appropriately the anathemas of Rome may then be called the seven thunders. It is a historic fact that the opening of the book by the Reformation, called forth the loudest voices of the seven thunders.

John says that he was about to write what they uttered, then he heard a voice from heaven say, "write it not." When we remember that the thunders that issued from the Vatican were regarded by the nations as the voice of God, and that the Pope claimed to be the vicar of Christ, we can understand why the voice would not want what they said written.

REV 10:5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

REV 10:6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

REV 10:7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

This angel made a solemn oath to God. There was assurance given that despite all the anathemas and papal thunders this work would be accomplished. The NIV translation has, "There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, ..." In other words, there will be no more delay in giving the Bible back to the people, because what is left is the 7th trumpet and the ending of the world.

REV 10:8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

REV 10:9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

REV 10:10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

REV 10:11 And he said unto me Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

John himself now becomes a part of the scene. He is commanded to take the book out of the angel's hand. This indicated that he was to have some important part in the work of restoring the scriptural doctrine and practice. But as he had been dead about 1400 years when the Reformation began, he did not do any of that work personally. Being one of the number through whom the true gospel was first given, the restoration of that gospel gave him back his position of authority as one who ruled under Christ.

The command to eat the book must be understood as not literally eating the book, but to meditate deeply upon its contents. The thoughts would give him joy, but practicing the teaching would bring persecutions, sufferings, and possible death. (Jer. 15:16), "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart."

"Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." John would again prophesy as people began to read his words from their own Bibles. This was not a new church, but a restoration of the old one.

REVELATION 11

REV 11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

REV 11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

There are several points that must be noted: 1. Who measures? 2. The measure used. 3. What is measured? 1. A reed is given to John to be used as a measure. It is not an angel who measures, but an apostle. Since John was the only remaining apostle living, he then represents all the apostles. It is the apostles who are to measure. 2. The measure is not a human one. John did not make it, nor did any other apostle, nor any man, or body of men. The reed was given to him. It is a divine measure. Whatever is measured is to be compared with a divine standard. We have a divine standard for measurement which was given by our Lord to the apostles. It is the New Testament of Jesus Christ. 3. Measure the temple. This cannot mean the literal temple. What is meant is that of which the temple was a symbol (the church). Without the altar worship was impossible, and the altar is taken as a symbol of the worship. The sacrifices of the altar were all typical of Christ's atonement. The 9th chapter of Hebrews is a comparison of the Old Testament altar with the New Testament altar.

And them that worship therein. The measure shall be applied to those who profess to be Christians. It will be seen whether they come up to the standard.

And the court which is without the temple. This was the outer court, the court of the Gentiles, the type of the world. They were not to be measured.

The Holy City Jerusalem shall be trod under foot forty and two months. That's 1260 days. In prophetic time that's 1260 years. The Holy City Jerusalem is the church. (Heb. 12:22-23) "**22** But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, **23** To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect," To be trodden under foot would be fulfilled when Gentiles would corrupt and devastate the church. This period was to last 1260 years. This is the period of time that the Roman Catholic Church ruled with absolute authority and religious corruption prevailed.

REV 11:3 And I will give power unto MY two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

REV 11:4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

The two witnesses were to be in sackcloth for 1260 years. Sackcloth is a symbol of sorrow and mourning. It implies that these witnesses shall be in tribulation during this period.

The olive tree was the source of the oil used to provide for the candlesticks. The candlesticks, burning the oil, gave forth light. The symbols imply that during this period

of 1260 years God shall have two agencies, bearing divine witness, which shall give forth light to men. The light from these witnesses was to be dim (in sackcloth) during this period, but that it was to exist.

Who or what are the two witnesses? The word witness means one who testifies, and testimony is what is said. The two divisions of the Bible are called the Old and New Testaments. So, they are witnesses in the sense that they present God's testimony. Being two distinct parts of the testimony, they fit the symbol.

REV 11:5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

REV 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

The Old and New Testaments as God's two witnesses, though testifying for 1260 years in sackcloth, were to have God's protection and finally prevail. Their enemies, therefore, were to be devoured. (Jer. 5:14) "Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them." The evident meaning is that those who were enemies or rejected God's word would be punished finally as his word taught.

These have the power to shut up heaven. This is a remarkable comparison to Elias' praying for it to not rain on the earth. (James 5:17-18) "**17** Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. **18** And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." The 3 1/2 years of drought is also 42 months, or 1260 days. There was also to be a drought of God's word because of the power of the Catholic Church, as there was a drought in the days of Elias.

REV 11:7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them and shall overcome them, and kill them.

REV 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

REV 11:9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

And when they shall have finished their testimony... That is, the end of the testifying in sackcloth which resulted in their symbolic death. From Dan. 7:3, 17, 23 we learn that "beast" represents a king or kingdom. Here it must refer to some antichristian institution, for it fights against the two witnesses whom God raised from the dead and exalted to heaven. This will be made clear as we read subsequent chapters to be the Roman Catholic Church. They had essentially killed the two witnesses (the Word of God) to the people.

There are two separate dates fixed as the start of the Catholic Church. In A.D. 533 Justinian, the emperor of the eastern part of the empire, issued a decretal letter solemnly recognizing the Roman bishop as "head of the churches." However, Gregory the Great, the western emperor, did not accept his decree. The church at Rome liked the idea, and John the Faster took the title of "Universal Bishop." Gregory the Great sent him a letter condemning his use of that title. In A.D. 606 Boniface III induced Phocas, who reached the Roman throne through murder, to transfer the title from John the Faster to himself. Historians generally recognize the 606 date, but the wheels were in motion in 533.

If A.D. 533 was the beginning of the 1260 years, the end of that period when the witnesses were to be slain would be 1793. If about that time the word of God was legally abolished, then the symbol fits. There had been numerous attempts since the 16th century of Reformation, starting with Martin Luther, but it still remained weak. There was to be a time of death of the word.

The French Revolution introduced the "Reign of Terror," during which citizens were executed by the hundreds without justice or mercy. The nation was drenched in blood. The National Convention from 1792 to 1795 was a seething mass of the most revolting crimes. In 1793 in the convention Liberty and Reason had been celebrated as the real worship; "the ancient faith had been abjured"; the calendar had been changed and the traditions attached to it destroyed; the "Convention had substituted a divinity created in their own image" "for the supreme God of religious faith." Truly, God's witnesses may be declared legally dead under such circumstances. Since the "beast" - the papacy - caused the witnesses to testify in sackcloth, it may also be charged as indirectly causing their death, because France was up to that time dominated by Catholicism.

Dead bodies in the street. Leaving dead bodies to lie unburied in the street is both disrespectful and contemptible. The symbolic vision, as John saw it, indicates the great contempt which they who had decreed the abolishment of God would show for the Bible. The bodies lying in the street may also indicate that they could not get rid of the Bible though they officially rejected it. Since it was France that decreed the death of the witnesses, if the "great city" is to be taken literally it would refer to Paris, the capital. But elsewhere in this book the great city is used symbolically to indicate papal Rome. In Rev. 18:10 Babylon is used figuratively to represent the apostate church. Here we are told that spiritually the great city is also called "Sodom and Egypt" - that is, both of these cities are typical of it. Sodom represents corruption and Egypt bondage. Papal Rome, then, held its subjects in spiritual corruption and bondage. Then France turned infidel and rejected God's word that was spiritually crucifying Jesus afresh. Being a Catholic country, the witnesses were slain within the boundaries dominated by the papacy. The great city then probably refers spiritually to that apostate church rather than to any special earthly city.

Men look upon their dead bodies 3 days and a half. 3 1/2 years. The French Revolution lasted 3 1/2 years.

REV 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

REV 11:11 And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

REV 11:12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

REV 11:13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

After 3 1/2 years they came back to life. The French National Convention lasted 3 1/2 years before the people came to their senses. Public worship was restored. Its atheistic laws were repealed, and Christianity was acknowledged as the religion of the State. The resurrected witnesses were revived, but not to live in sackcloth anymore. The age of religious toleration had come. From France to the rest of the world every civilized land was in favor of religious liberty.

A great earthquake. Not a literal earthquake that took a 10th part of the city, but a 10th of the kingdom was lost to the spiritual Babylon - the papal church. Earthquakes indicate a great commotion among men. Rome began losing its great influence on other nations, but still holds much power over a lot of people.

REV 11:14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

REV 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Other translations, as the Revised Version and the New International Version, say kingdom instead of kingdoms. Many commentators agree the singular "kingdom" is the correct term. We are now in the kingdom established by Christ (John 18:36; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:5-9). After the judgement it will return back to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-26).

REV 11:16 And the four and twenty elders1 which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God.

These are the same elders that were mentioned in Rev. 4:4.

REV 11:17 Saying, We give thee thanks, 0 Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come: because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

REV 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

This is a look ahead to the final judgement where there will be a great separation, and His servants will be rewarded, and the rest will be eternally destroyed.

REV 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings. and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

This should be the start of the 12th chapter. Having reached the judgement in verse 18, we will now be taken back to cover the same ground with a new set of symbols, some incidences that previously were only mentioned briefly, now may give a more detailed description, while other scenes are described equally but with different symbols.

The temple was typical of the church (Heb. 9:1-9; 1 Cor. 3:16).

The lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and hail all precede the events and fulfillments of the symbols to be described just as those that accompanied God's speaking the commandments on Mount Sinai, and the plagues in Egypt (Ex. 19:14-18; Psalms 18:13).

REVELATION 12

REV 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

REV 12:2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

The word "wonder" is translated in some versions of the Bible as "sign". A "sign" is something to represent something else.

"Woman" in this vision represents the church. "For thy maker is thine husband; The Lord of hosts is his name;…" (Isa. 54:5). Concerning Christ's relationship to the church Paul said: "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church." (Eph. 5:23). In verse 32, he declares plainly that in using the illustration of husband and wife, he spoke of Christ and the church. Paul refers to Sarah and Hagar as being the two covenants - one from Mt. Sinai, the other from Jerusalem - and says that Christians are children of the free woman. (Gal. 4:23-24, 31). Paul told the Corinthians that he had espoused them unto one husband. (2 Cor. 11:2).

