

The Book Of Revelation



Sermon Outlines

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To God Be The Glory!

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The Book Of Revelation

Introduction (Part One)

INTRODUCTION

1. *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place.” (Re 1:1a)*
2. So begins the book of Revelation, one of the most challenging books of the Bible
3. It is the first book that many people new to the Bible want to study, while it is often neglected by mature Christians
4. It has been used by false teachers and false prophets to lead people into doomsday cults
5. Yet when properly handled, it can be a wonderful blessing to those who read and meditate upon it!

[How is this book different from other books of the New Testament? How should we interpret it? These are questions we will seek to answer in this introduction to the book. Let’s start by noticing...]

I. THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THE BOOK

A. IT IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF BOOK...

1. Revelation is certainly different from other books of the New Testament
2. It is also very different from most kinds of writing familiar to people today
3. Unfortunately, this has caused many people to shy away from the book
4. Or on the other hand, to misuse it in propagating wild and fanciful theories
5. Most people conclude it is just too mysterious to understand
6. But it was actually written to make things clearer!
 - a. The word “revelation” in the Greek is **apokalupsis**
 - b. Which means “an uncovering” or “unveiling”
 - c. It is therefore a book designed to uncover or unveil, not conceal!

B. IT IS APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE...

1. A style of writing not familiar to modern man, but quite popular from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D.
2. A type of literature well known to Jews and Christians in the first century A.D.
3. Features of apocalyptic literature include the use of symbolic or figurative language
4. It was normally written in times of persecution, depicting conflict between good and evil
5. There are other examples of apocalyptic literature in the Bible
 - a. In the OT, the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah each contain elements of this style of writing
 - b. In the NT, Matthew 24 contains apocalyptic elements

[Though Revelation is written in a style of literature with which many are not familiar, it is possible to understand much if not all of the book...]

II. UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK

A. BY THOSE IN THE FIRST CENTURY....

1. The early church likely did not have the problem understanding the book as we do today
2. They were well acquainted with the style of apocalyptic literature
3. They were living when the symbols of the book were likely very familiar to them
 - a. Similar to how a picture of a donkey and elephant fighting would be understood today
 - b. I.e., depicting conflict between the Democratic and Republican parties in the USA
4. In fact, the book was originally intended to be understood by a casual hearing! Note the opening beatitude:
 - a. *“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.” (Re 1:3)*
 - b. This verse suggests a setting in which one is reading while others listen
 - c. The listeners were expected to understand enough to be blessed by what they heard!

B. BY THOSE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY...

1. Our difficulty with this book is due to our unfamiliarity with apocalyptic literature as a method of communicating a message
2. We are also far removed from the historical and cultural context of the times which would make the symbolism easier to understand
3. To properly interpret the book, we must try to understand the historical context in which it was written
4. We must also interpret it in a manner that would have been meaningful to those to whom it was first addressed
5. It also behooves us to pay close attention to those passages or statements which are clear and easy to understand, interpreting difficult passages that is consistent with easier ones

[While challenging, The Book of Revelation can be understood and bless those today who read *“the words of this prophecy”*. It helps to be aware of different methods of interpreting the book, which generally fall into four distinctive views...]

III. METHODS OF INTERPRETATION

A. THE “PRETERIST” VIEW...

1. The book refers to events that were fulfilled in the first century A.D., or shortly thereafter
2. It was written primarily to encourage the original recipients to whom it was sent
3. Its value for today would therefore be didactic (teaching the value of faithfulness to Jesus)

B. THE “HISTORICIST” VIEW...

1. The book provides a panoramic view of the experience of the church as it proceeds throughout history
2. This view finds in the book such events as the rise of Catholicism, Islam, the Protestant reformation, world wars, etc., ending with the return of Christ
3. As such it would encourage Christians no matter when they lived

C. THE “FUTURIST” VIEW...

1. Apart from the first few chapters, the book depicts events which immediately precede the second coming of Christ
2. Therefore most of the book has yet to be fulfilled (or is being fulfilled now)
3. Its value would be primarily for Christians living at the time Jesus returns

D. THE “IDEALIST” VIEW...

1. The book does not deal with any specific historical situation
2. Instead, it is simply enforcing the principle that good will ultimately triumph over evil

3. As such the book is applicable to any age

[I have studied all four views, and have changed my interpretation of the book the more I've studied it. Allow me to share with you what is my currently...]

IV. PREFERRED METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

A. ECLECTIC, BUT MOSTLY PRETERIST...

1. I believe a proper understanding of the book incorporates some of all these views
2. I.e., there are historicist, futuristic, and idealist elements in the book
3. But in my estimation an overall "preterist" view has the most merit

B. REASONS FOR A PRETERIST INTERPRETATION...

1. The book was written specifically to seven churches in Asia (in modern day Turkey) - **Re 1:4**
2. Its purpose was to uncover or reveal "*things which must shortly come to pass*" - **Re 1:1,3; 22:6,10**
3. John was told, "*Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand*" - **Re 22:10**
4. Compare the previous two points with **Daniel 8:26**
 - a. Daniel was told to "*seal up*" his vision, "*for it refers to many days in the future*"
 - b. Yet we know that his vision was fulfilled within several hundred years
 - c. John was told "*do not seal*" what he had seen, "*for the time is at hand*"
 - d. How could this be, if the bulk of Revelation refers to what has yet to occur more than two thousands years later?
 - e. This is the problem I have with the "futurist" view, which places primary fulfillment of the book thousands of years after its composition
5. Place yourself in the position of Christians in the churches of Asia in the first century, A.D.
 - a. They were told that the things described in the Revelation would "shortly come to pass", which should comfort them
 - b. But according to the "futurist" view, it has been nearly 2000 years and much of the book has yet to be fulfilled!
 - c. That would be like someone today writing that something is soon coming to pass, when in reality it will be 4000 A.D. before it does!
 - d. How would a book depicting events to occur thousands of years in the future comfort those who were suffering in the first century A.D.?
6. This is not to say there are no "futurist" elements in the book
 - a. I understand chapters 20-22 to deal with the ultimate destiny of the redeemed, which would have been of great interest and comfort to the Christians suffering in the first century
 - b. My approach to the book, therefore, will be primarily from the preterist viewpoint, with occasional elements from other viewpoints as the text warrants

This concludes **PART ONE** of this Introduction to the Book Of Revelation. In **PART TWO**, we shall consider the Author, Date, Purpose, Key Verse, and Outline of the book.

The Book Of Revelation

Introduction (Part Two)

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Part One** of this Introduction to the Book of Revelation, we considered...
 - a. The unique nature of the book as containing elements of apocalyptic literature
 - b. The importance of understanding the book as first written to early Christians
 - c. Four common views of interpreting the book (preterist, historicist, futurist, idealist)
 - d. My eclectic approach to interpreting the book (though mostly preterist)
2. In **Part Two**, we will complete our introduction to the Book of Revelation by considering...
 - a. Who wrote the book
 - b. The date it was written
 - c. The purpose of the book
 - d. The key verse of the book
 - e. A brief outline of the book

[The book begins by saying, “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants...*” (**Re 1:1**), so we know its ultimate source came from God Himself, but who wrote the book as we have it...?]

I. THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK

A. IDENTIFIED AS “JOHN”...

1. “...*who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus*” - **Re 1:1-2**
2. While debated by some, he was most likely the apostle John, brother of James
3. Author of the gospel of John, and three epistles (**1,2, & 3 John**)

B. JOHN’S AUTHORSHIP SUPPORTED BY...

1. Justin Martyr (165 A.D.)
2. Irenaeus (185 A.D.)
3. Clement of Alexandria (220 A.D.)
4. Hippolytus (236 A.D.)
5. Origen (254 A.D.)

[While scholars are mostly unanimous on John the apostle as the author of the Book Of Revelation, the date of when the book was written is another matter...]

II. THE DATE OF THE BOOK

A. THE ISSUE RELATED TO THE DATE WRITTEN...

1. When one dates the book will have a bearing upon one’s interpretation of the book
2. Especially if one (such as myself) follows the “preterist” view
3. Two dates are usually proposed:
 - a. An “**early date**”, around 64-68 A.D., during the reign of the Roman emperor, Nero
 - b. A “**late date**”, around 95-96 A.D., during the reign of the Roman emperor, Domitian

B. EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR THE LATE DATE (95-96 A.D.)...

1. Appeal is often made to a statement of Irenaeus who lived in the late 2nd Century A.D.

2. His statement is rather ambiguous, however, and can be understood in different ways
3. For a detailed examination of Irenaeus' quotation, see **Redating The New Testament, by John A. T. Robinson**

C. EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR THE EARLY DATE (64-68 A.D.)...

1. The Syriac version of the New Testament (dating back to the 2nd Century A.D.) says the book was written during the reign of Nero
2. The Muratorian Fragment (170-190 A.D.) and Monarchian Prologues (250-350 A.D.) claim that Paul wrote to seven churches following the pattern of John's example in Revelation, placing the Book of Revelation even before some of the Pauline epistles - **Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 12; p. 406**
3. Because of the contradictory nature of the **external evidence**, I place more weight on the **internal evidence** (evidence from within the book itself)

D. INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR DATING THE BOOK...

1. In **Re 11:1-14** the temple, which was demolished in August of 70 A.D., is still standing.
 - a. Advocates of the "late date" naturally understand this passage in a strictly figurative sense
 - b. But consider **Philip Schaff**: "*While somewhat figurative, the allusion to the crucifixion of our Lord (Re 11:8) compel us to think of the historical Jerusalem.*"
2. In **Re 17:9-11**, we find mention of EIGHT "kings"
 - a. If these "kings" are emperors of Rome, starting with Augustus the FIRST FIVE were: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero (who died June 9, 68 A.D.)
 - b. Nero's death left the empire in an uproar; this may be the "deadly wound" in **Re 13:3,12,14**
 - c. Three men (Galba, Otho, and Vitellius) tried vainly to consolidate power over the empire, but it was Vespasian who restored order in 70 A.D.
 - d. Thus, the "deadly wound" was healed, and Vespasian would be the SIXTH "king" (or the "one is" in **Re 17:10**)
 - e. This would make Titus the SEVENTH emperor and Domitian the EIGHTH
3. Notice carefully, that in **Re 17:8,11** John was told that **the beast "is not"**
 - a. It **"was"**, and **"is about to come"** (ASV), but at the time the Revelation was being given, the beast **"IS NOT"**!
 - b. If we understand (as I do) that the "beast" represents imperial Rome as personified in its emperors Nero and Domitian, then Revelation could NOT have been written during the reigns of either Nero or Domitian!
4. The condition of persecution that had been experienced already by those in the book are similar to that mentioned by Peter
 - a. He wrote to the Christians in Asia Minor also, just a few years before (cf. **1Pe 1:1**)
 - b. They were undergoing persecution similar to that described in **Re 2 & 3** (cf. **1Pe 1:6; 4:12; 5:9**)
 - 1) Persecution by the Jews with the help of Roman authorities
 - 2) Something that had been going on since the days of Paul's first missionary journey

E. MY PERSONAL CONCLUSION REGARDING THE DATE...

1. The internal evidence indicates that the Revelation was given during the reign of VESPASIAN, the SIXTH emperor, while the **"beast is not"** - **Re 17:8,11**
2. This would place the date of the book around the spring of 70 A.D. - **Philip Schaff, History Of The Church, Vol. I**
3. A date between the death of Nero in 68 A.D. and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was also favored by F. J. A. Hort, J. B. Lightfoot, and B. F. Westcott - **John A. T. Robinson, Redating The New Testament, p. 224**

4. **Philip Schaff**, who at one time held the “late date”, stated the following:
 - a. *“The early date is best suited for the nature and object of the Apocalypse, and facilitates its historical understanding. Christ pointed in his eschatological discourses to the destruction of Jerusalem and the preceding tribulation as the great crisis in the history of the theocracy and the type of the judgment of the world. And there never was a more alarming state of society.”*
 - b. *“The horrors of the French Revolution were confined to one country, but the tribulation of the six years preceding the destruction of Jerusalem extended over the whole Roman empire and embraced wars and rebellions, frequent and unusual conflagrations, earthquakes and famines and plagues, and all sorts of public calamities and miseries untold. It seemed, indeed, that the world, shaken to its very center, was coming to a close, and every Christian must have felt that the prophecies of Christ were being fulfilled before his eyes.”*
 - c. *“It was at this unique juncture in the history of mankind that St. John, with the consuming fire in Rome and the infernal spectacle of the Neronian persecution behind him, the terrors of the Jewish war and the Roman interregnum around him, and the catastrophe of Jerusalem and the Jewish theocracy before him, received those wonderful visions of the impending conflicts and final triumphs of the Christian church. His was truly a book of the times and for the times, and administered to the persecuted brethren the one but all-sufficient consolation: Maranatha! Maranatha!”* (**History of The Christian Church, Vol. I, pp. 836-837**)

[If the Book of Revelation was written in the spring of 70 A.D. before Jerusalem fell in September, 70 A.D., what was it’s purpose...?]