The description of the woman here was the originally established church, and not the corrupt one which came later. Christ is the "sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2). He is the source of all our spiritual light. "Arrayed with the sun" probably means the church clothed with Christ. The "moon under her feet" is thought to represent the Jewish covenant.

The word "crown" here - "*stephanos*" - means a crown of victory, not a ruling crown. The apostles victoriously revealed the truth.

The church was in a growing period as indicated by the church "with child."

REV 12:3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon. having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

REV 12:4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

The great dragon is called Satan in the 9th verse.

The dragon is described as being great and red. This implies that his fight against the true church would be terrific and characterized by bloodshed. The seven heads are explained in Rev. 17:9, where the 7-headed beast is said to be the seven mountains where the great harlot and false church sat. It is thought that "horns" indicate power. In Rev. 17:12 we are told that the 10 horns are 10 kings, who have received no kingdom as yet. These 10 are claimed by many to be: (1). Kingdom of the Vandals in Spain and Africa. (2). Kingdom of the Visgoths. (3). Kingdom of the Suevi in Spain. (4). Kingdom of the Alans in France. (5). Kingdoms of the Burgundians. (6). Kingdom of the Franks. (7). Kingdom of the Britons. (8). Kingdom of the Huns. (9). Kingdom of the Lombards. (10). Kingdom of Ravenna. The Roman empire was broken up into these

kingdoms, and they were all supporters of the Papacy. These 10 kingdoms did not exist in John's time but came later.

"And his tail drew a third part of the stars..." Satan has a lot of power. Some see Satan as having drawn a third of the angels from heaven down with him. But in relationship to the Roman Empire and the church, it is possible that a third of the religious leaders were either killed or apostatized by the Roman Empire.

As the woman represents the church, the birth of a child indicates increase in the church by the addition of members. The time period of this persecution of the Christians was probably near A.D. 303 when Diocletian, the emperor of the Roman Empire, tried to destroy Christianity. It was his intent to "abolish the name Christian".

REV 12:5 And she brought forth a man child. who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne.

This is not Jesus as some suppose. Christ was not born of the church, but he founded the church. In verse 17 the dragon is said to "make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God." This refers to the members of the church. Then the man-child symbolically represents the increase of the church (men and women) just as the woman represents the church (men and women).

The expression "rule them with a rod of iron" in Rev. 19:15 clearly refers to Christ, but the same expression in Rev. 2:27 just as clearly refers to saints that keep Christ's commandments. This text is synonymous with 2:27 and not with 19:15. The word "rule" in all these texts (*poimaino*) means to "shepherd", not the word (*basileuo*) which means "reign". The thought is that those who keep Christ's commands will be able to shepherd or lead with God's word. A 'rod of iron" would indicate that their dominion would be strong and dependable. Such is the nature of God's word.

"and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne." This means that the church, with its increase in membership, was to be exalted to a position where it would be protected instead of persecuted. In A.D. 310 Galerius, the Eastern Emperor, issued his Edict of Toleration by which Christians were granted the right to worship God and conduct their own religious services. And by A.D. 325 Christianity was accepted as the true religion in the Roman Empire by Constantine.

REV 12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

John here briefly mentions what he covers in verses 14-17.

REV 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

REV 12:8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

REV 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

REV 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast downs which accused them before our God day and night.

Some commentaries see a duo event here with Satan actually at some time (but not at this period in time) being cast out of heaven, and that of the symbolical event concerning the church in this place of history. Others see only the symbolic events as they happen to the church.

There was a state of things existing in regard to the woman and the child - the church in the condition in which it would then be – which would be well represented by a war in heaven; that is, by a conflict between the powers of good and evil. A vision passed before the mind of John as if there was a conflict, in regard to the church, between the angels in heaven and Satan. This is mentioned right after the flight of the woman, or the church. According to Dan. 10:13; 12:1, Michael is an angel of heaven that assists the righteous. The dragon is clearly Satan. Just as Jesus operates through his followers, So Satan operates through human agents. In this case pagan Rome is the instrumental dragon. The visible war was between pagan Rome and the church.

"and they prevailed not..." Pagan Rome was to fail in her war on the church.

...the accuser of our brethren is cast down..." The use of "our brethren" indicates the symbolism here is referring to Satan's persecution of the church, and it cannot entirely refer to Satan's war in heaven. This song is sung in heaven by those who belonged to the redeemed church, and whose brethren were still suffering persecution and trial on the earth.

REV 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

They made the supreme sacrifice in giving their lives to Jesus. And because of the blood of the Lamb, and of Jesus himself being victorious over death, gave them strength to fight harder and become victorious over pagan Rome because they valued a life in heaven over their life on this earth.

REV 12:12 Therefore rejoice, heavens, and Ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Satan knows that his time is limited, and he wants to take as many people with him as he can.

REV 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

REV 12:14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time from the face of the serpent.

The symbolism of the woman having two wings meant the church was given the means to escape into the wilderness, and to be out of sight. The time the church would be hidden from the world was to be "a time, and times, and half a time". An analysis of Rev. 11:2-3; 12:14; 13:5 will show that 1260 days, forty-two months, and time, times,

and a half time all refer to the same period. Verses 6 and 14 show that these are the same. This period of time, that we have already covered, began in A.D. 533.

REV 12:15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

REV 12:16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

REV 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Satan persecuted the church to drive her off the face of the earth. The earth helped the woman by causing a great chasm to swallow up the water. Whatever destruction would be sent against the church would not completely destroy it. The fact that the church still exists today shows that it was not annihilated.

The first general effort to destroy the church was made through paganism. Failing to accomplish this, Satan went after her "seed", or those who followed after, that made an apparent disappearance of the church. Even though the church was not visible to the historians during this period, we are told that it still existed.

REVELATION 13

REV 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Some translations say, "And he stood..."; that is, Satan stood on the seashore and called the beast forth. This beast bears the old dragon mark (12:3) of seven heads and ten horns. Thus, it is an extension of the same power of Satan. It is the dragon, Satan, who called the beast forth from the sea. The beast John saw had ten horns; so did the fourth beast of Daniel's vision (Dan. 7:20). It is also believed by many the beast in Daniel's vision was Rome.

The ten crowns are diadems which are the sign of royal authority. They represent ten kings or kingdoms (17:2). In the 12th chapter the seven heads had the diadems; now the horns wear them. The reason for this will come later in the 17th chapter.

"...and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." They claimed honors which did not belong to them, but to God; thus, they were blasphemous.

REV 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

The first three beasts that Daniel saw (Dan. 7:4-7) were like a lion, a bear, and a leopard, and the fourth was a dreadful and terrible beast. In John's vision here the beast is the same as the fourth beast in Daniel's vision with all the attributes of Daniel's first three beasts. The beast of the Roman Empire was the most terrible kingdom that ever lived. The fact that the first beast represents the Roman Empire will be further evident when we study the second beast described in verses 11-18. The dragon (Satan) gave the beast (the Roman Empire) his power. Whatever the Roman Empire did against the kingdom of Christ, it did it as an agent or instrument of the devil.

REV 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

"...wounded to death." This "death" wound was inflicted to one of the seven heads of the beast. This was inflicted by a sword (verse 14); that is, by war. Although this type of wound would normally mean death, its power was restored by the arts of the second beast (verse 14). Rome when it was a pagan empire essentially died in A.D.476 by Odoacer after she was severely weakened by other attacks by other nations before that.

When the church later became a full-fledged apostacy, there was a union of church and state, with the church exercising its supreme power. At this time political Rome revived as a persecuting power against the true church. But this time its persecutions came from the orders of the papal church. It is an amazing thing that a persecuting power could receive such a blow and still survive in another form with its persecuting power still at strength. It is no surprise that the whole world wondered after the beast.

REV 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

In following after and obeying and worshipping the beast (pagan or papal Rome) they really gave worship to the dragon (Satan) which had given the beast his power. They were really worshipping Satan and didn't really know it.

The power of Rome under the papacy was such that the people thought it had supreme authority. As history tells us, many have lost their lives by political Rome under the commands of papal Rome.

REV 13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

REV 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Satan gave the beast such a mouth to make blasphemies and edicts. This power continued for 1260 years. This was the period that the true church was to testify "in sackcloth" and the woman (true church) would remain in obscurity in the wilderness. The beast made arrogant claims of authority that only God could give, thus blaspheming His name. By "tabernacle", which was the ancient place of God's worship, the symbol indicates that the worship of God was blasphemed. "Them that dwell in heaven" probably refers to the members of the true church who have their names recorded in heaven. The beast then blasphemed God's name, the church, and the worship.

REV 13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

The power given to papal Rome was given by Satan. This power was exercised against the saints, or the church. This power was widespread over all kindreds, tongues, and nations. Much of the world was under the control of papal Rome.

REV 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The method of baptism performed in Catholicism does not put one in the body of Christ as it is not the prescribed method. Only by following the pattern given can one's name be added to the Lamb's book of life. Hence, since sprinkling is not true baptism, the worshippers in Catholicism are not worshipping God, but worshipping Satan unknowingly.

REV 13:10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

John evidently intended to encourage the saints by assurance that the nation that would inflict all these calamities would in turn be led into captivity. That political Rome led nations into captivity and papal Rome persecuted Christians are facts fully

sustained. This verse has been fulfilled in both cases. It was during the trials of oppression during these periods that the patience and faith of the saints were put to the test.

REV 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth- and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

REV 13:12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

This beast had two horns like a lamb, which indicates that the institution represented a lamblike character. But it also spake like a dragon. The pious exterior would be no evidence of godliness within. The beast's words (commands) would be harsh, arrogant, and imperious or demanding as she asserts her authority. These two beasts, though distinguished, are so similar in nature and work that they may be considered as two parts of one great power that was to persecute the true church. The papal structure may be considered as a continuation of the universal empire - operating through Rome in its so-called Christian state.