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

A. AS CLEARLY STATED IN THE BOOK...

1. Both at the beginning and end of the book - cf. **Re 1:1,3; 22:6,10**
2. To reveal *“things which must shortly come to pass”*
3. It is a revelation from Christ Himself of the judgment to come upon those who were persecuting His people - cf. **Re 6:9-11; 16:5-7**
4. This judgment was directed especially toward those who had been deceived by Satan to attack the Church of Christ

B. TO REVEAL JUDGMENTS TO COME...

1. *“Undoubtedly he had in view primarily the overthrow of Jerusalem and heathen Rome, the two great foes of Christianity at that time.”* - **Philip Schaff**
2. I also would suggest that the purpose of the book is to reveal how Christ was going to bring judgment on Jerusalem and Rome for rejecting God and persecuting His people
 - a. This judgment occurred with the destruction of Jerusalem in the fall of **70 A.D.**
 - b. And with the final cessation of persecution by Rome in **476 A.D.** when the empire fell

C. TO BOTH WARN AND COMFORT...

1. For erring disciples, it is a book of warning (“repent” or else) - cf. **Re 2:5,16**
2. For faithful disciples, it is a book of comfort (“blessed” are those who overcome) - cf. **Re 1:3; 2:7; 3:21; 14:13; 22:14**

[Before we conclude this two-part introduction to the Book of Revelation, it may be helpful to offer a brief outline of the main points of the book as I understand it...]

IV. OUTLINE OF THE REVELATION

INTRODUCTION, VISION OF JESUS, LETTERS TO CHURCHES 1:1-3:22

I. VISIONS OF JUDGMENT AGAINST UNFAITHFUL JERUSALEM 4:1-11:19

II. VISIONS OF JUDGMENT AGAINST PAGAN ROME 12:1-19:21

III. VISIONS OF THE FUTURE & BEYOND 20:1-22:5

CONCLUSION WITH FINAL EXHORTATIONS 22:6-21

CONCLUSION

1. The Book Of Revelation may be challenging...
 - a. Containing elements of apocalyptic literature (filled with visions and symbols)
 - b. With uncertainty about the date written, and the proper method of interpretation
2. But the main point of the book is clear, as stated in what may be the key verse:

“These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.” - Re 17:14

As a sister in Christ once said to me, *“Mark, the Book of Revelation can be summarized in two words: ‘Jesus wins!’”* I agree!

3. It is incumbent upon Christians to heed both the warnings and blessings in this book...
 - a. Because there are elements of the book that have yet to be fulfilled
 - b. Including a time in which Satan will once again deceive the nations to battle against the church
- cf. **Re 20:7-10**

Will we remain faithful even to the point of death should that happen in our lifetime? The Book of Revelation can help us in that regard...

“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days.”

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”

- Re 2:10-11

The Book Of Revelation

Prologue (1:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

1. The Book of Revelation begins similar to the Gospel of John...
 - a. Both books start with a **prologue** (“a preface or introduction to a literary work”)
 - b. The prologue to the Gospel of John is found in **Jn 1:1-18**
 - c. The prologue to the Book of Revelation is found in **Re 1:1-8**
2. John’s prologue to the Book of Revelation contains four parts:
 - a. Introduction and benediction - **Re 1:1-3**
 - b. Greetings to the seven churches - **Re 1:4-6**
 - c. Announcement of Christ’s coming - **Re 1:7**
 - d. The self-designation - **Re 1:8**

[Each part of the prologue is worthy of careful reflection, providing the setting for what is to follow...]

I. INTRODUCTION AND BENEDICTION (1-3)

A. INTRODUCING THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST...

1. Which God gave Him (Jesus) to show His servants - **Re 1:1**
 2. About things “which must shortly take place” - **Re 1:1**; cf. **1:3**; **22:6,10**
 3. Jesus sent and signified it by His angel - **Re 1:1**; cf. **22:6,16**
 4. To His servant John, who bore witness - **Re 1:2**
 - a. To the word of God, to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw
 - b. Referring to Revelation itself, or perhaps the gospel of John? - cf. **Jn 21:24**
- **Note the process of revelation: God - Jesus - Angel - John**

B. THE BENEDICTION TO READER & LISTENERS...

1. *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear this prophecy* - **Re 1:3**
 - a. Alluding to a setting in which one reads while others listen
 - b. Suggesting that the Revelation can be understood by careful listening
 2. *Blessed are those who keep those things written in it, for the time is near* - **Re 1:3**
 - a. The blessings in this book are for those obey it! - **Re 22:7**; cf. **Lk 11:28**
 - b. The book is mostly about things that would soon happen - **Re 1:1**; **22:10**
- **While much has already been fulfilled, it is still a blessing to those who read and heed!**

[Following the introduction and benediction, John sends greetings to the recipients for whom the Book of Revelation was initially intended...]

II. GREETINGS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES (4-6)

A. FROM JOHN, TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA...

1. In Asia Minor, the area known today as **SE Turkey**
 2. Which were located in the following cities: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea - cf. **Re 1:8**
- **Specific letters to these seven churches will be noted in chapters 2 & 3**

B. WITH GRACE AND PEACE...

1. From Him who is and who was and who is to come (God the Father) - **Re 1:4a**
 2. From the seven Spirits who are before His throne - **Re 1:4b**; cf. **4:5; 5:6**
 - a. Most likely the Holy Spirit, described figuratively in sevenfold perfection - cf. **Isa 11:2**
 - b. Or perhaps ministering spirits or presence angels (**Moses Stuart**) - **1Ti 5:21**; cf. **Re 8:2; 16:1; 21:9**
 3. From Jesus Christ - **Re 1:5-6**
 - a. The faithful witness (who bore witness before Pontus Pilate) - cf. **1Ti 6:13**
 - b. The firstborn from the dead (He was the first to rise, never to die again) - **1Co 15:20**
 - c. The ruler over the kings of the earth (the King of kings!) - **Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22**
 - d. Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood - **Jn 15:9; Ac 20:28**
 - e. Who made us kings and priests to His God and Father (a royal priesthood) - **1Pe 2:9**
 - f. To Whom be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen! - **1Pe 4:11**
- **A beautiful salutation of grace (unmerited favor) and peace (the tranquility which flows from unmerited favor) from the triune Godhead! - cf. **Mt 28:19; 2Co 13:14; 1Jn 5:7****

[Following the greeting to the seven churches of Asia, John's prologue includes an...]

III. ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHRIST'S COMING (7)

A. HE IS COMING WITH CLOUDS...

1. Descriptive of Jesus' second coming by angels after He ascended to heaven - **Ac 1:9-11**
 2. But also descriptive of Jesus' coming in judgment with the destruction of Jerusalem, an event that was to occur within that generation (and which did occur in 70 A.D.) - cf. **Mt 24:30,34**
- **A description often used in reference to judgment upon nations - cf. **Isa 19:1; Nah 1:1-3****

B. EVERY EYE WILL SEE HIM, EVEN THEY WHO PIERCED HIM...

1. A visible judgment is pronounced, especially by those who crucified Jesus
 2. Which He also told religious leaders who were about to sentence him to death - **Mt 26:63-64**
- **So is this a reference to judgment to come in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.?**

C. ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH WILL MOURN BECAUSE OF HIM...

1. This may sound like the worldwide judgment at Christ's second coming
 2. But Jesus used this terminology in describing the destruction of Jerusalem - **Mt 24:30**
- **Thus this announcement in verse 7 may actually be announcing the judgment to come upon Jerusalem described in Matthew 24, which occurred in 70 A.D.**

D. EVEN SO, AMEN...

1. A shocking announcement with which to begin, yet John says "so be it" (amen)
2. Similar to the manner in which he closes: "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*" - **Re 22:20**

[The prologue to Revelation ends with what has been called...]

IV. THE SELF-DESIGNATION (8)

A. "I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END"...

1. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet
 2. Identifying One "*who is the beginning of all history (the Creator), and the goal for whom all things are made (all history is made toward glorifying Him)*" - **ESV Study Bible**
 3. Both the Father (**Re 21:6**) and Jesus (**Re 1:11,17; 2:8; 22:12-13**) are described this way!
 4. Appropriately for Jesus, in light of the following scriptures - cf. **Jn 1:1-3; Co 1:15-18**
- **But Who is speaking, God the Father or Jesus Christ? Consider the following...**

B. “WHO IS AND WHO WAS AND WHO IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY”...

1. Some red-letter translations indicate it as Jesus speaking (e.g., KJV, NKJV)
2. Other red-letter translations indicate it as God speaking (e.g., ESV, NASB, NIV, NLT, CSB)
3. The phrase “*Who is and who was and who is to come*” refers to God the Father in **Re 1:4**
4. The “Almighty” consistently refers to God the Father in Revelation and elsewhere in the NT - **Re 1:8; 4:8; 11:16-17; 15:3-4; 16:7,14; 19:6,15; 21:22; 2Co 6:18**
5. Remember, the Revelation is that which God gave Jesus to show His servants - **Re 1:1**
- **It seems fitting the Revelation begins with a self-designation from God, its ultimate source!**

CONCLUSION

1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ begins with a clear statement of origin and purpose...
 - a. Given to Jesus by God to show His servants things which must soon take place
 - b. It was designed to bless those who read, hear, and keep the words of the prophecy
2. John then addressed the seven churches in Asia (SW Turkey)...
 - a. Offering grace and peace from each member of the Godhead
 - b. With descriptive terms that become more significant later in the epistle
3. His prologue includes a declaration concerning the Lord’s coming...
 - a. Coming with clouds (indicative of judgment against nations similar to those in the OT)
 - b. To be viewed by those who crucified Him (implying a judgment within their lifetime)
4. His prologue concludes with a self-designation...
 - a. Which many take to be the words of Jesus
 - b. But may be those of God the Father, as the ultimate source of Revelation - **Re 1:1**

In our next study we shall consider “**The Vision Of The Son Of Man**” (1:9-20), which explains how John came to have a crucial role in the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

In the meantime, have you have been washed from your sins in the blood of Jesus (**Re 1:5**)? If not...

“...why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” - Ac 22:16

Or as Peter told his fellow Jews on the first day of Pentecost following the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ:

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” - Ac 2:38-39

The Book Of Revelation

Vision Of The Son Of Man (1:9-20)

INTRODUCTION

1. John began Revelation with a **prologue**, in which included the following...
 - a. Introduction and benediction - **Re 1:1-3**
 - b. Greetings to the seven churches - **Re 1:4-6**
 - c. Announcement of Christ's coming - **Re 1:7**
 - d. The self-designation - **Re 1:8**
2. John then describes what led to him having such a crucial role in the Revelation which God gave Jesus to give to His servants...
 - a. His current circumstances on the island called Patmos
 - b. The voice & vision of the Son Of Man who appeared to him
 - c. The instructions given him to write to the seven churches in Asia

[Let's now consider the text of our study, **Re 1:9-20**, beginning with...]

I. JOHN'S CIRCUMSTANCES (9-10b)

A. THEIR BROTHER AND COMPANION...

1. In tribulation - **Re 1:9a**
 - a. He was a fellow Christian
 - b. Who himself was experiencing trials (see below)
 2. In the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ - **Re 1:9b**
 - a. Note that John considered himself as being in the kingdom of Christ
 - b. As did the apostle Paul, as he wrote to the Colossians - **Col 1:13**
- **Note well:** **The apostles viewed the kingdom as a present entity, not yet to come!**

B. ON THE ISLAND CALLED PATMOS...

1. Roughly 40 miles from the mainland of Asia Minor (Turkey) - **Re 1:9c**
 - a. Where a Roman fortress housed prisoners and exiles - **NLT Study Bible**
 - b. Where it is thought that John was exiled and living in a cave - **ESV Study Bible**
 2. For the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ - **Re 1:9d**
 - a. Perhaps exiled to Patmos for preaching the gospel
 - b. According to Eusebius, John was sent there in 95 A.D. by the Roman Emperor Domitian
- **If the early date (ca 69-70 A.D.) is correct, then John may been there twice**

C. IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY..

1. In the Spirit - **Re 1:10a**
 - a. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit - cf. **Re 4:2; 17:3; 21:10**
 - b. Perhaps like Peter when he fell into a trance before his vision - **Ac 10:9-13**
2. On the Lord's Day - **Re 1:10b**
 - a. Generally understood as the first day of the week (Sunday)
 - b. A day of significance to 1st century Christians, since it was the day:
 - 1) Jesus rose from the dead - **Mt 28:1ff; Mk 16:1ff; Lk 24:1ff; Jn 20:1ff**
 - 2) The church began when the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost - **Ac 2:1ff**
 - 3) Christians met to break bread (L.S.) and to lay by in store - **Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:1-2**

-- So John was likely worshipping on the Lord's Day

[But then the apostle John was abruptly interrupted...]

II. WHAT HE HEARD BEHIND HIM (10c-11)

A. A LOUD VOICE, AS OF A TRUMPET...

1. "like a trumpet blast" - NLT
2. Similar to what John would hear again later - **Re 4:1**

B. SAYING TO HIM...

1. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last"
 - a. The Nestle-Aland and Majority manuscripts omit this phrase in **Re 1:11**
 - b. Though they have Jesus defining Himself as the "the First and the Last" in **Re 1:17**
 - c. And again as "the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" - **Re 22:13**
2. "What you see, write in a book"
 - a. Which task John faithfully carried out
 - b. Which we have in the Book of Revelation
3. "Send it to the seven churches which are in Asia..."
 - a. Named by cities: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea
 - b. To which seven short letters will also be sent - cf. **Re 2&3**

[What has happened so far, John heard from behind him. When he turned around, we are told...]