As the corrupt church spake like a dragon and exercised all the authority of Imperial Rome, it is no surprise that it caused many to worship the rulers as representatives of the empire. When the pagan empire, through the invasion of the northern nations, came to an end in A.D.476, it would have ceased forever, if it had not been kept going by the apostate church. The imperial pagan head or form of government had received a death stroke but healed through a papal kingdom that had arisen. Such a union preserved the empire, and thus protected their religious apostacy.

REV 13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

The very nature of the beast indicates that the "great signs" were fake miracles which he claimed to do. They would be such, however, that many people would be easily influenced to accept them as true. This beast and Paul's "man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:3-12) evidently refer to the same thing. - the papal hierarchy or Roman church. Paul declares that he operates "according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish." Jesus had predicted that there "…shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matt. 24:24). These were "lying wonders" - false or pretended miracles - which Satan inspired the false church to perform.

Some plausibility in claiming to make fire come down from heaven could be made because Elijah in a real miracle at mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:37-38) did so, and the disciples James and John asked whether fire should be called down upon a certain Samaritan village (Luke 9:54); but whatever effort the false church made was a deceptive trick of some kind. For in the next verse, it is stated that the purpose of these pretended miracles was to deceive the people.

REV 13:14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

The following will serve as evidence of false miracles which papal Rome has offered in proof of the claim that she is the true church. Gibbon in referring to Gregory the Great, who was Bishop of Rome, A.D. 590-604, says, "The credulity or the prudence of Gregory was always disposed to confirm the truths of religion by the evidence of ghosts, miracles, and resurrections." In a Catholic volume - "Pictorial Catholic Library" - is a section devoted to the "Apparition of Lourdes," in which the claim is made that the Virgin Mary appeared to a young girl several times in 1858. Finally, she commanded the girl to drink from a spring that had suddenly burst from the earth. The water from the spring, it is claimed, has produced many cures. Such preposterous delusions are proof of the beast's power trying to deceive the nations by false miracles.

Doing these pretended miracles "in the sight of the beast," indicates that secular Rome approved of what the apostate church did because of benefits it received. During the 1260 year reign the church and state had such common interests that it is practically impossible to separate them completely.

REV 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Papal Rome, which had preserved the life of imperial Rome, kept basically the same image of the old beast by its persecution of the true church. The papal church also required its subjects to give religious honor to the secular empire. There were those from the papal Rome who held positions in the secular councils of Rome. These enacted religious laws as well as secular laws the people had to follow. There was a close and cordial union between church and state.

REV 13:16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

REV 13:17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

All classes of people had to receive the mark. To Israel God said his words would be "for a sign upon thy hand" and "for frontlets between thine eyes." (Deut. 6:8). It is no surprise, then, for members of an apostate church to carry a sign indicating their characteristics. The mark of the beast is some stamp or sign, by which all its worshippers should be known. In ancient days slaves were sometimes branded, as cattle are in our own age. The brand or mark of the beast would be some sign which would designate with certainty those who were subject to his authority. A mark in the hand is supposed by some to represent the practice, while a mark in the forehead indicates the profession of life. It is remarkable, however, that a mark on the forehead, the sign of the cross made with water, converts a person into a Roman Catholic, and without this mark none are regarded as heirs of salvation.

"...no man might buy or sell..." It has been common for Catholics to be forbidden to patronize those who were not loyal to the Pope. At least three councils are named,

those of Tours, of Constance and the Lateran, which have expressly forbidden business deals with heretics.

REV 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

The number of the beast - 666. The 17th verse speaks of the name of the beast. It also speaks of the number of its name. It is plain that the number 666 is the number of the name of the beast, and this is a man's name. 666 is English. John did not write in English, but in Greek. The Greeks did not express numbers by figures, but by letters; just as among the Romans, X stood for ten and C for one hundred. 666 could be expressed by spelling out the words in the Greek language, or by using the letters which were symbols for various quantities. 30=L, 1=a, 300=t, 5=e, 10=i, 50=n, 70=o, 200=s. Lateinos was the father of the Latin race of which the Romans were. The numerical value of Lateinos is 666. The Roman church is officially called the Latin church; the Catholic books are written in the Latin tongue; the worship is conducted in every country in the tongue of the ancient Latins. This name is one that at once points to a power which has displayed every mark which is assigned to the beast.

REVELATION 14

REV 14:1 And I looked, and, lo a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

"And I looked..." John's attention was now drawn to a new vision.

"...a Lamb..." refers to Christ as we saw in Rev. 5:6 and 12:11. This is in contrast to the beast (Rev. 13:11) that had horns like a lamb, but spake as a dragon.

"...on the mount Sion..." Zion, literally and originally, was the southern hill in the city of Jerusalem. At some time, the whole city was given the name Zion, besides Jerusalem. As this was the seat of divine worship on earth, both Jerusalem and Zion became an emblem of heaven, the dwelling place of God. "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." (Gal. 4:26). "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels," (Heb. 12:22).

"...and with him an hundred forty and four thousand..." This is same number as mentioned in Rev. 7:4-9 who were the sealed servants of God, with His name written in their foreheads. This verse says they had the name of Christ and His Father written on their foreheads.

REV 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

REV 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

A new song was being sung before the throne. The voice was not made by many waters, but it was as the voice of many waters, or as the voice of thunder. The Revised Version and the New Internation Version say the voice he heard was "as" harpers harping. Coffman, Hinds, and Barnes are all in agreement concerning this. Their singing was very melodious.

"no man could learn that song but the ... redeemed." No one but the redeemed can fully appreciate the joys of salvation, and certainly we will not understand what heaven means until we reach it. We are glad when our sins are pardoned, and we are in happy anticipation of eternal life, but nothing will compare to the joy of actually being in that city of eternal blessing. Such a song could only be sung by those who have already attained that city.

REV 14:4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

It has been common to use terms such as adultery, fornication, and impurity in reference to spiritual impurity as Christians are the bride of Christ; and when they

partake of the sins of the world, or worship in an unauthorized religion they are in spiritual impurity and spiritual adultery. These redeemed had been faithful to the Lamb.

REV 14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

"guile" - deceit or lie. We are told in Rev. 21:8 that there would be no liars in heaven. These 144,000 were completely honest. As the Jews were required to make their animal sacrifices with animals without any blemish, so are the Christians to live their lives a living sacrifice, pure and holy before God. Even though it says all men sin, we can have our robes washed and be made pure and white.

REV 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

REV 14:7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

In the course of John's visions, he has seen many angels; now, he sees another one flying in the midst of heaven with a message to fear, and to worship God, and to give Him the glory. This message was to be directed to those on the earth, to every nation and people.

REV 14:8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Babylon was a well-known city on the Euphrates, and was, in the days of its pride and glory, the head of the heathen world. They were proud, haughty, insolent, and oppressive. They had invaded the Holy Land and reduced its capital and temple to ruins and had held the inhabitants into a long and painful captivity (70 years). The term Babylon became an emblem of all that was haughty and oppressive. The literal Babylon had long ceased to exist; but the name was properly used to denote a similar power.

Rome has been characterized by many of the same attributes as Babylon, being arrogant, proud, and oppressive. Rome, like Babylon, was distinguished for its conquests, and making all other nations subject to its control. Rome has been a desolating power, having destroyed the capital of the Holy Land, and burned its temple, and reduced the country to a province.

Rome in its papal power and religious perversion of the church, took away the true worship of God, and put the people in spiritual bondage to papal authority for 1260 years. The Reformation ended that bondage but did not destroy the papal system any more than freeing Israel from Egyptian bondage destroyed Egypt.

"...made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication". Drinking wine intoxicates and leads to folly and madness. Practicing false doctrines leads to confusion and rebellion against God. Jeremiah spake of the city of Babylon thus: "Babylon hath been a golden cup in Jehovah's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are mad." (Jer. 51:7). Papal Babylon made the nations drunk with her false doctrines. God has broken spiritual Babylon's

stranglehold on the world and will destroy her at the Lord's coming. The "wrath" here mentioned refers to the punishment that would fall upon her and those she deceives or intoxicates with her false teachings.

REV 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

REV 14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

REV 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

This angel refers to the corrupt and anti-Christian power as the "beast" which is mentioned in Rev. 13:11. The great enemy with its entire influence would finally be destroyed. All individuals who would accept and practice the false teaching of the apostate church would also be destroyed.

"wine of the wrath of God..." is the cup in the hand of the Lord, which, when drunk, makes them reel and fall. The image would seem to have been taken from the act of holding out a cup of poison to a condemned man that he might drink and die.

Being "without mixture..." Without being diluted, as with water, in its full strength. In other words, there would be no slackening in God's punishment.

"smoke of their torment forever and ever..." Wherever there is smoke there is fire. The fire of torment will also last forever and ever, and "day and night." When the final sentence is passed, the destiny of the wicked is fixed forever.

REV 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

REV 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

The sufferings and persecutions which saints would have to endure in their struggles against the powers of the beast would require the strongest patience. The fact that they kept the commandments of God would be sufficient proof that they did have the required patience. Keeping the faith of Jesus means that they held to the faith Jesus required and did not deny him. The promise of the ultimate overthrow of their enemies would also be an incentive to sustain their faith and keep them patient.

Angels flying, as they appeared to John in the vision, had pronounced the doom of those who worshipped the beast. Next, he hears a voice that seems to come from heaven commanding him to write a certain promise regarding the dead. It is not stated whose voice was speaking. John recorded not only what he saw in the visions, but also what he heard, as he was commanded. The blessing here pronounced was upon a certain class of the dead - those "who die in the Lord." To secure this blessing one

would first have to have come into the Lord, and second, one would have to have been faithful until dead, for no one can die in the Lord unless he has been faithful until death.

"rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." We labour for the Lord in this life, then our rest will come in that eternal home. But the good deeds one does in this life continue to have their influence on others after his departure. In this statement it is revealed that that influence would be great enough that those works would follow them. This implies that the good of righteous deeds will follow with the dead to the judgement. Paul declares that at the judgement each will receive "…according to what he hath done…" (2 Cor. 5:10).

REV 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

We have a description of the final judgement on the good and the bad.