III. WHAT HE SAW, AND HIS REACTION (12-17a)

A. TURNING TO SEE THE VOICE, HE SAW...

1. Seven golden lampstands, later identified as to represent the churches - **Re 1:20**
2. In the midst of the seven lampstands, One like the Son of Man - cf. **Dan 7:13-14**
 - a. Clothed with a garment to His feet, girded about the chest with a golden band
 - 1) Similar to that worn by seven angels later in the vision - **Re 15:6**
 - 2) Also by the glorious man that appeared to Daniel in his vision - **Dan 10:5**
 - 3) Many suggest the golden band was an emblem of high rank and the long linen was priestly - perhaps indicating Jesus as both king and high priest
 - b. His head and hair white as wool, white as snow
 - 1) Like the "Ancient of Days" in Daniel's vision - **Dan 7:9**
 - 2) Suggesting infinite, divine wisdom - **ESV Study Bible**
 - c. His eyes like a flame of fire
 - 1) Again, like the glorious man in Daniel's vision - **Dan 10:6**
 - 2) Suggesting the ability to see through facades - **ESV Study Bible**
 - d. His feet like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace
 - 1) Again, like the glorious man in Daniel's vision - **Dan 10:6**
 - 2) Suggesting the ability to crush any opponents - **ESV Study Bible**
 - e. His voice as the sound of many waters
 - 1) Cf. "like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty" - **Eze 1:24**
 - 2) Imagine the sound of Niagara Falls!
 - f. In His right hand, seven stars
 - 1) Later identified as the angels, or messengers of the seven churches - **Re 1:20**
 - 2) Who would receive the seven letters to the churches - e.g., **Re 2:1**
 - g. Out of His mouth, a sharp two-edged sword

- 1) Likely symbolizing the Word of God - **He 4:12**
- 2) With which He would fight against churches and nations - **Re 2:16; 19:15**
- h. His countenance like the sun shining in its strength
 - 1) Akin to when Jesus was transfigured on the mount - **Mt 17:1-2**
 - 2) And as when Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus - **Ac 26:13**

B. SEEING HIM, JOHN FELL AT HIS FEET AS DEAD...

1. Not an unusual reaction, given what he has seen!
2. As when Daniel saw the vision of the Glorious Man - cf. **Dan 10:8-9**

[Overwhelmed by what he saw, John is shocked to a state of paralysis. But then, the “Son of Man” laid His right hand on him (**Re 1:17**) and spoke...]

IV. THE LORD’S WORDS TO JOHN (17b-20)

A. “DO NOT BE AFRAID”...

1. *“I am the First and the Last”* (the Alpha & Omega) - cf. **Re 1:11; 22:13**
2. *“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forever more. Amen.”*
3. *“I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”*
- **Jesus: Deity that became flesh, died and rose again, who has authority over all things, including death and the realm of the dead - Jn 1:1,14; Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22**

B. “WRITE”...

1. *“The things which you have seen”* - the vision of the Son of Man - **ch. 1**
2. *“The things which are”* - the letters to the seven churches - **chs. 2-3**
3. *“The things which will take place after this”* - the heavenly visions - **chs. 4-22**
- **The Book of Revelation which we are now privileged to read and study**

C. “THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN STARS AND THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS”...

1. *“The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches”*
 - a. The word “angel” means “messenger”; not necessarily a supernatural being
 - b. The seven angels may have been men sent to bear the letters to the churches
2. *“The seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches”*
 - a. The seven churches already named - **Re 1:11**
 - b. The seven churches whose letters will follow - **chs. 2& 3**

CONCLUSION

1. With this vision, John is commissioned to write seven letters, and of things to be shown him
 2. In our next study, we shall consider the first letter John was to write: **The Letter To Ephesus**
- Are you in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ...? - cf. **Re 1:9; Co 1:13; 2:12-13; Jn 3:5**

The Book Of Revelation

Letter To Ephesus (2:1-7)

INTRODUCTION

1. In the vision of the Son of Man, John was given instructions to write letters to seven churches in Asia (modern day Turkey) - **Re 1:11**
 - a. They were written to “*the angels of the seven churches*” - **Re 1:20; 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14**
 - b. These “angels” (i.e., messengers) were possibly men who delivered the letters
2. The first letter was written to the church in **Ephesus**. Some background information...
 - a. **The city of Ephesus**
 - 1) The leading city in Asia, “the greatest emporium in the province of Asia Minor” (**Strabo**)
 - 2) It had a population of about 250,000 - **Revelation: Four Views**
 - 3) It boasted the temple of Diana (Artemis), one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world
 - 4) The theater in Ephesus could host 25,000 spectators - **New Bible Dictionary (“Ephesus”)**
 - 5) It would later become a center of the emperor cult - **ibid.**

-- **Today you can still visit remains of this great city**
 - b. **The church at Ephesus**
 1. Perhaps started by Paul during a short visit on his second missionary journey - **Ac 18:19-21**
 2. Aquila & Priscilla, together with Apollos were early members of the church - **Ac 18:24-26**
 3. Paul returned and stayed three years on his third missionary journey - **Ac 19:1-20:1**
 4. He later met with the Ephesian elders in Miletus - **Ac 20:17-38**
 5. From prison he wrote the epistle to Ephesians - **Ep 1:1; 3:1; 4:1; 6:20**
 6. Timothy was at Ephesus when Paul wrote to him - **1Ti 1:3**
 7. John himself may have been at Ephesus prior to his exile to Patmos - **NBD**

-- **Paul spent more time in Ephesus than any other place on his missionary journeys**

[With such a storied and privileged background, one might assume the church in Ephesus would remain strong in their service to the Lord. But it was not long before all was not well. The letter to the church begins with...]

I. THE LORD’S SELF-DESIGNATION (1)

A. “HE WHO HOLDS THE SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND”...

1. As seen earlier in the vision of the Son of Man - **Re 1:16**
 2. The seven stars explained as the angels (messengers) of the seven churches - **Re 1:20**
- **The letters are written to the “angels”, but are clearly messages for the churches**

B. “WHO WALKS IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS”...

1. Also seen in the vision of the Son of Man - **Re 1:12-13**
 2. The seven lampstands explained as the seven churches - **Re 1:20**
- **An image suggesting that Jesus is present with His churches - cf. Mt 18:20**

[In most of the letters to the seven churches, the self-designation is then followed by...]

II. THE LORD’S COMMENDATION (2-3,6)

A. FOR THEIR WORKS, LABOR, AND PATIENCE...

1. They cannot bear those who are evil, having tested those who say they are apostles but were liars

2. Their perseverance, patience and labor for His name's sake, not growing weary
- **Clearly steadfast in their opposition to false teachers!**

B. THEY HATE THE DEEDS OF THE NICOLAITANS, AS DOES THE LORD...

1. Some (e.g., Irenaeus) think it has reference to Nicolas from Antioch - cf. **Ac 6:5**
 2. Who is supposed to have given his name to a group in the early church to work out a compromise with paganism, so Christians could take part in social and religious activities without embarrassment - **New Bible Dictionary ("Nicolaus, Nicolaitans")**
 3. It is possible that "Nicolaitan" is a Greek form of Hebrew "Balaam" and an allegorical reference to those groups condemned also by Peter & Jude (**2Pe 2:15; Jude 11**) - **ibid.**
- **With strong disdain for the practices of false teachers**

[With such steadfast opposition to false teachers and their deeds, one might think the church in Ephesus was truly a "sound" church! But in one important area they were sorely lacking...]

III. THE LORD'S CONDEMNATION AND WARNING (4-5)

A. HIS CONDEMNATION...

1. The Lord had this against them: "*you have left your first love*"
 2. Their love (passion & enthusiasm) they once possessed had diminished
 3. Suggesting that in opposing false teachers they were simply going through the motion
- **It is not uncommon for Christians and churches to become apathetic in their service**

B. HIS WARNING...

1. Remember from where they have fallen; repent and do the first works
 - a. The antidote to apathy in one's service to the Lord!
 - b. Go back to the fundamentals (e.g., Bible study, prayer, assembling, good works)
 2. Or the Lord will come quickly and remove their lampstand from its place
 - a. Not His final coming, but as a judgment upon a city or nation (cf. the OT)
 - b. As seen in the vision: Jesus walks among the lampstands
 - c. To remove their lampstand suggests they would no longer enjoy His blessings
- **Note well: a congregation can cease to be a true church of Christ!**

[If we find our faith and love for the Lord waning, it is a matter to be taken seriously! To encourage the Ephesians (and us today), the condemnation and warning is followed by...]

IV. THE LORD'S EXHORTATION AND PROMISE (7)

A. "HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR"...

1. An exhortation spoken frequently during His earthly ministry - **Mt 11:15; 13:9,43**
 2. Calling listeners to give special heed to what is being said - **Mk 4:23-25**
- **How well do we hear when the Word of the Lord is read or spoken?**

B. "WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES"...

1. The letter to the church at Ephesus was for other churches as well!
 2. As with all the epistles in the NT, they are for us to heed!
- **Written to others, but preserved for our benefit!** - cf. **Ro 15:4; 1Co 10:11-12**

C. "TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES"...

1. The one who remains faithful, loving, obedient, even if it means death
2. Despite false teachers, or persecution, even at the cost of life

-- “Overcoming” is a major theme throughout this book!

D. “I WILL GIVE TO EAT FROM THE TREE OF LIFE, WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD”...

1. The tree of life - last seen in the Garden of Eden - **Gen 2:9; 3:24**
 2. In the future - in the New Jerusalem - **Re 21-22; esp. Re 22:1-2**
- **Many of the promises mentioned in the letters to the seven churches will be described in their fulfillment later in Revelation as the events are foretold**

CONCLUSION

1. Let us not assume that because we may have been faithful and steadfast in the past...
 - a. Even to the point of standing fast against false teachers
 - b. Enduring persecution for Christ in any of its forms-- **That we are in good standing before the Lord!** - cf. also **He 3:12-15**

2. To receive the promises such as those in the Book of Revelation, heed also Paul & Peter...
 - a. *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.”* - **2Co 13:5**
 - b. *“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;”* - **2Pe 1:10**-- **Be willing to examine yourself, to make your calling and election sure!**

Through His letters to the seven churches in Asia, Jesus helps us to examine ourselves that we might be sure to overcome and inherit the promises found in the Word of God!

Next we shall consider the letter to the church in **Smyrna**...

The Book Of Revelation

Letter To Smyrna (2:8-11)

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we considered the letter to **Ephesus**, in which Jesus...
 - a. Commended steadfast opposition to false apostles and false religion - **Re 2:2-3,6**
 - b. Condemned losing their first love, with a call to repent and return to their first works - **Re 2:4-5**
 - c. Promised to those who overcome, access to the tree of life in the Paradise of God - **Re 2:7**
2. The second letter was written to the church in **Smyrna**. Some background information...
 - a. **The city of Smyrna**
 - 1) One of most prosperous cities in Asia Minor - **New Bible Dictionary** (“Smyrna”)
 - 2) It had the largest Jewish population of any city in Asia Minor - **Revelation: Four Views**
 - 3) It was a faithful ally of Rome long before Roman power became supreme - **NBD, ibid.**
 - 4) It became the headquarters for the imperial cult of emperor worship in that area - **Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary**
-- **It is the only city of the seven churches that is still in existence today**
 - b. **The church at Smyrna**
 - 1) Probably began through Paul’s work while at Ephesus - cf. **Ac 19:8-10**
 - 2) They had already experienced tribulation and poverty - cf. **Re 2:9**
 - 3) From the 2nd century, there are letters to and from the church in Smyrna (Ignatius to the church, Polycarp to the Philippians, and an account of Polycarp’s martyrdom)
-- **One of two churches to whom Jesus spoke no word of condemnation (the other is Philadelphia)**

[Little is known about the church of Smyrna in the Bible, and the letter Jesus had John write to the church is the shortest of the seven (only four verses), but **it provides the setting for why and what is to follow** in the Book of Revelation. As before, we begin with..]

I. THE LORD’S SELF-DESIGNATION (8)

A. “THESE THINGS SAYS THE FIRST AND THE LAST”...

1. A designation spoken twice by the Son of Man in the vision of chapter one - **Re 1:11,17**
2. Used together with “the Alpha and the Omega” - **Re 1:11; 22:13**
-- **Jesus used designations that clearly declare His deity with JEHOVAH - cf. Isa 41:4**

B. “WHO WAS DEAD, AND CAME TO LIFE”...

1. As mentioned in the vision of the Son of Man - **Re 1:18**
2. A reference to His own resurrection from the dead
-- **Perhaps spoken in light of the promise later to follow - cf. Re 2:10**

[As deity, Jesus is “*the First and the Last*”; in becoming flesh, He “*was dead and came to life*”. To a church that had suffered tribulation and would experience more, we now read...]