Jesus has himself said that the Son of man shall be seen coming upon the clouds of heaven. "**30** And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. **31** And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. 24:30-31). John here sees Jesus sitting upon a white cloud. The Saviour says that his coming shall be with great power and glory. John now sees upon the head of Jesus a golden crown.

The sickle is a cutting tool used in harvest.

REV 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

An angel (who is beneath Christ) now tells Jesus to thrust in his sickle, it is time for the harvest. Why should a lowly angel tell Jesus what to do? This angel came from the temple, wherein dwelled God, and delivered a message which was not of his own, but which came from God. But this is consistent because Christ does not know when that time will come. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matt. 24:36).

REV 14:16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Jesus does not do this on his own but sets the reaping in motion. The work is done by his host of angels. "**41**The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; ... **49**So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just," (Matt. 13:41, 49). "**7** And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, **8** In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:" (2 Thes. 1:7-8). These innumerable angels will be operative under Christ's authority in the execution of the final judgement.

"The harvest of the earth is ripe..." In God's mind, of which he has not revealed to man, there is a certain condition upon the earth upon which He considers enough is enough, the time is ripe to reap the harvest of the earth. When this time is achieved, He sends a messenger to Jesus to start the harvest.

It was fitting that the command to reap should be given to Christ, for he was the sower who scattered God's word as seed. He was the proper one to harvest it. All that will be saved will be through that word. The harvest being ripe means that everything is ready for gathering the saved into heaven's garner.

REV 14:17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

Again, John sees another angel come out from the temple, which is heaven. This angel has a sharp sickle. The figure of the harvest would include both good and bad - wheat and chaff; but that of the vintage refers only to the wicked. The point in the emblem is not the preservation of the clusters, but the pressing out of the juice which represents the condemnation of the wicked. This figure is thus applied by Joel. "Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread ye; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great." (Joel 3:13).

REV 14:18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

This is the sixth angel mentioned in this chapter. The brazen altar stood in the outer court before the temple. It was the place where burnt offerings were presented to God. The work to be done was destructive in its nature, and the altar of burnt offerings was the appropriate place from which the angel should come.

This means that the clusters were to be cut off and cast into the wine press. Being fully ripe means that wickedness had continued till it was the proper time to remove the sinners from the earth. Sin had reached the full limit to which God's mercy would allow it to come.

REV 14:19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

REV 14:20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Crushing the grapes and the red juice flowing like streams of blood was a most striking emblem of destruction. It forcefully represented the overflow and final rejection of the wicked. The vintage of the earth would be the wicked part of the earth. The winepress of God's wrath means that the wicked will be forced to feel the power of God's righteous indignation when they find themselves rejected.

Wine presses were usually placed in vineyards, not in cities; hence the statement that it was without the city. The text says blood came out. In this expression the symbol - juice of the grape - is dropped and what it represents is stated. Blood, however, is but a symbol of the overflowing of the wicked - their final rejection.

The wine press was called great because of the immense number of the lost. The flowing of the juice, like blood in a great battle, looked to John like a great lake, sixteen hundred furlongs and up to the bridles of horses in depth. If this measurement means a square, the surface covered was 200 miles square. It indicates the large multitudes that will be lost when God's wrath is finally poured out upon the wicked. This is the last sad event in the experience of the condemned before entering their final state.

REVELATION 15

There are three sets of symbolic sevens, each one bringing the story to the end of time or the coming of the Lord. Since the prophetic history of the church from John's time was revealed in the book of seven seals, the seventh seal would not be exhausted till the end. The seven trumpets came under the last seal and the sounding of the seventh one brings the end (Rev. 11:15-19). In like manner the plagues, under another set of symbols, complete the cycle, for Rev. 15:1 says in them is "finished the wrath of God.

The fourteenth chapter was designed to encourage saints in their struggles by predicting the fall of Babylon (verse 8) and the final victory of the righteous (verse 13). Whereas the fourteenth chapter gave us a summary of these events, the fifteenth through the nineteenth chapters present these same events in detail.

In view of the fact that these plagues were to be poured out upon the beast and his worshippers (Rev. 16:2,10), it is evident that they represent a series of events that will ultimately end the papal hierarchy - accomplish the destruction of the "man of sin." This event will occur at the coming of the Lord (2Thess. 2:8). "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:"

The opening of the 7th seal (Rev.5:) carries the reader to the triumph of Christianity over Roman Paganism. The 7 trumpets (Rev.8:) lead us onward to the overthrow of the western Roman Empire by the Goths, Vandals and Huns, and the ruin of the Eastern Empire by the Saracens and Turks. The last trumpet of the seven reaches to the close of secular history with the trump of the Archangel. The 7 vials (coming up) present the series of calamities that first weaken and then destroy the power of Papal Rome.

REV 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Another scene is displayed in heaven for John. Seven angels having the seven last plagues. Called the last plagues because they are God's final plagues upon the beast and its image; they bring the series to a close. The are full of the wrath of God.

REV 15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

In Rev. 4:6 "the sea of glass, clear as crystal," was seen about the throne of God. Now it is mingled with fire, a symbol that that denotes judgments. Those that were victorious over the beast - who had successfully resisted all the schemes and devices of the papacy to force them to accept its doctrines and practices in spite of threats and persecutions - were standing on this sea of glass.

REV 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

When Israel was delivered from Egypt, they sang the song of Moses as they had done on the shores of the Red Sea. Here, the spiritual Israel, redeemed, standing on the

crystal sea, sings a song of deliverance, but it is the old song to a new strain, the song of the Lamb, the Redeemer.

REV 15:4 Who shall not fear thee, 0 Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

The judgments now given to the seven angels showed that God is a consuming fire. We understand His power; but we also understand His holiness. His righteous acts have been made known and those influenced by them to be faithful regardless of whatever persecution is pressed upon them.

REV 15:5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

The tabernacle of the testimony was the Holy of Holies. Into it none but the High Priest entered, and he only to make intercession for the forgiveness of sins. It was here that God dwelled. Thus, this represents the actual dwelling place of God in heaven. It was this place in heaven that was opened, or revealed, to John.

REV 15:6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

Having come out of the temple these seven angels had been sent by God for some divine purpose. Each one of them had a plague to deliver. They were clothed in "pure and white linen." Some scholars say that should read "stone pure and bright" instead of "pure and white linen," but both have the same meaning that their mission was pure, and the value of their work was great. The golden girdles that they wore were like that that Christ wore in the vision of Rev. 1:13.

REV 15:7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

The four beasts, or living creatures, were first mentioned in the 4th chapter of John's Revelation. Now one of them (which one we don't know) gave each of the seven angels a vial full of God's wrath. Some translations say bowls instead of vials. These were to be poured out upon the earth.

REV 15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Some have interpreted this falsely to mean that no one could enter the church during this period until the plagues were carried out; that the doors of heaven were shut to man. It simply means that providence has been set concerning the events these seven angels were to perform. No prayers or pleadings contrary to this agenda would be heeded. The smoke fills the temple to avert anyone from interceding, or averting these judgments until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. The door would be closed against those who would petition on behalf of such a corrupt institution; its ultimate end must be destruction. The Lord's ears are open to the supplication of the righteous, but not in this matter.

REVELATION 16

REV 16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

These words came from the temple indicating their authority came from God. They were to take God's wrath to the earth; the specifics of which come in the following verses.

REV 16:2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

We see the object of the pouring out of this vial was those who had the mark of the beast. These represent punishments and calamities that were to fall on the papal church. A noisome and grievous sore would be a physical malady that was painful and tormenting. Whatever the plagues might indicate, the events would occur in countries predominantly under the influence of Catholicism. The power of Roman Catholicism began to wane in 1793 after 1260 prosperous years.

For many centuries France was the stoutest supporter of the Romish Church. It was Charlemagne, the emperor of France, who bestowed the temporal power upon the Popes. It was to Avignon in France that, at one time, the Papacy was transferred for 70 years. The ruler of France was long styled "the eldest son of the Church." It was France that had perpetrated the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the dragonnades of the Cevennes, and the banishment of the Huguenots. The French nation had the mark of the beast to at least as great an extent as any other nation. In 1793 there broke out in France a fearful, moral ulcer that had long been festering. The French Revolution, the uprising of enslaved masses who were maddened into fury, sent Catholic king, royal families, nobles, and priests to the guillotine by tens of thousands, impelled the nation in its madness to publicly declare itself atheistic, and broke the hold of Rome to such a degree that she can never more control France. At one time 200,000 citizens of all conditions and both sexes were in prison, and often in Paris alone, 80 people were sent to the scaffold in a day. As the result of the breaking forth of this ulcer, the mightiest Catholic nation was convulsed with civil war, every Catholic country in Europe was deluged in blood, and the Papal power received a shock from which it never can recover. The first vial, the breaking forth of grievous, painful ulcers, most fitly represents the breaking out of the French Revolution.

REV 16:3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

The first calamity has been upon the earth; the second is upon the ocean. The second angel pours his vial upon the sea. Then the waters become red as blood and in the great mortality that follows it seems to John as if every soul in the sea was dead. Under the second trumpet a great and burning mountain fell into the sea. The Vandal power swept the Mediterranean, destroyed the Roman navy, and laid siege to the old imperial Rome. Now, from the sea, under the second vial, spiritual Rome is weakened. In 1780 France and England were both mighty strong upon the sea, and equally matched. They

held the mastery of the seas. From 1793 to 1815 these two countries warred against each other upon the seas. Napoleon, in a working agreement with the Pope, allied with Spain, Portugal, and Italy under the Catholic name fought against Protestant England. France and her allies lost heavily in these engagements. Over 600 large ships were lost in these battles and an incalculable number of smaller vessels of war and commerce. History tells us there was not another period of naval warfare as great as this 18-year period. Such facts would justify the language of the symbol: the sea "became blood as of a dead man." Definitely there were heavy blows against those who had the mark of the beast.