II. THE LORD’S COMMENDATION (9a)

A. FOR THEIR WORKS, TRIBULATION, AND POVERTY...

1. Their faith was not dead, but had produced works - cf. **Ja 2:17,20,24,26**
2. They had experienced tribulation, like John their companion in tribulation - cf. **Re 1:9**

3. Leading to poverty, often the result of persecution - e.g., **He 10:32-34**
- **An indication of their circumstances: they had suffered some persecution**

B. BUT THEY ARE RICH...

1. Rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom! - cf. **Ja 2:5**
2. Having a better and more enduring possession in heaven - cf. **He 10:34**
- **Though rich in faith, they had experienced tribulation and would experience more**

[Where was this persecution and tribulation coming from? We learn of one source as we read...]

III. THE LORD'S EXHORTATION AND PROMISE (9b-11)

A. "I KNOW THE BLASPHEMY OF THOSE WHO SAY THEY ARE JEWS AND ARE NOT, BUT ARE A SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN"...

1. A reference to unbelieving Jews (unlike many Jews who did and do believe in Jesus)
 - a. Who by their lack of faith in Jesus revealed themselves followers of Satan - cf. **Jn 8:37-44**
 - b. For the true and faithful Jew is one who is circumcised in heart - cf. **Ro 2:28-29; Deu 10:16**
2. A major source of persecution against the church leading up to 70 A.D.
 - a. By unbelieving Jews in Judea - cf. **Mt 23:34-36; 1Th 2:14-16**
 - b. By unbelieving Jews in Asia (Turkey) & Greece - cf. **Ac 13:50; 14:2,5,19; 17:5-7,13; 18:12-13**
- **Remember that Smyrna had the largest Jewish population of any city in Asia Minor**

B. "DO NOT FEAR ANY OF THOSE THINGS WHICH YOU ARE ABOUT TO SUFFER"...

1. *"The devil is about throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested"*
 - a. The malevolent spiritual force behind their persecution - cf. **1Pe 5:8-9**
 - b. The Devil (slanderer) and Satan (adversary) who deceives the whole world - cf. **Re 12:9**
 - c. Who manipulated unfaithful Jerusalem & pagan Rome in an effort to destroy the church
2. *"You will have tribulation ten days"*
 - a. In Revelation, numbers are often figurative or symbolic
 - b. For example: "10 days" is a relatively short period of time in contrast to "1000 years"
- **Thus their tribulation suffering will only be for a short time, to test their faith**

C. "BE FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE YOU A CROWN OF LIFE"...

1. They were to be faithful until death
 - a. For every Christian, one must be faithful till they die - cf. **Mt 10:22**
 - b. Even if death if the result of their faith (i.e., martyrdom) - cf. **Re 12:11**
2. The crown of life is promised to those who love Him - **Ja 1:12**
 - a. Called an imperishable crown - **1Co 9:25**
 - b. Called the crown of righteousness - **2Ti 4:8**
 - c. Called the crown of glory - **1Pe 5:4**
- **A wonderful promise for remaining faithful and paying the ultimate price if necessary**

D. "HE WHO OVERCOMES SHALL NOT BE HURT BY THE SECOND DEATH"...

1. The overcomer is one who remains faithful, loving, obedient, even if it means dying for Christ
2. The "second death" is explained at the end of Revelation - **Re 20:14; 21:8**
 - a. The first death is natural, physical death
 - b. The second death is eternal punishment, depicted as a lake of fire
- **Again He says, "He who has an ear, let him hear...!" Brethren, are we listening?**

CONCLUSION

1. From the letter to the church at **Smyrna**, we learn that Christians...
 - a. Were experiencing opposition from unbelieving Jews, as did the apostle Paul
 - b. Though rich in faith, they had suffered tribulation and poverty, with more suffering to come-- **Doesn't this contradict the so-called "gospel of health and wealth"?**

2. We also learn of the two alternatives facing us in the future...
 - a. The crown of life for those who are faithful unto death even if it leads to martyrdom
 - b. The second death for those who do not overcome the Satanic forces against them-- **Which will you receive: the crown of life, or the second death?**

Through His letters to the seven churches in Asia, we learn the circumstances that prompted Jesus to have John write the book of Revelation. We also learn the sort of faith necessary for us to overcome and inherit the promises found in the Word of God!

Next we shall consider the letter to the church in **Pergamos**...

The Book Of Revelation

Letter To Pergamos (2:12-17)

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we considered the letter to **Smyrna**, in which Jesus...
 - a. Commended their rich faith in the midst of tribulation and poverty
 - b. Offered no words of condemnation (one of two churches in which nothing negative is said)
 - c. Promised to those who overcome, the crown of life and not hurt by the second death
2. We noted that it provides information regarding the opposition they were facing...
 - a. By those who said they were Jews, but were actually a synagogue of Satan
 - b. I.e., unbelieving Jews, like those who persecuted Christians in Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece
3. The third letter is written to the church in **Pergamos** (or Pergamum). Some background information...
 - a. **The city of Pergamos**
 - 1) One of the most important cities in Asia Minor - **Eerdmans Bible Dictionary**
 - 2) The earliest capital of the Roman province of Asia - **NLT Study Bible**
 - 3) Signs of its splendor included a theater, Asclepium (healing center), gymnasium, and several famous temples - **EBD, ibid.**
 - 4) It also hosted temples to “the divine Augustus and the goddess Roma” - **ESV Study Bible**
-- **The city thus boasted a religious primacy in the province, especially in regards to what developed into an imperial cult involving the worship of the caesars and Rome**
 - b. **The church at Pergamos**
 - 1) Probably began through Paul’s work while at Ephesus - cf. **Ac 19:8-10**
 - 2) They had already experienced martyrdom (**Antipas**) in their congregation - cf. **Re 2:13**
 - 3) Later recorded martyrs at Pergamos besides were **Carpus, Papyrus, and Agathonike** - **ISBE**
-- **Other than what is written here in Revelation, little else is known about the church**

[As we proceed to examine the letter written to the church at Pergamos, again **note carefully the setting** as it provides insight **for why and what is to follow** in the Book of Revelation. Again we start with...]

I. THE LORD’S SELF-DESIGNATION (12)

A. “THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO HAS THE SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD”...

1. This “sword” is that which went “out of His mouth” in the vision in chapter one - **Re 1:16**
2. It would be used in judgment against both His disciples & the nations - cf. **Re 2:16; 19:15**
-- **A reminder that Jesus judges both churches and nations as King of kings and Lord of lords**

B. THE “SWORD” IS A METAPHOR FOR THE WORD OF GOD...

1. A figure of speech in OT Messianic prophecy - cf. **Isa 49:2**
2. Used of the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit - cf. **He 4:12-13**
-- **A discerner of thoughts and intents of the heart, from which none can hide**

[An example of the sort of judgment the Lord rendered in regards to His churches we will notice in His condemnation and warning, but first we read of...]

II. THE LORD’S COMMENDATION (13)

A. FOR THEIR WORKS, WHERE THEY DWELL, WHERE SATAN'S THRONE IS...

1. Their faithful service, despite living near "Satan's throne"
2. Satan's throne "might refer to the altar of Zeus on the mountain above the city or to emperor worship at the temple of Augustus." - **NLT Study Bible**
3. Or "the earliest shrine of the provincial cult of Rome and Augustus, established there in 29 B.C. In view of other allusions in Rev. to the imperial cult, this is most probably the reference here." - **F.F. Bruce (New International Bible Commentary)**
-- **Political and social pressure to worship Caesar as a god must have been intense**

B. FOR HOLDING FAST TO HIS NAME AND NOT DENYING HIS FAITH...

1. Even when Antipas, His faithful martyr (witness), was killed among them
2. Even though living where Satan dwells, i.e., among his great influence that included emperor worship
-- **They had remained strong in faith and service to Christ in very difficult times**

[But all was not well in the church at Pergamos. Thus we read of...]

III. THE LORD'S CONDEMNATION AND WARNING (14-16)

A. HIS CONDEMNATION...

1. They have those who hold the doctrine of Balaam - cf. **Num 31:16**
 - a. Who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before Israel
 - b. To eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality
2. Thus they have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which He hates
 - a. This may explain the teaching and practice of the Nicolaitans
 - b. I.e., compromising with the world in order to get along
 - c. Whose deeds those in the church at Ephesus hated - cf. **Re 2:6**
 - d. But whose teachings were held by some at Pergamos!
-- **The influence of the Nicolaitans was stronger at Pergamos than at Ephesus**

B. HIS WARNING...

1. Repent or He will come to them quickly
 - a. Not His final coming, but as a judgment upon a city or nation (cf. the OT)
 - b. Similar to His warning to the church at Ephesus - cf. **Re 2:5**
2. He will fight against them with the sword of His mouth
 - a. Compare this judgment with that given to the church at Ephesus
 - b. Fighting against those at Pergamos vs. removing the candlestick of Ephesus!
-- **Judgment differs between simple apathy (Ephesus) and sinful participation (Pergamos), but the consequences are serious nonetheless!**

[Despite commendation for past faithfulness, they needed to correct false teaching and sinful practices in their midst. To encourage them to do so, we read of...]

IV. THE LORD'S EXHORTATION AND PROMISE (17)

A. "HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES"...

1. This time the repeated refrain comes before rather than after the exhortation & promise
2. Again, this is an exhortation for all churches, for all time!
-- **Brethren, are we listening?**

B. "TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES I WILL GIVE SOME OF THE HIDDEN MANNA TO EAT"...

1. The manna recalls the food from heaven that sustained Israel in the desert - **Exo 16:4,14-15,31**

1. Perhaps here a reference to eternal life that Jesus offers
2. Certainly plausible in view of Jesus' words in **Jn 6:27-35,51**
- **Which is offered as an alternative to eating things sacrificed to idols - cf. Re 2:14**

C. "AND I WILL GIVE HIM A WHITE STONE, AND ON THE STONE A NEW NAME WRITTEN WHICH NO KNOWS EXCEPT HIM WHO RECEIVES IT"...

1. There is uncertainty as to the exact meaning of the "white stone" and "new name"
2. "It seems best to link the stone to the thought of the manna and see it as an allusion to an invitation that entitled its bearer to attend one of the pagan banquets." - **Expositor's Bible Commentary**
3. "...either the name of Christ himself, now hidden from the world but to be revealed in the future as the most powerful of names (**Re 3:12; 14:1**), or the believer's new name or changed character through redemption (**Isa 62:2; 65:15**)." - **ibid.**
4. Undoubtedly these were metaphors familiar to those at Pergamos, offering promises of blessings that would encourage them to remain faithful in difficult times
- **We do not have to understand the exact meaning to understand the main point: to him who overcomes (remains faithful even unto death), blessings will follow! - cf. Re 14:13**

CONCLUSION

1. From the letter to the church at **Pergamos**, we learn that Christians were living...
 - a. In difficult circumstances, with one of their own members having been martyred
 - b. With a civil government under the rule of Satan himself - cf. **Re 12:9; 20:8**
2. While the church at **Pergamos** as a whole had been steadfast to the faith at great cost...
 - a. They had members who were teaching compromise with their sinful culture
 - b. They needed to repent, or Jesus would come in judgment against them

Again, through His letters to the seven churches in Asia, we learn the circumstances that prompted Jesus to have John write the book of Revelation.

We also learn the sort of faith necessary for us to overcome any Satanic influenced society we may face today, and inherit the eternal promises found in the Word of God!

Next we shall consider the letter to the church in **Thyatira**...

The Book Of Revelation

Letter To Thyatira (2:18-29)

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we considered the letter to **Pergamos (Re 2:12-17)**, in which Jesus...
 - a. Commended their works and steadfast faith in the midst of persecution and Satanic influence
 - b. Condemned them for harboring those who held false doctrine and compromise with the world
 - c. Warned them to repent, or He would fight against them with “the sword of My mouth”
 - d. Promised to those who overcome: hidden manna to eat, a white stone, on that stone a name known only to the recipient (perhaps metaphors alluding to attending the Messianic banquet, cf. **Re 19:9**)
2. We suggested that it provides information regarding the opposition they were facing...
 - a. Dwelling where Satan’s throne is, where Satan dwells - **Re 2:13**
 - b. With pressure by their society to worship the Roman emperor and state sanctioned idolatry
 - c. With pressure by some of their own members to compromise with societal sanctioned immorality
3. The fourth letter is written to the church in **Thyatira**, home of Paul’s first convert in Philippi (**Ac 16:14-15**). Some background information...
 - a. **The city of Thyatira**
 - 1) The center of a number of trade guilds that used natural resources in the area - **HIBD**
 - 2) The purple cloth that Lydia sold was a major product of that city - **Revelation: Four Views**
-- **The trade guilds practiced idolatrous rites at their gatherings, which would had made it difficult for Christians to continue in their trades without compromise - ibid.**
 - b. **The church at Thyatira**
 - 1) May have begun through Paul’s work while at Ephesus - cf. **Ac 19:8-10**
 - 2) Received the longest letter of the seven churches (12 verses)
 - 3) Faced pressure from within as well as from without to conform with the world
-- **Other than what is written here in Revelation, little else is known about the church**

[As we proceed to examine the letter written to the church at Thyatira, **again note carefully the setting** it provides for **why and what is to follow** in the Book of Revelation. Once again we start with...]