REV 16:4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

Around 450 A.D. Attila the Hun battled imperial Rome on the rivers of Europe. Now another calamity was to befall papal Rome on the rivers. During the same period of time the great battle was raging upon the seas, there were also battles raging upon the rivers of Europe. The French army crossed the Alps and invaded the Albigenses. On the river system of Italy, on the Rhone, the Po and its tributaries they battled the Austrians and their allies. Every one of these battles were fought upon the rivers. The battle of Lodi was fought on the Adda, Arcola on the Adige, Marengo on the Bromida. The battles resulted in an armistice after Bonaparte invaded Rome and took it. Papal Rome paid out 21,000,000 francs and a hundred pieces of art that went to Paris. In 1798 Pope Pius VI was taken prisoner into France to die. Where the Pope was once an ally of France, he was now her prisoner. A successor was named in Venice rather than in Rome.

REV 16:5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, 0 Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

The angel of the waters would be the angel that poured the vial over the waters.

REV 16:6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

The Albigenses on the east side of the Alps on the rivers had been persecuted by the Roman papal church. Now they were free. Papal Rome had suffered much loss of blood and life in these battles.

REV 16:7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Under the 5th seal (Rev. 6:9-11) the martyrs were seen under the altar, and they were crying with a great voice, asking how long till God would avenge their blood on those upon the earth. Here John hears another voice that appears to come from the altar endorsing the angel's statement that God's judgments are true and righteous.

REV 16:8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

REV 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

The thing John saw was an angel pouring the contents of a bowl upon the sun which so intensified the heat that men were scorched. In the symbol the word "sun" is used literally; but in applying the symbol it must be used figuratively. Christ is referred to prophetically as "the sun of righteousness." (Mal. 4:2). In a dream Joseph saw the sun, moon, and stars bowing to him. This was explained to mean his father, mother, and brethren. (Gen.37:9-10). As a symbol the sun represents a leader or prominent man. The simple and natural meaning of the fourth plague is that a great leader with irresistible power would bring great distress and suffering to men that might be likened to the burning rays of a scorching sun. The facts naturally indicate that he would be a military leader, and the sufferings would come through war.

According to the view taken of the preceding plagues, this one is probably another result of the French Revolution and would naturally be expected to follow close after them. The military career of Napoleon Bonaparte came at the exact time to fulfill the requirements of this symbol. He was the most brilliant, successful, and scorching military sun the world had seen. His military talents were first recognized in 1793. After many successful invasions of other nations, he took the government of France into his own hands in 1799, becoming first consul for life. With unlimited power he became a constant menace to other nations. In his wars it is estimated that 2,000,000 men perished, and none can tell of the misery of injured bodies and desolated lands that were tracked by his armies. Historian Elliott says, "Never before had there been such a subversion of old dynasties, and changes in new ones, in the history of modern Europe." The nations that felt the scorching effect of his power were dominated by the papal system of religion. Surely no known historical event fits the symbol any better. It would certainly be remarkable if a career that so clearly affected the fortunes of the church would not be a subject to be depicted in a series of prophetic symbols. No other explanation seems as probable.

It would be impossible to learn how much suffering and bloodshed occurred in these wars. The natural effect that these calamities would have upon wicked men would be to cause them to blaspheme God for allowing such misfortunes to fall upon them. They would charge that he alone had power to bring them. If they admitted that God had power to bring the plagues, and they were suffering from them, that should have produced repentance, but it did not. This shows that those with the mark of the beast were too fully steeped in false teaching to yield; so, they repented not.

REV 16:10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

REV 16:11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

The word "throne" means authority and this bowl was, therefore, intended to weaken the highest authority in the beast’s power. As the theory here accepted is that the beast represents the apostate or papal church, we conclude that the beat's throne means the authority of the Pope. This plague was greatly to weaken that power, but not to destroy it. That would not occur till the seventh plague had been poured out. The "man of sin" is not to be destroyed till the Lord comes. (2 Thess. 2:3,8). This blow against papal authority would leave the Pope's subjects in distress and confusion, fittingly represented as spiritual darkness.

The words "pains" and "sores" seem to refer to the effects of the preceding plagues, indicating that this one only intensified their distress and misery already felt from plagues suffered. Gnawing their tongues signifies great suffering and deep anguish.

After victories in northern Italy in 1796 and 1797, the French army under Napolean was rushed toward Rome. The Pope (Pius VI) saved himself with a payment of 21,000,000 francs and a hundred of the finest paintings and statues in the Vatican. But he lost his temporal power, was taken away as a prisoner, and soon thereafter died. In 1804 Pope Pius VII was summoned to Paris to crown Napoleon as emperor, or rather to give official sanction to his assuming the position. In 1801 Napoleon made an agreement with Pius VII by which the Roman Catholic Church was restored as the state religion of France, but Protestant worship was to be allowed. In 1809 Napoleon issued a decree, declaring the Pope's temporal authority at an end, but allowed him the Vatican and the position of spiritual head of the church. This intensely exasperated the Pope, who excommunicated Napoleon. The Pope was then taken a prisoner to France, and the states of the church annexed to that empire.

In the year 1848 the people of Rome arose in rebellion to the Papal authority and drove Pius IX into exile. A few months later he was restored by a French army. Nor did he dare remain when restored, save under the protection of the French army. With a French garrison he continued to rule his circumscribed territory until 1870. In that year France was compelled to withdraw her soldiers to defend her soil from German invasion. That was the opportunity of Italy. The Papal army was scattered by the soldiers of Victor Emmanuel; the Pope shut himself in the Vatican, and Rome became the capital of new Italy. The temporal power of the Pope is gone forever. The Italian government seized upon the overgrown possessions of the church. The lands it claimed were confiscated, monasteries and convents were closed, and universal religious toleration was declared. Protestant churches and schools were found in Rome itself, and statues were erected under the shadow of the Vatican to martyrs whom the Papacy had slain. The authority of the Roman Pontiff had been both changed and limited.

REV 16:12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

The angel of the sixth trumpet is connected with the river Euphrates (Rev. 9:14). There a movement is symbolized which ends in the overthrow of the Eastern Roman Empire, the old Roman world power. Here a movement is probably signified which will work to the same end in the case of the Roman dominion revived in the Papal world power. The river Euphrates was the seat of the great city which once oppressed Israel and carried God's people into captivity. It was taken by Cyrus, God's chosen agent, and the means employed was the drying up of the Euphrates River during a drought. (Jer. 51:36). "Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry." Cyrus turned the river, which ran through the city, into new channels, dried up the old bed, then marched in this bed under the walls where they crossed the river on arches, and took the city. In some way the drying up of the Euphrates shall overthrow, or tend to overthrow, spiritual Babylon. Possibly this may be accomplished by the exhaustion of the resources of that power. The nations which once supplied them have been falling away.

In the infancy of Christ, the wise men of the East, also called kings in the Psalms, came to offer homage to the kingly child. The prophecy implies that when this obstacle is removed, the way of the inhabitants shall be opened. The drying up of the Euphrates will, in some manner, open the way for those that are signified to come to Christ, as those of old did to the manger.

REV 16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

REV 16:14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Notice that there is an alliance of three powers described as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. From their mouths came three unclean spirits, like frogs, who go forth to the kings of the earth, rally their forces under the banners of the three allied powers, and march them to the battle of the great day of the Almighty. The dragon (Satan, chapter 12) wars against the woman (the church) in the form of old Pagan Rome; he then (chapter 13) transfers this warfare to the seven-headed beast, the political world power shown both in the form of Imperial and Papal Rome; this power was supported, then when about to perish was revived by the lamb-like dragon who is the false prophet (13:11). It is unclear as to why the unclean spirits coming out of their mouths were like unto frogs. These were from false prophets.

In the mid 50's a man, Asa Alonzo Allen, who claimed to be a miracle healer, claimed to exorcise demons from people by taking frogs out of their mouths. He had used plants in his audiences and various tricks to convince the audience that he was really performing miracles. Two of the people he supposedly had healed of cancer had died within days of his healing. There were many rumors going around about this man's morality, and he was arrested a number of times for drunken driving. He died in 1970 of acute alcoholism and destruction of the liver.

REV 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

To watch for an event means to be constantly prepared for it. Those who are faithful till death will be happy, for they will not be taken unprepared. To keep his garments is a figurative expression. It probably means that as one who puts off his garments takes the risk of having them lost, leaving him naked, so one who lays aside his righteousness will find himself exposed to shame when the Lord comes.

REV 16:16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

There will not be a final battle between good and evil as some suppose, but there will be a gathering together of all people at one place on that great day. At his coming Jesus will slay "with the breath of his mouth" the man of sin (2 Thes. 2:8). He will only have to speak the words and events will transpire.

The original Har-Magedon refers to a famous battlefield where decisive victories were lost and won. This will be the final decisive victory over evil.

REV 16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

In Eph. 2:2 Satan is represented as the "prince of the powers of the air". This is Satan's final defeat.

REV 16:18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

The beginning of the destruction of the earth.

REV 16:19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

The complete destruction of the spiritual Babylon. The alliance of the three powers were now completely divided. (The dragon, Satan; the beast, Pagan Rome; and the false prophet, papal Rome).

REV 16:20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

REV 16:21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

This indicates that the distress and torment of that day will be terrible. Hail of such size would produce great sufferings; and sufferings will be great in that final day.

REVELATION 17

REV 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

This is one of the seven angels mentioned in the previous chapter whose work is described now in more detail. By the upcoming descriptions it is believed to describe the final fall of spiritual Babylon, the Catholic Church.

The great whore is the apostate church. She sits upon many waters. In verse 15 the "many waters" are explained to be "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Since the apostate church is also called "Babylon the great," the image may have been drawn from the fact that the ancient city was situated upon the Euphrates with many canals through it. Jer. 51:12-13. "**12** Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon. **13** O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness." These waters sustained the city; the city controlled the waters. In like manner the nations supported spiritual Babylon, the apostate church, and the papacy ruled the nations.

REV 17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

A pure woman is a symbol of the true church. An unfaithful wife represents an apostate church - those who have corrupted themselves with idolatry and human doctrines. The kingdoms of Israel and Judah were both charged with having "committed adultery with stones and with stocks." (Jer. 3:6-10; Ezek. 23:37). The same symbol is used in reference to the apostate church.