I. THE LORD’S SELF-DESIGNATION (18)

A. “THESE THINGS SAYS THE SON OF GOD”...

1. Emperor worship in Thyatira gave homage to the Roman emperor as “the Son of God” - **Back To The Future, Ralph E. Bass**
2. Here Christ is confronting that worship and stating that it is He who is the true Son of God - **ibid.**
-- **And serving as a reminder of Who is truly the King of kings and Lord of lords!**

B. “WHO HAS EYES LIKE A FLAME OF FIRE, AND HIS FEET LIKE FINE BRASS”...

1. With piercing vision that sees all and judges righteously - **ibid.**
2. And feet to tread upon the wicked in the winepress of God’s wrath - **ibid.**
-- **The description of His eyes and feet both suggest impending judgment - ibid.**

[As before, the Lord’s self-designation in each letter ties together elements of the vision of the Son of Man in chapter one, with what He then says to each of the seven churches. Now for...]

II. THE LORD'S COMMENDATION (19)

A. FOR THEIR WORKS, LOVE, SERVICE, FAITH, AND PATIENCE...

1. Their work and service was joined with love, faith, and patience
2. Unlike the church at Ephesus, they had not left their first love - cf. **Re 2:4**
-- **Sounds like a wonderful congregation!**

B. THEIR LAST WORKS ARE MORE THAN THE FIRST...

1. Their spiritual productivity was increasing
2. Typical of that expected of all Christians - cf. **1Co 15:58; 1Th 4:1,9-10**
-- **Sounds like an excellent congregation!**

[With piercing eyes, the Lord sees and gives credit where credit is due. But all was not well; indeed, there was a serious problem at Thyatira, and thus follows...]

III. THE LORD'S CONDEMNATION AND WARNING (20-24)

A. HIS CONDEMNATION...

1. They allow that woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess
 - a. To teach and seduce His servants (contrary to **1Co 14:34; 1Ti 2:12**)
 - b. To commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols
 - c. Akin to the Jezebel of the OT - cf. **1Kin 16:30-33; 19:1-2**
 2. Whom the Lord had given time for her to repent
 - a. Of her own sexual immorality
 - b. But she did not repent
- **Note the Lord's longsuffering: He gave the woman time to repent! - cf. 2Pe 3:9**

B. HIS WARNING...

1. The Lord will cast her into a sickbed (from a bed of fornication to a bed of sickness)
 2. Those who commit adultery with her will have great tribulation, unless they repent
 3. He will kill her children (followers?) with death (pestilence)
 4. The churches will know that He searches the minds and hearts - cf. **Ac 5:1-11**
 5. He will give to each according to their works - cf. **Jer 17:10**
 6. For those who do not follow her doctrine (or have not known the depths of Satan as they say), He places on them no other burden
 7. Thoughts on "**The depths of Satan**":
 - a. "This suggests a fascination with quasi-Gnostic teachings that said that familiarity with and practice of paganism resulted in greater sanctification." - **Ralph Bass, Back To The Future**
 - b. "Connecting this with what we already know of her teaching, it seems that her doctrine was a proto-Gnostic teaching that Christians would attain new and greater levels of sanctification by immersion into the depths of Satanism: worshiping idols, committing fornication, entering to the fullest extent into the depravities of the heathen around them—sinning that grace might abound." - **David Chilton, The Days Of Vengeance**
- **Again note the Lord's longsuffering: He is willing to withhold tribulation, if they repent!**

[Strong warning and condemnation to be sure, but perhaps necessary to warn the faithful if they were going to remain such in the days ahead (akin to the effect the judgment on Ananias & Sapphira had - cf. **Ac 5:11**). But the warning is followed by...]

IV. THE LORD'S EXHORTATION AND PROMISE (25-29)

- A. “BUT HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE TILL I COME”...**
1. May have reference to His Second Coming
 2. Or His coming in judgment upon nations deceived by Satan (cf. Jerusalem & Rome)
 3. Or the arrival of judgment threatened to “Jezebel” and her “children”
- **Whichever, the principle charge remains forever true: Hold fast! - cf. He 10:23**
- B. “HE WHO OVERCOMES, AND KEEPS MY WORKS UNTIL THE END, TO HIM I WILL GIVE POWER OVER THE NATIONS—‘HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON; THEY SHALL BE DASHED TO PIECES LIKE THE POTTER’S VESSELS’—AS I ALSO HAVE RECEIVED FROM MY FATHER;”...**
1. A promise in some way to participate in the current reign of Christ!
 2. A reign of the Messiah foretold in Psalms - cf. **Psa 2:8-9**
 3. In which He would reign “in the midst of His enemies” - cf. **Psa 110:1-7**
 4. His reign declared by the apostles to be current - cf. **1Co 15:24-26; Re 1:5**
- **Perhaps an allusion to that described later: participating in the reign of the saints with Christ after death in heaven - Re 20:4-6; cf. also 1Co 6:2-3**
- C. “I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR”...**
1. “In a later chapter, Jesus identifies himself as the Bright and Morning Star (**Re 22:16**).” - **Revelation: Four Views**
 2. “Thus as He is the ‘hidden manna’ promised to the overcomers of Pergamos (**Re 2:17**), so is He the ‘morning star’ that will be given to the overcomers of Thyatira.” - **ibid.**
- **“The promise may convey the idea that those who continue to hold forth their lamp in the present night, they will live to see the dawning of a new day.” - ibid.**
- D. “HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES”...**
1. As with the three previous churches, Jesus includes this exhortation
 2. A reminder that these letters were not just for the benefit of the seven churches to whom they were initially addressed
- **The exhortation to hold fast against societal pressures to conform is especially worth heeding when one contemplates the promises Jesus offers to those who hold fast!**

CONCLUSION

1. From the letter to the church at **Thyatira**, we learn that they...
 - a. Had much for which to be commended
 - b. Had much for which to be condemned
2. From the letter to the church at **Thyatira**, we learn that Jesus...
 - a. Will bring judgment upon those who compromise with the world in its ungodliness
 - b. Will in some way involve His saints who overcome in His current reign over the world

Next we shall consider the letter to the church in **Sardis**...

The Book Of Revelation

Letter To Sardis (3:1-6)

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we considered the letter to **Thyatira (Rev 2:18-29)**, in which Jesus...
 - a. Commended their works, love, service, faith, and patience, with their last works being more than the first
 - b. Condemned them for allowing a self-proclaimed prophetess named Jezebel to seduce them to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols
 - c. Warned them of judgment that would come against her and her children (followers)
 - d. Promised that those who overcome would reign with Him over the nations and receive “the morning star” (**Re 2:28**; i.e., Himself, cf. **Re 22:16**)
2. We suggested that we learn from His letter to **Thyatira** that Jesus will...
 - a. Bring judgment upon those who compromise with the world in its ungodliness
 - b. Somehow involve His saints who overcome in His current reign over the world - **Re 2:26-27**
3. The fifth letter is written to the church in **Sardis**. Some background information...
 - a. **The city of Sardis**
 - 1) One of the major features there in NT times was a temple to Artemis, the goddess of love and fertility
 - 2) Once the capital of the kingdom of Lydia, the greatest of foreign powers encountered by the Greeks
 - 3) Yet twice in its history it had been conquered by failing to keep careful watch
 - **To which Jesus may have alluded when He exhorted the church to be watchful - Re 3:2-3**
 - b. **The church at Sardis**
 - 1) It too may have begun through Paul’s work while at Ephesus - cf. **Ac 19:8-10**
 - 2) Other than what is written in this letter, nothing else is known of the church
 - **But then, what would one expect of church that was “dead”?**

[Do we wish to make sure that we do not become like the church at Sardis? Then let’s pay careful attention to this letter, beginning with...]

I. THE LORD’S SELF-DESIGNATION (1a)

A. “HE WHO HAS THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD”...

1. First mentioned in the introduction to Revelation - **Rev 1:4**
2. Again later in the vision of the throne scene - **Re 4:5**
- **Most likely the Holy Spirit, described figuratively in sevenfold perfection - cf. Isa 11:2**

B. “AND THE SEVEN STARS”...

1. Seen in the image of the Son of Man - **Re 1:16**
2. Explained to represent the seven angels (messengers) sent to the seven churches - **Re 1:20**
- **As One who has both the Holy Spirit and the messengers, Jesus is qualified and equipped to offer condemnation to a church that was alive in name only**

[And so He exercises that ability which is evident from...]

II. THE LORD’S CONDEMNATION AND WARNING (1b-3)

A. HIS CONDEMNATION...

1. They have a name that they are alive, but they are dead - **Re 3:1**
 - a. Which can be true of many churches of Christ today (cf. **Ro 16:16**)
 - b. They may wear the right name, but be spiritually dead
 - c. Having a scriptural name for the church does not ensure faithfulness
 2. Their works have not been found perfect before God - **Re 3:2c**
 - a. James teaches us that faith without works is a dead faith - **Ja 2:20,26**
 - b. And that works makes faith perfect - **Ja 2:22**
 - c. Sardis did not have the faith to complete the works they started
- **Truly a sad state of affairs for a church of Christ that was once alive!**

B. HIS WARNING...

1. Be watchful (learn from their city's history!) - **Re 3:2a**
 2. Strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die - **Re 3:2b**
 3. Remember how they had received and heard - **Re 3:3a; cf. Re 2:5**
 4. Hold fast and repent - **Re 3:3b**
 5. If they don't watch, He will come upon them as a thief - **Re 3:3c; cf. 1Th 5:2; 2Pe 3:10**
- **A much needed prescription for ailing churches of Christ today!**

[As sorry the condition of the church at Sardis was, not all was lost as we read of...]

III. THE LORD'S COMMENDATION (4)

A. THERE ARE A FEW NAMES IN SARDIS WHO HAVE NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS...

1. Though the church as a whole was "dead", there were the "faithful few"
 2. They had not compromised their personal faith and life in Christ
- **One may be a member of a "dead" church but still be faithful to the Lord**

B. THEY SHALL WALK WITH HIM IN WHITE, FOR THEY ARE WORTHY...

1. As promised further in this letter - cf. **Re 3:5**
 2. A reminder that salvation and condemnation is determined on an individual basis
- **It is with help of the "faithful few" that a dead church has hope of becoming alive again!**

[That hope exists for any dead church becoming alive again is implied...]

IV. THE LORD'S PROMISE AND EXHORTATION (5-6)

A. "HE WHO OVERCOMES SHALL BE CLOTHED IN WHITE GARMENTS"...

1. As promised earlier in this letter - **Re 3:4**
 2. Garb similar to that worn by the 24 elders - **Re 4:4**
 3. And that given to souls slain for the Word of God and the testimony they held - **Re 6:9-11**
 4. And worn by the great multitude from all nations before the Lord in heaven - **Re 7:9-17**
- **"People wore white garments for festivals, sacred ceremonies, and Roman celebrations; here they signify purity, cleansing, and end-time victory" - NIV Zondervan Study Bible**

B. "I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE"...

1. The book of life in which names of the saved are written - **Ph 4:3; cf. Re 20:12,15; 21:27**
 2. **Note well:** if "once saved, always saved" is true, then Jesus' promise to not blot out their names is meaningless (together with His repeated warnings to repent throughout these seven letters)
- **Together with many other scriptures warning about the danger of apostasy (e.g., He 3:12-14)**

C. "BUT I WILL CONFESS HIS NAME BEFORE MY FATHER AND BEFORE HIS ANGELS"...

1. A promise made by Jesus during His earthly ministry
2. To those who are willing to confess His name before men - **Mt 10:32; Lk 12:8**

D. “HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES”...

1. There are very real dangers regarding our spiritual condition, both as a church and as a Christian
2. But there are wonderful promises to motivate repentance and faithfulness if we will only heed His exhortation!
-- **Brethren, are we listening?**

CONCLUSION

1. From the letter to the church at **Sardis**, we learn...
 - a. That a true church of Christ can become a dead church
 - b. That Christians can be blotted out of the Lamb’s book of life
2. From the letter to the church at **Sardis**, we learn that Jesus...
 - a. Judges us individually, not just congregationally (but we must not “defile our garments”)
 - b. Gives congregations and individuals the opportunity to repent, if they will heed Him

Next we shall consider the letter to the church in **Philadelphia**...

The Book Of Revelation

Letter To Philadelphia (3:7-13)

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we considered the letter to **Sardis (Rev 3:1-6)**, in which Jesus...
 - a. Condemned them for:
 - 1) Having a name that they are alive but they were dead
 - 2) Their works were not found perfect before God
 - b. Warned them to:
 - 1) Be watchful, for if they didn't He would come upon them as a thief
 - 2) Strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die
 - 3) Remember how they had received and heard
 - 4) Hold fast and repent
 - c. Acknowledged some members who had not defiled their garments
 - d. Promised to all who would overcome:
 - 1) They shall be clothed in white garments
 - 2) Will not have their names blotted out of the Book of Life
 - 3) He will confess their names before His Father and before His angels
2. And from the letter to the church at **Sardis** we learn that Jesus...
 - a. Judges us individually, not just congregationally (but we must not "defile our garments")
 - b. Gives congregations and individuals the opportunity to repent, if they will heed Him
3. The sixth letter is written to the church in **Philadelphia**. Some background information...
 - a. **The city of Philadelphia**
 1. Inscriptions from Philadelphia mention the worship of Zeus and Hestia - **ESV Study Bible**
 2. The Roman imperial cult was already present by the first century A.D. - **ibid.**
 3. An inscription from a nearby town mentions a synagogue in that town - **ibid.**
 - **The cultural pressures to conform would have come from both Rome and Judaism**
 - b. **The church at Philadelphia**
 1. It too may have begun through Paul's work while at Ephesus - cf. **Ac 19:8-10**
 2. They had been faithful up to that point - **Re 3:8**
 3. They later received a letter from the early church father Ignatius (c. a.d. 110) - **ESV Study Bible**
 4. They suffered during the martyrdom of Polycarp (c. 155) - **ibid.**
 - **One generation was spared from "the hour of trial", evidently a later generation was not**

[Should an "hour of trial" come upon the world during our lifetime, will we be spared the worst of it? Let's glean what we can from...]