Kings here are the rulers, representing the nations who were influenced by, and made a part of, these false doctrines of the apostate church. To "commit fornication" spiritually is to practice the false teachings. These people were affected by these practices as a drunk man is by wine.

REV 17:3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

It is unknown as to why John was carried away into the wilderness in his vision. Sometimes wilderness is a symbol of desolation. Perhaps it is the desolation of the papal church.

John sees the woman sitting "upon many waters", and "upon a scarlet colored beast." This seven-headed and ten-horned beast was described in the 13th chapter and later on in this chapter as the city (7-hilled Rome) and the ten kingdoms under her control.

REV 17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls/ having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

Scarlet color is a characteristic of royal apparel; rich jewels of gold, pearls, and precious stones are the natural adornment of earthly rulers. When enemies ridiculed the claim that Jesus was a king, they placed a scarlet robe upon him (Matt. 27:28). Red is also a significant color in the wardrobe of officials of the Catholic Church, especially that of the cardinals.

The woman has a golden cup in her hand, of which she encouraged others to drink its contents. This is a figurative expression meaning she tries to get others to partake or practice her false doctrines.

REV 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth.

This helped John to understand the character of the woman. Its reason was to prevent anyone's misunderstanding her corrupt nature.

Mystery - Paul, by the Holy Spirit, revealed in 2 Thessalonians concerning the man of sin, who's coming is after the working of Satan: "**7** For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. **8** And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:" (2 Thess. 2:7-8).

She was the Mother of Harlots. There were to be many who would be harlots like her.

REV 17:6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

John views symbolically a drunken woman, not with wine, but with the blood of the saints. There were many over the centuries whose blood was shed by the Catholic Church.

REV 17:7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

John wondered in the previous verse when he saw the vision of the woman with the saying written on her forehead. The angel responds to his wonderment. The angel was going to tell what it all meant.

REV 17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

This means that the wicked power represented by the beast John saw had existed, did not exist, but would come into existence again. This will be explained a few verses later. Roman power died, then was revived.

REV 17:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

Since the beast refers to Roman power, its depiction of sitting on seven mountains is applicable. Rome has been called since long before Christ as the city of seven mountains, or the city of seven hills. The woman, it says here, sits on seven mountains.

REV 17:10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

The seven heads are represented as seven kings. (Kings being representative of kingdoms). These are seven different periods of the Roman government. Five were fallen, one is, and the other is yet to come. The different forms of the Roman government from its beginning till the establishment of the church are these: (1) Kings, (2) Consuls, (3) Dictators, (4) Decemvirs, (5) Military Tribunes, and (6) Emperors. The first five had passed away when John wrote. The sixth was in existence during his time. The seventh would be in the future for John. It it believed the seventh head, or kingdom, was a revived political Rome before the papacy took over.

REV 17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

The eighth was the beast described in the 13th chapter - that of the papal church taking control of imperial Rome. The revived kingdom was of the seventh, but then controlled by the Catholic Church (papal authority).

In Rev. 13:12 it stated that the second beast (mentioned here) "exerciseth all the authority of the first beast," and required men to worship the first beast. The papacy claimed the right to exercise both religious and secular power over the nations.

Flavio Biondo, a papal writer of the 15th century wrote: "The princes of the world now adore and worship as perpetual dictator the successor, not of Caesar, but of the fisherman, Peter; that is, the supreme Pontiff, the substitute of the afore-mentioned Emperor."

The Encyclopedia Britannica says in A.D. 1215 the council presided over by Pope Innocent III passed the following law: "It was there decreed that all rulers should promise to tolerate no heretics within their dominions, and that any prince who should refuse to comply with an injunction of the church to purge his dominions of heresy was to be punished with excommunication, and in case of contumacy to be deposed, if necessary by force by arms."

REV 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

The were the ten major kingdoms controlled by the Catholic Church before the French Revolution. Most agree these were the Vandals, the Visigoths, the Suevi, the Allans, the Burgundians, the Franks, the Britons, the Huns, the Lombards, and the kingdom of Ravenna.

"One hour" indicates a short period of time over the whole existence of the Roman kingdom.

REV 17:13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

Having one mind shows that whatever differences may have existed among these ten-horned nations, however they may have warred against each other, they were all Roman Catholics, and recognized her spiritual authority as the supreme power of government. The papacy received their endorsement and support.

REV 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Christ will overcome in the end.

REV 17:15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

The great whore, the Catholic Church, sits over many nations and people.

REV 17:16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

These kingdoms have waged war on Rome and have pulled from her dominating power.

REV 17:17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

God had control in using these nations to punish Rome.

REV 17:18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

The woman, the mother of harlots is Rome.

REVELATION 18

REV 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

After the vision described in the last chapter. Another angel with power: there is some evidence that there is a hierarchal structure of angels. The earth being lighted with his glory also indicates this angel came from the presence of God.

REV 18:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

"Babylon the great is fallen" is borrowed from the Old Testament prophets who speak of ancient Babylon's fall.

Isa. 21:9. "And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."

And a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

Isa. 13:19-22. "**19** And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. **20** It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. **21** But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. **22** And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."

The fall of spiritual Babylon is to be great having been compared to the fall of the original Babylon.

REV 18:3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

All the nations have shared in her spiritual adultery.

There have been many merchants down through the ages who have profited because of the Catholic Church doctrines.

REV 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

This urging came from the angel who had great authority from God. The command means that people should abandon all false doctrines taught by the mother of harlots, or any of her daughters. "My people" probably does not mean Christians, but those who really want to follow God.

REV 18:5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Her wickedness is known to God, and he will not forget to reward her.

REV 18:6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

She will be rewarded accordingly. As her dupes drank from the cup of her false doctrines, so must she drink double the cup of punishment.

REV 18:7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

The harlot's boast "I sit a queen" finds its fulfillment in the papal claim of infallible authority.

REV 18:8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Her arrogant claims will end in one day - that is, suddenly. Paul represents the coming of Jesus as a "thief in the night." The plagues mentioned are those that would happen upon a city being destroyed. Typically, they represent the complete overthrow and end of the apostate church.

REV 18:9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

REV 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

REV 18:11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

REV 18:12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

REV 18:13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

Those who have made gain trafficking in human practices in religion will mourn because their source of income has been cut off. The articles of merchandise mentioned symbolize every kind of religious device used to deceive those ignorant of God's word.

REV 18:14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

REV 18:15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

REV 18:16 And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

REV 18:17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

The merchants who profited in her trade stood afar off.

REV 18:18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

REV 18:19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Notice that they were weeping and wailing not for the great city, but for their lost income.

REV 18:20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

While there are mourners, another company is called upon to rejoice.

REV 18:21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

This symbolic act implies an utter destruction.

Jer. 51:61-64. "**61** And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words; **62** Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever. **63** And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: **64** And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah."

Now the stone is cast into the sea because of another Babylon.

REV 18:22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

REV 18:23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

Candles and elaborate weddings have always been a big thing with Catholic churches. These buildings would become silent.

REV 18:24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth.

This destruction of the great harlot was to happen because of what she has done to the true church.

REVELATION 19

In the preceding chapter three angels picture the fall of spiritual Babylon and tell what the effects will be upon those deceived by her false religion; now we have recorded the thanksgiving that will be expressed by the heavenly hosts.

REV 19:1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

After the symbolic act and words of the third angel (18:21-24). John heard another loud voice of a great multitude of people in heaven. In the last chapter (18:20) the apostles, prophets, and saints were invited to rejoice over the harlot's desolation. These verses contain the response to that invitation.

Alleluia - means "praise ye Jehovah". They were attributing praise to God for their salvation.

REV 19:2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

True and righteous are his judgments. It is appropriate for Christians to be reminded that the terrible judgments upon nations, cities, and individuals who spurn his ways are "righteous." The final punishment of the great harlot will come because she corrupted the earth with her false doctrines and because she caused the blood of saints to be shed. Her punishment will avenge that blood.

REV 19:3 And again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

After the judgment the final punishment of the wicked will endure forever.

REV 19:4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

Four and twenty elders - thought to possibly represent the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles. The four beasts as well as the twenty-four elders were covered in the fourth chapter. These beasts were described as having six wings and having the characteristics of a lion, calf, man, and an eagle. These are the defenders of God's holiness. They are his chariot on which he rides to judgment. Ezekiel, chapters 1 and 10, speak at length of the cherubim as God's war wagon. They stand between Adam and the way to the tree of life. They are standing over the ark of the covenant. They are servants to God.

REV 19:5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

The host in heaven is once again called to praise God.

REV 19:6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

The host responds with a great combined voice in their praise of God.

REV 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

The reason given here for the rejoicing is that the "marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." The coming of the Lord to receive the prepared church is similar to a bridegroom coming for his bride. Paul compared the relationship of marriage between husband and wife with that of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:22-32). So, we as a body are spiritually married to Christ. WE are to make ourselves ready for Christ as a bride makes herself ready for her husband.

REV 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

As a bride adorns herself with fine linen, so Christians adorn themselves with "righteous acts."

REV 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Those bidden are those who have washed their robes in Christ's blood (7:14) and are faithful unto death (2:10). Here the saved are presented as guests at a feast. This is the start of a closer relationship with Christ. Wedding feasts soon end, but the joys of heaven are eternal.

REV 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

This was the feet of an angel at which John had fallen and worshipped. But, just as in other instances, the angel wouldn’t have none of it. Angels are not to be worshipped.

REV 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

The white horse has been used previously as being symbolic of successful, or victorious warfare. Faithful and true are characteristics of Christ (1:5; 3:14). Jesus now rides the victory horse. He will judge righteously. The prophets declared that "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." (Isa. 11:5). His decisions will all be just and his warfare in defense of the truth always right.

REV 19:12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

His eyes were sharp, piercing, and bright, indicating his power to penetrate and see every object. He had on his head, not the "crown" -victor's wreath - but the "diadem" - symbol of his regal authority. "Many" diadems indicate the universal nature of his rule, and the complete victory he was to gain over all in the last conflict.

"a name written, that no man knew..." John saw the name, for it was written, but where it was written is not stated. No one knew it means that no one could understand what it signifies. It might be the same as the "new name" (2:17) which will be given

those who overcome, and therefore will not be known until the final state is reached. This implies that it expresses some heavenly relationship which men in the flesh cannot understand.

REV 19:13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

His garment is dipped (sprinkled) in blood because Christ shed his blood on the cross for mankind.

his name is called The Word of God. This is a title of Christ used only by the apostle John (John 1:14 - "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...").

REV 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

These armies are not wearing the battle armaments, but clean, white linen. It is believed that these are the saints made victorious by Jesus Christ.

REV 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Jesus said his kingdom was not to be defended with a carnal sword (John 18:36). Paul declares that Christians fight with the "…sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" (Eph. 6:17). The thing that proceeds from the mouth means words. God's words are even sharper than a literal sword (Heb. 4:12). Christ's victory will then be won by his word. As the worlds were created by the word of God, so by the word of Christ wickedness will be banished. There will not be carnal bloodshed; but Christ will speak the word and divine power will do the rest.

REV 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

This solidifies the thought that the rider of the white horse is Jesus. His kingship is superior to all others.

REV 19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

REV 19:18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

These are birds of prey that eat flesh. This is now a different supper than that mentioned earlier. Here it means that the punishment of the wicked will be like giving to birds of prey bodies slain in battle. The picture of bodies of all classes of people thus consumed is the horrible scene of the final destiny of the lost. There will be no chance for rulers to escape any more than the common man.

REV 19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

REV 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

REV 19:21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

The false prophet (the great harlot) and all her followers are cast into the great lake of fire and brimstone. This is the end of wicked powers and the final punishment of those who follow them.

REVELATION 20

Verses 1-10 have been made the battle ground for more conflicting theories, perhaps, than any other passage of scripture.

The word "millennium" is not in the Bible, but is commonly used in religious literature. It is a Latin word, meaning "a thousand years," and is generally substituted for that expression which is used six times in this passage. This is the only place in the Bible where this period is mentioned. There is a distinct age in which Christ will reign personally on earth, it is remarkable that neither he nor any of the apostles in their plain teaching said anything about it. Why should so important a matter be mentioned only in a book of symbols and in a highly figurative passage?

The popular notion that the millennium is a period of absolute and universal peace and righteousness is pure assertion; the word has no such meaning. The assumption is based upon the statement that Satan is to be "bound" during that period, which is supposed to mean literal binding and a complete destruction of his influence. Neither of these conclusions is true. If any wicked people are left on earth in the millennial age, Satan's personal binding would be of no special benefit; for his servants here could still torment and deceive the righteous. The wicked are his "ministers" now (2 Cor. 11:15) - "Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." At Christ's coming all the wicked are to be destroyed (Rev. 19:19-21) and the righteous living and dead are to receive immortal bodies (1 Cor. 15:51-52 - "**51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."; 1 Thess. 4:16-17 - "**16** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: **17** Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.") If he comes to establish the millennium, then there can be no literal kingdom, for there will be none in the flesh either to rule or be ruled. The passage must be explained figuratively.

Whatever the millennium may be, it precedes the final judgment. If the judgment occurs at Christ's coming (a fact taught by the scriptures), the doctrine that he comes to start the millennium is of necessity false. Peter makes the "coming of the day of God" the time when the heavens will be dissolved by fire and the elements melt with fervent heat. Jesus plainly teaches that both classes will be raised at the same time (John 5:28-29 - "**28** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, **29** And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."). These passages render a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth when he returns an impossibility.

The following conclusions are evident: If Jesus comes before the millennium, none can be raised bodily after it; for all are to be raised to be rewarded when he comes. Hence, the theory that only the wicked dead will then be raised is not true. If he comes after the millennium, none can be raised bodily before it, and the view that only the righteous

dead will then be raised is also untrue. In either case the premillennial view of this passage is false.

The symbols in 20:1-9 do not reveal events that are to follow chronologically after those of 19:19-21, where the beast and the false prophet were cast into the lake of fire. Verse 20:10 tells of Satan being cast into the same place. The millennial passage is a rehashing of things described in preceding chapters with different symbols. Reviewing the same periods with changed scenes is common in Revelations. The seven seals that closed with the end of the world stop with 11:18. The vision of the pure woman (true church) in her struggles against the dragon, beast, and false prophet, under the emblems of pouring out bowls of wrath, covers practically the same time, and the same final end is shown in 16:17-21. Next the destruction of the false church, represented as a drunken harlot and a great city, is symbolically pictured in chapters 17 and 18, followed with a song of triumph by the redeemed (19:1-10). In 19:11-18 is told the means by which this overthrow of evil is to be accomplished. Finally, 19:19-21 and 20:10 describe this overthrow and bring us for the third time to the end of the world, for the "lake of fire" in 20:14 is defined as the "second death."

The evident purpose of 20:1-10 is to give a brief review of Satan's overthrow from the time his power was restrained until banished in the lake of fire forever. Christ's personal coming ends the career of his enemies; this event is after, not before, the "millennium."

REV 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

This angel has the authority (by having the key from heaven) to open and close doors. Here he has the right to force Satan to remain in his own place and be restrained from the unlimited use of his power which he had been exercising during the long period of Catholic control. Being bound with a "great chain" signifies this restraint. The words "keys," "abyss," and "chain" should not be taken literally. The followers of Christ were to have protection from Satan's power so that they would be free to obey Christ.

REV 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Satan being a spirit, the only "chain" that can effectively bind him -restrain him - is God's word. In what was the world's greatest battle between right and wrong, Jesus defeated the devil at every turn with "it is written" (Matt. 4:). Satan's binding does not mean the destruction of all evil; though under restraint, Satan still operates through his angels who pose as ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

The duration of this binding is stated as a thousand years. This number does not fit the day-year theory; that would give the enormous amount of 365,000 years. If to be taken literally, the exact beginning and ending of the period could not be fixed definitely. It is probably a symbolic number meaning a long but indefinite period of time.

REV 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

During the 1260 year period he exercised practically unlimited power through the papacy and the kingdom it controlled. The millennium - the period of his being bound - must of necessity begin after that power was broken; and, for the same reason, it must have begun when that power was broken.

The purpose of the binding was to prevent Satan's deceiving the nations. During the papal supremacy the Bible, man's only real protection against the devil's power, was practically taken away from the people. With the Bible removed, it was no trouble for him to deceive the nations by superstition, false miracles, and pretended infallibility. When the Reformation broke the Catholic Church's religious bondage by giving the Bible back to the people so they could read God's word for themselves, Satan was bound in the fair meaning of the text. The millennial period is not a time of absolute and universal righteousness upon earth but a time of such restraint of Satan's power that all may have the privilege to serve God as the Scriptures teach, if they so desire.

After the millennium period ends, Satan must be loosed, not permanently, but for a "little time."

REV 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

This is an explanation of how Satan's binding would affect the church during the millennial period. Those whom John saw were reigning in some sense. Both judge and rule carry the idea of authority to command, approve, or condone. A person can reign in a secondary sense when he is authorized by the actual ruler. In this sense the apostle's rule under Christ as our King. Jesus told Peter in Matt. 19:28, "...Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." "The regeneration" means the Christian dispensation. Christians can rule in this period by influencing others to correct living, or to condemn by implication the disobedient through faithfulness to God.

John saw "souls of them that were beheaded." They reign with Christ because they would die before becoming traitors to the faith, or by accepting false doctrines. They had been killed because of their belief in Christ and refusal to deny him or God's word. They resisted the power and influence of the beast. They must have lived then before Satan was bound; lived during the period where the apostate church exercised supreme power.

"They lived" does not mean that souls were brought to life, for souls do not die in the literal meaning of death. Spiritually they continued to live with the knowledge that they had obeyed Christ. In this way Christ was with them. Some view two separate resurrections, in the physical sense, but John tells us in John 5:28-29, "**28** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, **29** And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Our first resurrection was when we became Christian's through the act of baptism.

REV 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand Years were fished. This is the first resurrection.

The rest were those who had not become Christians. Since they did not experience the first resurrection through baptism, their first resurrection would come at the judgment day.

REV 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Satan's power could not reach those who went through the first resurrection. Rev. 2:11, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

REV 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

The view here advocated is that the binding of Satan means the return to the people the right to read and obey the Bible without human dictation; his loosing, then, would be his regaining in some way the power to prevent or hinder such voluntary obedience.

REV 20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Though we do not know how or exactly what means he will use, it is not improbable that wickedness will prevail as never before. In this "little time" will occur the events recorded in 19:17-21 and 20:7-10; it will be Satan's last struggle against the church in which not only he but his chief aides - beast and false prophet - will be overcome and banished to the lake of fire (19:20; 20:10). This victory will not be gained by a carnal sword, but by the word that proceeds from the Lord's mouth (19:15).

Magog was a son of Noah after the flood, and the land he possessed was called Gog. Ezekial 38th & 39th chapters indicate that God was displeased with them. Ez. 38:2, "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him." and Ez. 39:6, "And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord." This was a complete destruction of the enemies of God's people.

REV 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

The Christians, spiritual Jerusalem, in those days will appear to be entirely encamped about by Satan's army and be utterly defeated when God will step in and not allow this to happen. They will be destroyed as Gog was. This will be the end of time as we know it.

REV 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Jesus said in Matt. 25:41, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" There is no escape; and the time is eternity.

REV 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

The scene of the great judgment starts. Jesus himself sits upon the great white throne, called the judgment seat. Heaven and earth fled away; they were destroyed. Their disappearance was final. 2 Peter 3:10-12, "**10** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. **11** Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, **12** Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

REV 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

All nations of all time of all people, good and bad, are gathered out before him. Both the Old and New Testaments were opened as well as the record of our lives. God's memory is just as good as if he wrote everything down. We will be judged by our works, contrary to the thoughts of many.

REV 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

However, or wherever men died, they came forth to the judgement seat to be judged by their works.

REV 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

There will no longer be death after the judgment, nor will there be any need to have Hades, the resting place of those after they have died.