I. THE LORD'S SELF-DESIGNATION (7)

A. "THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO IS HOLY, HE WHO IS TRUE"...

1. This is the first of the letters not to take its description from the vision in chapter one
2. But Jesus is described this way later in Revelation - **Re 6:10**
- **"He is absolutely pure and separate from sin. 'True' can refer both to one who speaks truth, and who is genuine or authentic as opposed to fake." - MacArthur Study Bible**

B. "HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID"...

1. The description here is likely an messianic allusion taken from **Isa 22:22**
2. Initially describing Eliakim, steward of the house of King Hezekiah
- **The significance of the statement may be that Jesus, as the Son of David (Mt 1:1), provides access to God and His Kingdom, but also to opportunities for service (see next)**

C. "HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS"...

1. He has authority to open or shut doors of opportunity - cf. **2Co 2:12**
2. And no one can counteract what He chooses to do
- **As with self-designations to the other churches, this one relates especially to the church addressed**

[Which is evident as we now consider...]

II. THE LORD'S COMMENDATION (8)

A. THE LORD HAS SET AN OPEN DOOR BEFORE THEM AND NONE CAN SHUT IT...

1. Perhaps a door of opportunity for the Word of God
2. Which is how Paul often used the metaphor of an "open door" - cf. **1Co 16:9; 2Co 2:12; Co 4:3**
- **Especially in view of what Jesus goes on to say is the reason why**

B. FOR THEY HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT HIS WORD, AND NOT DENIED HIS NAME...

1. With little strength they have kept His word, perhaps they will be given more opportunity to do so
2. They have not denied His name, but rather confessed it (unlike Peter on three occasions)
- **Being faithful with little strength, they would be given opportunity to do more! - cf. Mk 4:23**

[As with the church at **Smyrna**, there is no condemnation and warning to the church at **Philadelphia**, so we now move on to...]

III. THE LORD'S PROMISE AND EXHORTATION (9-13)

A. ABOUT THE "SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN" (WHO CLAIM TO BE JEWS, BUT ARE NOT)...

1. They are not real Jews in Christ's sight - cf. **Jn 8:39; Ro 2:28-29**
2. He will make them come and worship before their feet - cf. **Isa 45:14; 60:14**
3. He will make them know that He has loved those in Philadelphia
4. Perhaps when Christians are glorified when Jesus comes in glory - cf. **2Th 1:10,12**
- **Another indication that a major source of persecution came from unbelieving Jews, not just pagan Rome**

B. BECAUSE THE CHURCH HAS KEPT HIS COMMAND TO PERSEVERE...

1. He will keep them from the hour of trial (a relatively short period of persecution)
2. Which shall come upon the whole world (i.e., the Roman Empire, cf. **Lk 2:1**)
3. To test those who dwell on the earth
- **Those at Philadelphia had already passed their "test"**

C. BEHOLD, HE IS COMING QUICKLY...

1. Again, Revelation was about things that would shortly take place - **Re 1:1,4; 22:6,10**
2. Here He may be referencing His coming judgment against unfaithful Jerusalem and pagan Rome
- **Especially as it relates to those who had been persecuting His church**

D. HOLD FAST WHAT THEY HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE THEIR CROWN...

1. Spared the hour of trial, they still needed to "hold fast" (for many fall due to apathy)

2. They need to remain faithful unto death to receive the crown of life - **Re 2:10**
- **Many Christians lose their crown, not because of persecution, but simply for failing to “hold fast” regarding their salvation in Christ - cf. He 3:14; 4:11; 10:23,35,38**

E. HE WHO OVERCOMES, THE LORD WILL...

1. Make him a pillar in the temple of His God, and he shall go out no more
 - a. This may be a promise pertaining to “the intermediate state” - cf. **Re 7:13-15** (note the reference to “temple”)
 - b. Whereas in “the eternal state” there is no temple as such - cf. **Re 21:22**
 2. Write on him:
 - a. The name of His God - cf. **Re 7:3; 14:1**
 - b. The name of the city of His God, the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from His God - cf. **Re 21:2,10**
 - c. His new name - cf. **Re 22:4**
- **As before, the promises relate to what is described later in Revelation, certainly intended to encourage hope and steadfastness to Jesus Christ!**

F. “HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES”...

1. Again, what Jesus had John write to each church was not just for that congregation
 2. Every letter contained things that all churches then needed to hear
 3. And the 7 letters were preserved so that churches today could hear what is needed to hear
- **Brethren, are we listening?**

CONCLUSION

1. From the letter to the church at **Philadelphia**, we learn...
 - a. That like the church at Smyrna, persecution at that time sometimes came from Jewish opposition
 - b. That a church with little strength can be faithful to the Lord
 - c. That Jesus may spare some churches from what may befall other churches
2. From the letter to the church at **Philadelphia**, we learn that Jesus...
 - a. Requires faithful Christians to “hold fast”, or they may lose their “crown”
 - b. Offered promises that appear related to both the intermediate and eternal states of the righteous, as described later in the book of Revelation

Next we shall consider the last of the seven letters, the one written to the church in **Laodicea**...

The Book Of Revelation

Letter To Laodicea (3:14-22)

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we considered the letter to **Philadelphia (Rev 3:7-13)**, in which Jesus...
 - a. Commended them for having:
 - 1) A little strength
 - 2) Kept His word and not denied His name
 - 3) Kept His command to persevere
 - b. Said He would:
 - 1) Make those of the “synagogue of Satan” (unbelieving Jews) to worship before their feet and come to know that Jesus loved them (His disciples at Philadelphia)
 - 2) Keep them from the hour of trial that was coming
 - c. Promising to him those who overcome:
 - 1) He would make a pillar in the temple of His God
 - 2) Write on them the name of His God, the city of His God, the New Jerusalem, and His new name
2. And from the letter to the church at **Philadelphia** we learn...
 - a. That like the church at Smyrna, persecution at that time sometimes came from Jewish opposition
 - b. That a church with little strength can be faithful to the Lord
 - c. That Jesus may spare some churches from what may befall other churches
 - d. Requires faithful Christians to “hold fast”, or they may lose their “crown”
 - e. Offered promises that appear related to both the intermediate and eternal states of the righteous, as described later in the book of Revelation
3. The seventh and final letter is written to the church in **Laodicea**. Some background information...
 - a. **The city of Laodicea**
 - 1) A very prosperous commercial city
 - 2) When destroyed by an earthquake in 60 AD the city rebuilt itself without any help from Nero
 - 3) It had a famous medical center noted for ophthalmology
 - 4) But it lacked a good water supply, and water piped from hot springs likely arrived lukewarm-- **We will notice how Jesus used the city’s character to describe the church’s character**
 - b. **The church at Laodicea**
 - 1) It too may have begun during Paul’s work while at Ephesus - cf. **Ac 19:8-10**
 - 2) Perhaps through Epaphras, who had a special interest in it - cf. **Col 4:12-13**
 - 3) Some think the “letter from Laodicea” (**Col 4:16**) may have been the epistle to the Ephesians which may have served as a circular letter to many of the churches in that part of Asia Minor-- **With men like Paul and Epaphras having a vested interest in this congregation, it should have been an outstanding church**

[But such was not the case, as it received no commendation. Could we become like the church at Laodicea? Before we consider what ailed them, let’s first notice...]

I. THE LORD’S SELF-DESIGNATION (14)

A. “THESE THINGS SAYS THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS”...

1. “*The Amen*”
 - a. A Hebrew expression meaning “so be it”

- b. Twenty-five times in John’s gospel Jesus prefaced His remarks with “Amen, amen...” (the NKJV translates it as “Most assuredly...”)
 - 2. *“The Faithful and True Witness”*- cf. **Re 1:5**
 - a. Coupled with “The Amen”, Jesus emphasizes the truthfulness of His message to them
 - b. Regarding His diagnosis of their spiritual condition, the warning if they do not repent, and the promise they will receive if they repent, accept His prescription, and overcome
- **Jesus is the “Great Physician” who can be trusted to tell it like it is!**

B. “THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD”...

- 1. Some (e.g., JWs) believe this means that Jesus was the first thing created by God
 - 2. But the Greek word translated “beginning” is **arche**, “which carries the concept of the ‘beginning, origin, active cause.’” - **Revelation: Four Views, Steve Gregg**
 - 3. **Arche**: “one who or that which constitutes an initial cause—‘first cause, origin.’” - **Louw Nida 89:16**
 - 4. John wrote: *“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”* - **Jn 1:3** (If Jesus is a created being, then He did not make ALL things)
 - 5. Paul wrote: *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”* - **Col 1:15-17**
 - a. The expression “firstborn” is often used as a metaphor depicting one that has preeminence
 - 1) E.g., God called David *“My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth”* - **Psa 89:27**
 - 2) David was not the first king God installed over Israel (Saul was), but David was made the preeminent king at that time
 - 3) Thus Christ was the Preeminent One over all creation because He created everything!
 - b. JWs in their New World Translation (NWT) insert the word “other” four times in **Col 1:16-17**
 - 1) Paul wrote *“all things”* four times, the NWT has *“all other things”* four times
 - 2) *“All things”* makes it clear Jesus is not a created being, the NWT twists the scriptures in an effort to teach otherwise
- **The Laodiceans were familiar with the epistle to the Colossians (Col 4:16), so they would have understood John properly**

[As the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Preeminent One and Creator of all things, Jesus now speaks strong words of judgment to the church at Laodicea...]

II. THE LORD’S CONDEMNATION AND WARNING (15-19)

A. HIS CONDEMNATION...

- 1. They are neither cold or hot
 - a. He wished they were cold or hot
 - 1) Not that he would prefer them either spiritually alive or dead
 - 2) But that they be more palatable to His taste (e.g., tea: preferably either cold or hot)
 - b. But because they are lukewarm, He will vomit them out of His mouth
 - 1) Their apathy was distasteful to Him
 - 2) The image of Jesus vomiting is shocking and undignified, but His use here warns us that we are not to take Him lightly (compare this with God’s warning to Israel, **Lev 18:24-28**)
- 2. They are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked
 - a. Though they say they are rich, wealthy, and in need of nothing
 - 1) Materially speaking, they like their city were well off
 - 2) Prosperity can be misleading, trusting in uncertain riches - cf. **1Ti 6:17; Lk 12:15-21**
 - b. Therefore He counsels them...

- 1) To buy from Him:
 - a) Gold refined in the fire, that they may be rich; i.e., godly character refined by affliction, cf. **Job 23:10; 1Pe 1:6-7**
 - b) White garments, that their nakedness be not revealed; i.e., righteous acts of the saints - cf. **Re 19:8**
 - 2) To anoint their eyes with eye salve, that they might see
 - a) Perhaps an allusion to the famous medical center noted for ophthalmology
 - b) Growing in the knowledge of Christ cures spiritual myopia - cf. **2Pe 1:8-9**
- **To apathetic Christians, however affluent, Jesus offers true spiritual riches and godly character**

B. HIS WARNING...

1. As many as He loves He rebukes and chastens
 - a. The Lord chastens those that He loves - cf. **Pro 3:12; He 12:3-11**
 - b. Such chastening is designed to save our souls - cf. **1Co 11:30-32**
 2. Therefore be zealous and repent
 - a. The antidote to being lukewarm is fervent zeal
 - b. Fervent zeal is also a manifestation of true repentance - cf. **2Co 7:10-11**
- **Are we slack in our service to the Lord? We need to repent with zeal!**

[To help motivate us to repent and being zealous (if that be our need), we now consider...]

III. THE LORD'S PROMISE AND EXHORTATION (20-22)

A. HIS PROMISE...

1. He stands at the door and knocks...
 - a. If any will hear Him and open the door, He will come in and dine with him
 - b. We may have shut Christ out of our heart, He is willing to come back in if we let Him
 - **Note well: this is a promise to Christians, not telling lost people how to be saved!**
 2. To him who overcomes...
 - a. The Lord will grant to sit with Him on His throne
 - 1) What an amazing promise!
 - 2) Compare with that told the church at **Thyatira - Re 2:26-27**
 - b. Just as He overcame and sat down with His Father on His throne
 - 1) A promise in some way to participate in the current reign of Christ!
 - 2) A reign of the Messiah foretold in Psalms - cf. **Psa 2:8-9**
 - 3) His reign declared by the apostles to be current - cf. **1Co 15:24-26; Re 1:5**
- **Perhaps an allusion to that described later: participating in the reign of the saints with Christ after death in heaven - Re 20:4-6; cf. also 1Co 6:2-3**

B. HIS EXHORTATION...

1. Hear what the Spirit says to the churches
 2. The seventh time this exhortation is found in chapters 2 & 3
- **What Jesus says to one church, all churches should heed!**

CONCLUSION

1. From the letter to the church at **Laodicea**, we learn...
 - a. The danger of material prosperity and apathy in our service to the Lord
 - b. The need to be zealous and repent as necessary

2. From the letter to the church at **Laodicea**, we learn that Jesus...
 - a. Wants erring Christians to let Him back in their hearts
 - b. Offers promises to sit with Him on His throne, that is, to reign with Him!