REV 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

One of the books was the record of those whose names were written who became Christians. If their name was not recorded, they were automatically cast into hell fire.

REVELATION 21

REV 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

The scriptures point to the destruction of the old earth when the Lord comes to judgment.

2 Peter 3:10. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

This world does not conform to what our new bodies will be like.

Phil. 3:21. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

That new heaven and earth will be a state, place, or condition "wherein dwelleth righteousness."

2 Peter 3:13. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

REV 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The original "Jerusalem" had been the Jewish capital, physically and spiritually. It was the center of Jewish activity. This is where they came to be close to God. It is for this reason Heaven is referred to as the New Jerusalem. The saints will come there and abide with God.

Heb. 12:22. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,"

This city is likened to a beautiful bride adorned to meet her husband. A holy city and a beautifully adorned bride figuratively represent the beauty and holiness of the redeemed church.

REV 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

God's dwelling with men is not a new idea, but doing so in his personal presence is. We shall be able to fully recognize his presence. Under the Old Covenant God dwelt in the tabernacle between the cherubim's, where only the high priest could approach. In the heavenly Jerusalem we shall dwell in the tabernacle with God.

REV 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

In this verse are mentioned the most satisfying characteristics which make the heavenly state so appealing to people in the flesh. The most distressing and harrowing

experiences known to human life are to disappear completely. The glorious body cannot be racked with pain; no incurable disease or death can make the heart cry out in anguish. Such a great appeal to the mortal experience.

REV 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

John is once again commanded to write these things down.

REV 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; hence "the beginning and the end." All begins with God, and he closes the drama of earthly history.

To those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5:6) there will be the privilege of drinking the "water of life freely."

REV 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

This is substantially the same promise made to the seven churches, with the same condition imposed - they must overcome.

Inheritance is usually from parents to their children after their death. Christ died so that we may inherit eternal life. And in the new life we will continue to be sons of God in a more glorious relationship.

REV 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Those joined to sin have no place in the glorious home prepared for the saints but will suffer for eternity in hell with Satan and his angels. From the second death there is no relief.

REV 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

The speaker here was one of the seven angels that poured out the seven plagues. He is about to show John the bride, the Lamb's wife, the saved church.

REV 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

He seemed to be stationed on a high mountain and there to see a mighty city descending out of heaven.

REV 21:11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

In the descending city which John saw in the vision there was God's glory; its light was like a precious stone clear as crystal, dazzling bright. Truly an appropriate appearance for the dwelling place of God.

REV 21:12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

A great wall indicates that the eternal city of our God will be securely protected - no enemy can ever touch the redeemed again. Angels at the gates carry the same idea of protection or being safely guarded. Possibly there is here an allusion to the Cherubim and flaming sword that protected the tree of life in Eden. (Gen. 3:24).

The names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written there. All those who belong to the true Israel, the saints, will enter there.

REV 21:13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

The significance of three gates on all four sides is unknown.

REV 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Twelve foundations under the wall - the twelve apostles of Jesus are the foundations of the Church, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20).

REV 21:15 And he that talked with me had a Golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

REV 21:16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

The church is measured to see if it is according to divine plans and spacious enough for all the saved.

The city was not only foursquare but was a cube. 15000 furlongs would be 1500 miles in each direction. Such an enormous city, if taken literally, indicates the ample provisions our God had made for the final home of his obedient children.

REV 21:17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

A wall made the vision correspond with cities of that age. It also carried with it the idea of protection. According to the measure of a man evidently means that the reed used was the same length that man would use. No one would be able to batter down the walls (on an 18-inch cubit, they are 216 feet thick).

REV 21:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

Earth's richest jewels and most precious metals are symbols of the richness of God's provisions for the saved in heaven. This makes Solomon's temple seem like a shanty.

REV 21:19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

Even the foundations of the wall were adorned with twelve manner of precious stones.

REV 21:20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

REV 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Among the ancients, pearls were considered of the highest value among precious stones because their beauty was entirely natural and without effort of art. Each gate was made of a separate pearl.

REV 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

Under the Jewish system the most holy place of the temple was where God met the high priest, as representative of the people; in the church - the true tabernacle - all are kings and priests and worship God. In the heavenly Jerusalem he will meet the saved personally; there will be no special place for a tabernacle, for the whole city will be the temple; or, in another view, God and the Lamb will be the temple. In 7:15 it says that in the final state we will "serve him day and night in his temple."

REV 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Ordinary cities must have lights both natural and artificial. Not so in the New Jerusalem, the glory of God and the presence of Jesus will be all the light needed.

REV 21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

The prophet said that all nations would flow into the mountain of the Lord's house (Isa. 2:2). The redeemed will come from all nations, but in heaven will be spiritual beings with all national distinctions blotted out. To carry out the same figure kings - the rulers of nations - will bring their honor into it. They will not there be acting as kings, but rather will themselves become subjects to God and give him all the glory that once they received. (Even a president of the United States was a member of the church of Christ).

REV 21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

Ancient cities shut their gates by night and opened them by day. In God's eternal city there will be no night, for the glory of God and Christ will give it perpetual light.

REV 21:26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

REV 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This verse is substantially the same in thought as verse 8 with the additional statement that none can enter except those written in the "Lamb's book of life." Those who desire to enter must be righteous; in heaven they will be free from vexations due to the sins of men.

REVELATION 22

The previous chapter presented us with a description of the New Jerusalem, or heaven. That vision is complete in the beginning of this chapter.

REV 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In John's vision he sees a river of water proceeding from the throne of God. Water is necessary for physical life; and homes generally were built near an abundance of water, even if wells had to be dug, or drilled. Early settlers in this country built their homes near rivers. It is a fit symbol that our home in heaven would also have a water source. This water is pure, and clear as crystal. Most water is clear when it comes from its source in the mountains, but as it travels through farmlands, industry, and cities it becomes more polluted. Those living farther downstream cannot drink from it directly. Our source of water in heaven will always be pure. It comes from the throne of God. There will be no impurities there.

REV 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

There was a river in the garden of Eden, also. (GEN 2:10-17) "**10** And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. **11** The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; **12** And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. **13** And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. **14** And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. **15** And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. **16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: **17** But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Both places depict a river and a tree. Of the tree in the garden of Eden the fruit was not to be eaten; if so, the result was death. Of the tree in heaven the twelve manners of fruits that gave live, not death. Its leaves were used for healing, not healing in the sense that there will be sick people in heaven that will need it, for Rev. 21:4 tells us that condition will not exist, but its presence in heaven will prevent disease. This was a huge tree that sprang up out of the middle of the river and covered both banks. This tree yields her fruit every month. Reminds me of the lemon tree in Eric Harper's back yard, where no matter what time of year you could pick ripe lemons off of it.

REV 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

When man sinned in Eden he was driven out from the tree of life under a curse, including pain, sickness, sorrow, and death. In the final city of God, these curses can never come.

REV 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

This is a privilege that man has never had, not even those of the Old Testament; but those who will reside in heaven will get to see God's face. His name shall be on their foreheads. He will know his people, and all the angels will know God's people.

REV 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever:

All of the dread and fear of the darkness which has haunted man for ages will be gone. There will be nothing to fear in heaven, and God's brightness there will be no need to have any artificial brightness. It is not said that we shall reign over anyone else, but we shall enjoy the pleasures of heaven as if others were serving us.

REV 22:6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

Apparently an angel is speaking here, telling John that everything he heard and saw was true. John was again assured as he was in the beginning that these things he saw in his visions would start shortly.

REV 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

The angel speaking as the messenger of Christ. "I come quickly" does not have the meaning, "I come soon", but rather, "I come suddenly." He will come as a thief in the night when no one expects him to come.

REV 22:8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

After the vision was over John fell down at the angel's feet to worship him. He evidently forgot that the angel told him earlier (Rev. 19: 10) not to worship him.

REV 22:9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

The angel forbade him to worship him, but to worship God.

REV 22:10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

That is, the time was near when the series of symbols would begin to be fulfilled. John was to promptly write these things so the churches then in existence would have a knowledge of what they would receive for faithfulness amid trials. To seal them would have meant to wrap them up and store them away.

REV 22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Those who would not heed the holy scriptures, let them go on in their wickedness. With these prophecies and promises in hand, if one cannot be influenced to serve God, then

the truth will not reach him. God offers to save none against his will. Do not "cast your pearls before swine" indicates we can spend our time better elsewhere teaching the word than to spend it teaching someone who stubbornly refuses it.

REV 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

We will be rewarded according to our works.

REV 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet used to express completeness. Christ is the Alpha and Omega. He was with God in the creation. (COL 1: 15-17) "**15** Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: **16** For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: **17** And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Christ will also be there in the judgment.

REV 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Some translations have, "Blessed are they who wash their robes." Some Bible translators have used the latter phrase, preferring it as if they were allergic to the phrase "doing God's commandments." Meaning is the same, we are to keep ourselves pure and do God's work.

REV 22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

To the Jew the dog was an unclean animal. It was generally wild, vicious, dirty, cowardly, and disgusting. They were scavengers of ancient cities. A thoroughly immoral person was called a dog. Sorcerer – handlers of black magic. Have been around long before John's time and are still around. Whoremongers - prostitution, adultery, fornication, lasciviousness, etc. Sensual sin. These will not inherit heaven. Murderer- Jesus included the person who hates as a murderer in his sermon on the mount. Idolatry - Not just Pagan idolatry, but power, fame, wealth, gold, science, or anything that we place before God. Liars will also not be in heaven.

REV 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

"I Jesus" indicates that everything the angels spake and revealed unto John came from, and by the authority of, Jesus. Christ was the promised Messiah, the offspring of David. He now rules at the right hand of God.

REV 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

An invitation to come to Christ.

REV 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

REV 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Early Bible scribes that copied the Bible spent agonizing amounts of time and effort into making sure they copied it correctly. Unfortunately, this dedication to the sanctity of the scriptures has evaded many of the translators of today. No longer are they trying to get as close a translation as they can possibly get, but now their effort is to paraphrase, just get the general meaning of the scripture. By doing this much of what is intended is lost.

REV 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

REV 22:21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.