In one sense, we already reign with Him:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” - Ep 2:4-7

The best is yet to come, as we will see in our study of the rest of the book of Revelation...!

The Book Of Revelation

God Is On His Throne! (4:1-11)

INTRODUCTION

1. **Chapters 1-3** of the Book of Revelation provide the setting for **what this book is about...**
 - a. A revelation (unveiling) from Jesus Christ to His servants about things that would shortly take place
 - b. With letters written to seven churches in Asia Minor who had already suffered persecution from Jewish and Roman sources, with more such hardships to come
 - c. The book and the letters were designed to both warn and comfort them as they prepared to face the tribulation to come
2. **In chapters 4-11**, I believe John is shown how the Lord would come in judgment on **unfaithful Jerusalem...**
 - a. In signs and symbols to Jewish Christians very familiar with similar prophecies in the Old Testament
 - b. And in fulfillment of prophecies made by Jesus during His earthly ministry - cf. **Mt 24, Mk 13, Lk 21**

[First, John describes a scene that should create a sense of awe and wonder, depicting...]

I. GOD ON HIS THRONE (1-8)

A. JOHN TAKEN TO HEAVEN...

1. After seeing the Lord and hearing the letters addressed to the seven churches
 2. Upon seeing a door standing open in heaven, and hearing a trumpet-like voice - **Re 4:1**
 - a. Being told "*Come up here*"
 - b. Where he will be shown "*things which must take place after this*"
- **The voice "like a trumpet" may have been the voice of Jesus (the ESV, NASB, NLT, NIV certainly translate it as such) - cf. Re 1:10**

B. JOHN DESCRIBES THE THRONE SCENE...

1. **The One on the throne**
 - a. Like a jasper (sparkling white)
 - b. And a sardius stone (fiery red) in appearance
 - c. With an emerald rainbow (various shades of green) around the throne

-- **The colors may reflect the characteristics of God, such as holiness, righteousness, justice, and mercy, or they may simply signify His splendor and majesty**
2. **The twenty-four elders**
 - a. Sitting on twenty-four thrones around the throne
 - b. Clothed in white robes
 - c. With crowns of gold on their heads

-- **Summers and Hailey suggest that they depict the twelve patriarchs of Israel and the twelve apostles, who represent the redeemed of both covenants now united in Christ (note that in Rev 5:8-9 they do seem to speak in behalf of the redeemed)**
3. **Other elements around the throne**
 - a. Lightnings, thunderings, and voices proceeding from the throne (**perhaps illustrating divine power and judgments coming from God**)
 - b. Seven lamps (the Seven Spirits of God) burning before the throne (**Summers suggests this symbolizes the Holy Spirit in His work of illumination and revelation of God's word to man**)
 - c. A sea of glass, like crystal, before the throne (**perhaps symbolizing the transcendence of God that presently separates God and His people**)

4. **The four living creatures in the midst and around the throne**
 - a. Unique characteristics
 - 1) The first was like a lion
 - 2) The second was like a calf
 - 3) The third had a face like a man
 - 4) The fourth was like a flying eagle
 - b. Similar characteristics
 - 1) Each had six wings
 - 2) Full of eyes in front and back, around and within
 - 3) Do not rest day or night, praising the holiness of the Eternal God
 - c. Who do not rest day or night, saying:
 - 1) “Holy, holy, holy”
 - 2) “Lord God Almighty”
 - 3) “Who was and is and is to come!”

-- **Hailey suggests they may be a special order of heavenly beings, perhaps the highest and closest to the throne, who serve God’s majestic will**

[With the throne scene set before us, John proceeds to describe...]

II. **PRAISED AS THE ETERNAL CREATOR (9-11)**

A. **PROMPTED BY THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES...**

1. Whenever they give glory, honor, and thanks
 2. To Him who sits on the throne, the Eternal One
- **Such praise is offered without rest day and night - cf. Re 4:8**

B. **OFFERED BY THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS...**

1. Who fall down before Him who sits on the throne
 2. Who worship Him who lives forever
 3. Who cast their crowns before the throne
 4. Who proclaim God worthy to receive glory, honor, and power
 - a. For He created all things
 - b. And by His will they exist and were created
- **As the Eternal Creator, God is worthy of such glory, honor and power**

CONCLUSION

1. This scene, along with that in chapter five, appears designed to set the stage for what follows
2. At the outset, we are shown the first guarantee of ultimate victory: **God is on His throne!** (Summers)
3. The praise offered by the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders reinforce the truth that the One on the throne (and in ultimate control) is none other than...
 - a. **The Lord God Almighty, Eternal and Holy**
 - b. **The Creator who holds all things together**

God is therefore worthy of glory, honor and power! He is the one to revere, not some mortal man, no matter what power man may exercise on earth!

In our next lesson, we will be introduced to **The Lamb** who is worthy of power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, and blessing...

The Book Of Revelation

Worthy Is The Lamb! (5:1-14)

INTRODUCTION

1. The scene that began in chapter four continues in chapter five...
 - a. The theme of chapter four can be stated as **“God is on His throne!”**
 - b. The theme of chapter five may be called **“Worthy is the Lamb!”**
2. Both chapters appear designed to set the stage for what follows...
 - a. That God is ultimately in control as He sits on His throne
 - b. That the Lamb (Jesus Christ) is worthy to reveal to His servants what God has given Him - cf. **Re 1:1**
3. As we read this chapter, we do well to consider...
 - a. What is revealed about the Lamb (Jesus), and what His death accomplished
 - b. The impact this scene would have had on the persecuted Christians in Asia Minor

[And so let us begin with...]

I. THE SCROLL AND THE LAMB (1-7)

A. THE SCROLL IN GOD’S RIGHT HAND...

1. Written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals - **Re 5:1**
2. The proclamation by the strong angel - **Re 5:2**
 - a. *“Who is worthy?”*
 - b. *“To open and the scroll and to loose its seals?”*
3. The initial response - **Re 5:3**
 - a. No one, in heaven, on the earth, under the earth!
 - b. No one, able to open the scroll, or to look at it!
4. John's reaction: *“So I wept much, because no one was found worthy...”* - **Re 5:4**
-- **John sensed that whatever was written in the scroll was of great importance!**

B. THE ONE WORTHY TO OPEN THE SCROLL...

1. Comforting words of one of the elders to John - **Re 5:5**
 - a. *“Do not weep”*
 - b. *“Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David”*
 - c. Who *“has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals”*
 2. John’s description of the Lamb - **Re 5:6-7**
 - a. Standing in the midst of the throne, the four living creatures, and the elders
 - b. A Lamb as though it had been slain
 - 1) Having seven horns and seven eyes
 - 2) Which are the seven Spirits of God sent into all the earth - cf. **Re 3:1**
 - c. Who takes the scroll out of God’s right hand
- **Though not mentioned by name at this point, clearly this is Jesus, the Lamb of God!**

[The scroll clearly represents *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants things which must shortly take place.”* (**Re 1:1**) When the seals are loosed, the things which must shortly take place will begin to be revealed. But first, John describes an amazing scene in which...]

II. THE LAMB IS PRAISED (8-14)

A. BY THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS...

1. Each having:
 - a. A harp - **Re 5:8**
 - b. Golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints - **ibid.**
 - **Note:** this does not justify the use of instrumental music and incense in the worship of the church, any more than it would be to offering slain lambs in our worship. The incense clearly represents the prayers of the saints; perhaps the harps represent the melody in our hearts - cf. **Ep 5:19; Co 3:16** (for more on this, see Music In New Testament Worship, I & II)
2. They sang a new song (the living creatures and elders singing on behalf of those redeemed to God)
 - a. The Lamb is worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals - **Re 5:9**
 - b. For He was slain and has redeemed them to God by His blood out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation - **Re 5:9; cf. Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16**
 - c. He has made them kings and priests to God, to reign on the earth - **Re 5:10; cf. Ep 2:4-6; Co 1:13; 1Pe 2:9; Re 1:9; 2:26-27; 3:21; 20:4-6**
 - **In Christ we are a “royal priesthood”, a kingdom of kings and priests!**

B. BY 100 MILLION ANGELS PLUS...

1. Their voices heard around the throne, along with the living creatures and the elders - **Re 5:11**
2. Saying with a loud voice - **Re 5:12**
 - a. *“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain”*
 - b. *“To receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing”*
 - **If such heavenly creatures praise the Lamb as worthy, how much more should we!**

C. TOGETHER WITH HIM (GOD) WHO SITS ON THE THRONE...

1. John then hears every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea praising both God on His throne and the Lamb who was slain - **Re 5:13**
 - a. *“Blessing and honor and glory and power...”*
 - b. *“Be to Him who sits on throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!”*
2. Upon which John describes - **Re 5:14**
 - a. The four living creatures said *“Amen!”*
 - b. The twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped Him who lives forever and ever
 - **If every creature offers God and Jesus blessing, honor, and power, how much more should we!**

CONCLUSION

1. This awesome scene would certainly encourage faithful Christians. As stated by **Ray Summers**:

“Such a scene was calculated to bring new courage and new hope to the hearts of John's first readers, the persecuted Christians of Asia; it brings the same cheer to Christian hearts in any age. Believing in the power of God (Ch. 4) and the redeeming love of God (Ch. 5), there is no enemy or force of evil which Christians need to fear. They can enter the conflict or endure the evil knowing that God is still on His throne; He has not laid aside His scepter; He has not abandoned His throne to any other.”

2. What will the scroll reveal when the seals are loosed?
 - a. I believe it divulges God's righteous indignation upon those who reject His Christ and persecute His people, and how His suffering saints would eventually overcome
 - b. As long as the scroll was sealed, the workings of God was still a mystery. But as the seals are broken (**Re 6:1-8:1**), we have: *“the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants -- things which must shortly take place.”* (**Re 1:1**)

The Book Of Revelation

Six Seals Opened (6:1-17)

INTRODUCTION

1. The scene that began in chapter four continued in chapter five...
 - a. The theme of chapter **four** can be stated as **“God is on His throne!”**
 - b. The theme of chapter **five** may be called **“Worthy is the Lamb!”**
2. Both chapters appear designed to set the stage for what follows...
 - a. That God is ultimately in control as He sits on His throne
 - b. That the Lamb (Jesus Christ) is worthy to reveal to His servants what God has given Him - cf. **Re 1:1**

[In chapter six, the Lamb opens six of the seven seals on the scroll. **The first four seals** reveals...]

I. FOUR HORSES AND THEIR RIDERS (1-8)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. First seal opened - Rider on a white horse - Re 6:1-2
 - a. The Lamb opens the first seal
 - b. One of the four living creatures says “Come and see” (NKJV) or “Come” (ESV)
 - c. John sees a white horse and its rider
 - 1) The man had a bow
 - 2) A crown was given to him
 - 3) The man went out conquering and to conquer
 2. Second seal opened - Rider on a red horse - Re 6:3-4
 - a. The Lamb opens the second seal
 - b. The second living creature says “Come and see” (NKJV) or “Come” (ESV)
 - c. John sees a fiery red horse and its rider
 - 1) The rider was granted to take peace from the earth, and for people to kill one another
 - 2) A great sword was given to him
 3. Third seal opened - Rider on black horse - Re 6:5-6
 - a. The Lamb opens the third seal
 - b. The third living creature says “Come and see” (NKJV) or “Come” (ESV)
 - c. John sees a black horse and its rider
 - 1) A pair of scales is in the hand of the rider
 - 2) A voice in the midst of the four living creatures says “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”
 4. Fourth seal opened - Rider(s) on the pale horse - Re 6:7-8
 - a. The Lamb opens the fourth seal
 - b. The fourth living creature says “Come and see” (NKJV) or “Come” (ESV)
 - c. John sees a pale horse and its rider
 - 1) On the horse sits Death, and Hades followed with him
 - 2) Power was given them over a fourth of the earth
 - 3) Power to kill with the sword, with death, and by beasts
- **Some manuscripts have the four living creatures saying “Come and see”, suggesting that they are speaking to John; other manuscripts have them saying “Come”, suggesting they are speaking to the four horses and their riders (I believe this is more likely)**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The first four seals reveal four horses and their riders, commonly referred today as **“The Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse”**
2. Notice what is said about the different riders:
 - a. *“...a crown was given to him...”* (the rider on the white horse)
 - b. *“...it was granted to the one...there was given to him...”* (the rider on the red horse)
 - c. *“...a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying”* (the rider on the black horse)
 - d. *“...power was given to them...”* (riders on the pale horse - Death and Hades)
3. Some questions to consider:
 - a. Who had the power to give a crown, to grant such authority?
 - b. Who in the midst of the four living creatures might have spoken? - cf. **Re 6:6**
 - c. Who had power to give to Death and Hades?
4. When we consider that **Jesus...**
 - a. Is the ruler of the kings of the earth - **Re 1:5**
 - b. Has the keys of Hades and of Death - **Re 1:18**
 - c. That He was in the midst of the four living creatures - **Re 5:6**
 - **It seems clear that the answer is Christ! In other words, the horses and their riders were acting upon the authority and power given them by Christ**
5. Therefore I suggest the following explanations for the first four seals:
 - a. The white horse and its rider - Represents **military conquest**, such as God used to bring judgment upon Assyria (**Isa 10:5-7,12-13,15-16**) and Babylon (**Isa 13:17-20**)
 - b. The red horse and its rider - Represents **civil war**, in which people would kill one another, such as God used in His judgment against Egypt (**Isa 19:1-4**)
 - c. The black horse and its rider - Represents **famine**, where necessities (wheat and barley) would be scarce, while luxuries (oil and wine) might be in abundance but of little interest to the hungry; God had used famine in His judgment upon Israel (**Jer 14:11-12**)
 - d. The pale horse and its riders (Death and Hades) - Represents **death** brought about by the sword, hunger, death (pestilence), and beasts of the earth. Such severe judgments God had brought upon Jerusalem in the past (**Eze 5:17; 6:12; 14:21**)
 - e. Many see the fulfillment of these things in the Roman advance on Jerusalem during A.D. 67-70, as described by **Flavius Josephus** in his book, *The Wars Of The Jews*
 - f. Compare with what Christ said would precede the destruction of Jerusalem: *“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.”* - **Mt 24:7**
 - **I’m suggesting that the four horses and their riders may represent the means by which Christ would bring divine judgment upon unfaithful Jerusalem**

[The reason for such judgment becomes evident when **the fifth seal** is opened...]

II. THE CRY OF THE MARTYRS (9-11)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. Fifth seal opened - The cry of the martyrs - **Re 6:9-10**
 - a. The Lamb opens the fifth seal
 - b. John sees under the altar those who had been slain
 - 1) For the Word of God
 - 2) For the testimony they held
 - c. They cried with a loud voice:
 - 1) *“How long, O Lord, holy and true”*
 - 2) *“Until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”*
2. Their consolation - **Re 6:11**

- a. A white robe was given to each of them
 - b. They were told to rest a little while longer, until their fellow servants and brethren would be killed
- **The judgment and avenging of their blood would come, but at the appropriate time**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

- 1. With the opening of the fifth seal, we are told why the Lord (Christ?) would bring the judgment signified in the first four seals (military conquest, civil war, famine, death)
 - 2. Souls have already been slain for the word of God and their testimony
 - a. When the time is right, the martyrs would be avenged - cf. **Lk 18:7-8**
 - b. Meanwhile, souls of the slain are comforted with white robes and rest - cf. **Re 3:4-5**
 - 3. Who were these souls (martyrs) under the altar?
 - a. Perhaps Christians who had already paid the supreme price for following Jesus
 - b. Such as Stephen (**Ac 7:54-8:2**), James (**Ac 12:1-2**), Antipas (**Re 2:13**), even Paul and Peter who had been martyred by the time Revelation was written, and countless others also
- **The righteous indignation of the Lord depicted in the first four seals appears to be explained by what is revealed in the fifth seal**

[Which brings us now to the opening of **the sixth seal**, which reveals what happens in...]

III. THE DAY OF THE LAMB'S WRATH (12-17)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

- 1. Sixth seal opened - Cosmic disruptions - Re 6:12-14
 - a. The Lamb opens the sixth seal
 - b. Cataclysmic events occur:
 - 1) A great earthquake
 - 2) Sun becomes black as sackcloth of hair
 - 3) Moon becomes like blood
 - 4) Stars fall to the earth, like ripe figs shaken from a tree by a mighty wind
 - 5) Sky receded as a scroll when rolled up
 - 6) Every mountain and island moved out of its place
 - 2. The reaction of mankind - Re 6:15-17
 - a. Great and small, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and rocks of the mountains
 - b. They cry out to the mountains and rocks:
 - 1) *"Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"*
 - 2) *"For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*
- **The sixth describes cosmic disturbances and the despair of trying to hide from the Lamb's wrath**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

- 1. Is this scene depicting "the day of the Lord" at the end of time? - cf. **2Pe 3:7-12**
 - 2. The language is reminiscent of that describing God's judgment upon nations in the OT
 - a. The burden against Babylon - **Isa 13:9-13**
 - b. The lamentation against Egypt - **Eze 32:7-8**
 - c. The prophecy against Samaria - **Hos 10:7-8**
 - 3. Jesus used similar language to warn people of the impending destruction of Jerusalem
 - a. As He foretold what would come upon those of His own generation - **Mt 23:34-39**
 - b. Even as He was being led to His crucifixion - **Lk 23:27-31**
- **Therefore I suggest it refers to the impending judgment upon unbelieving Jerusalem for persecuting God's people (both OT prophets and NT saints)**

CONCLUSION

1. Unfaithful Jerusalem would not escape the wrath of the Lamb...
 - a. The **first four seals** reveal the means by which He would bring judgment upon the city
 - b. The **fifth seal** reveals the reason for such judgment: the avenging of the martyrs' blood!
 - c. The **sixth seal** reveals in prophetic, symbolic language the despair of mankind at that time
2. Who would be able to stand in the great day of the wrath of the Lamb...?
 - a. The answer is given in the seventh chapter (**the answer may surprise you**)
 - b. Which serves as **an interlude** between the opening of the six seals and the seventh seal

Meanwhile, **we should be asking ourselves today** concerning the coming of our Lord to judge **the world** (cf. **Ac 17:30-31**): “Who will not be able to stand in that day of great wrath?”

The answer is found in Paul's 2nd epistle to the Thessalonians:

*“...and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on **those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.” - 2Th 1:7-10*

Do you know God? Have you obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? Heed what Peter commanded the Jews on the Day of Pentecost! - cf. **Ac 2:36-39**

The Book Of Revelation

Sealing Of Israel & Multitude In Heaven (7:1-17)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapter six, I proposed that it reveals how unfaithful Jerusalem would not escape the wrath of the Lamb...
 - a. The **first four seals** reveal the means by which He would bring judgment upon the city
 - b. The **fifth seal** reveals the reason for such judgment: the avenging of the martyrs' blood!
 - c. The **sixth seal** reveals in prophetic, symbolic language the despair of mankind at that time
 - **Which I understand relates to the events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., as foretold by Jesus prior to His crucifixion - cf. Mt 23:34-39; 24:1-34; Lk 21:20-36; 23:27-31**

2. Now in chapter seven, there is **an interlude** between opening of the sixth and seventh seals **with two visions**...
 - a. The 144,000 of Israel sealed on earth - **Re 7:1-8**
 - b. A great multitude from all nations in heaven - **Re 7:9-17**
 - **Which may be intended to answer the question raised at the end of chapter six: "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" - Re 6:17**

[With that question in our mind, let's first examine...]

I. THE 144,000 OF ISRAEL SEALED ON EARTH (1-8)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The angels restrained - **Re 7:1-3**
 - a. John saw four angels at the four corners of the earth
 - 1) Holding the four winds of the earth
 - 2) That the winds would not blow on the earth, sea, or any tree
 - b. John saw another angel ascending from the east
 - 1) Crying with a loud voice to the four angels granted to harm the earth and sea
 - 2) Instructing them not to harm the earth, sea, or trees until the servants of God were sealed on their foreheads

2. The 144,000 Of Israel sealed - **Re 7:4-8**
 - a. John "heard" the number of those sealed
 - b. Those sealed were 12,000 each of the tribes of Israel:

1) Judah	4) Asher	7) Simeon	10) Zebulun
2) Reuben	5) Naphtali	8) Levi	11) Joseph
3) Gad	6) Manasseh	9) Issachar	12) Benjamin
 - **Before the four angels could release the four winds and cause great calamity, servants of God who are children of Israel are sealed on their foreheads - Re 7:3**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. Notice an anomaly about the twelve tribes listed here compared to **Num 1:19-49**
 - a. **Ephraim** is not listed in **Re 7**, while **Levi** was not numbered as one of the twelve tribes in **Num 1**
 - b. Perhaps to indicate that this numbering is intended to be understood as figurative, not literal
2. They are sealed and thereby able to stand during the Lamb's wrath, similar to how the faithful were sealed prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in **586 B.C.** by the **Babylonians** - cf. **Eze 9:1-11**
3. **Eusebius** says that Jewish Christians were able to flee to Pella before the Romans overwhelmed Jerusalem, just as Jesus urged His disciples to do - cf. **Lk 21:20-24**
- **The 144,000 of Israel sealed on earth may therefore represent the faithful Jewish Christians in**

Palestine leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Romans

[And so the first answer to the question “*For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?*” appears to be: **the faithful remnant of Israel** (who had accepted Jesus as their Messiah, e.g. **Ac 2:36-41; 4:1-4; 5:14; 21:20**). Does that mean that all the faithful escaped the coming tribulation with their lives? Not necessarily, as appears evident in the second vision in **Revelation 7...**]

II. THE GREAT MULTITUDE FROM ALL NATIONS IN HEAVEN (9-17)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. John sees a great multitude - Re 7:9-12
 - a. Which none could number, from all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues
 - b. Standing before the throne and before the Lamb
 - 1) Clothed with white robes
 - 2) With palm branches in their hands
 - c. Crying with loud voices: “*Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!*”
 - d. Angels, the elders, and the four living creatures also join in with praise
 - 1) Falling on their faces before the throne and worshipping God
 - 2) Ascribing blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might to God
2. The great multitude identified - Re 7:13-17
 - a. Asked by one of the elders, John puts the question back to him
 - b. The elder identifies the great multitude:
 - 1) Those who come out of the great tribulation
 - 2) Who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb
 - 3) Who are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple
 - c. The elder describes their future blessedness:
 - 1) The One on the throne will dwell with them
 - 2) They shall not hunger nor thirst anymore; the sun nor any heat shall strike them
 - 3) The Lamb will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of water
 - 4) God will wipe away every tear from their eyes

-- **A great multitude who came through great tribulation on earth to experience great blessings in heaven!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The second vision provides hope for any who must pass through “*the great tribulation*”
 - a. Not just the faithful remnant of Israel, but “*of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues*”
 - b. For the tribulation would not be limited to Israel (related to the destruction of Jerusalem)
 - c. The tribulation would spread throughout the Roman empire following the fall of Jerusalem
2. This hope is for those who “*washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*”
 - a. Like those in Sardis who had not “*defiled their garments*” - cf. **Re 3:4**
 - b. And for all those who “*overcome*” (even unto death) - cf. **Re 3:5; 2:10**
3. **Note** that in this vision they praise and serve God before His throne in His temple - **Re 7:9,15**
 - a. This appears to be during “the intermediate state” (between death and the resurrection)
 - b. For in the “eternal state” (after the judgment), there is no temple in the “*holy city, the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God*” - cf. **Re 21:1-3,10,22**
 - c. With what we see in **Re 20:4-6**, I understand deceased Christians (at least martyrs) to be in heaven reigning with Christ during “the intermediate state” as promised earlier - cf. **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**

-- **Even if Christians were to lose their lives in the coming tribulation, great blessings awaited them!**

CONCLUSION

1. Thus it would be Jewish Christians in Palestine, and Christians among all nations willing to remain faithful, who would be able to stand when the great day of the Lamb's wrath has come - cf. **Re 6:16-17**
2. In the next chapter (**Revelation 8**), we will consider what happens when the **seventh seal** is opened, and the **first four of seven trumpets** are sounded by seven angels

While I believe the day in which the Lamb's wrath came upon unbelieving Jerusalem occurred in 70 AD, we should not forget the day of Judgment in which the Lamb of God will also judge the world! - cf. **Ac 10:42; 17:30-31**

The Book Of Revelation

Seventh Seal Opened & First Four Trumpets (8:1-13)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapter six, I proposed that it revealed how unfaithful Jerusalem would not escape the wrath of the Lamb...
 - a. The **first four seals** reveal the means by which He would bring judgment upon the city
 - b. The **fifth seal** reveals the reason for such judgment: the avenging of the martyrs' blood!
 - c. The **sixth seal** reveals in prophetic, symbolic language the despair of mankind at that time-- **Which I understand relates to the events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., as foretold by Jesus prior to His crucifixion - cf. Mt 23:34-39; 24:1-34; Lk 21:20-36; 23:27-31**

2. In chapter seven, there was **an interlude** between opening of the sixth and seventh seals **with two visions**...
 - a. The 144,000 of Israel sealed on earth - **Re 7:1-8**
 - b. A great multitude from all nations in heaven - **Re 7:9-17**-- **Which appears to answer the question raised at the end of chapter six: "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" - Re 6:17**

[As chapter eight begins, the **seventh** and **final seal** is opened...]

I. THE SEVENTH SEAL OPENED (1)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The Lamb opens the seventh seal - **Re 8:1a**
 2. There is silence for about half an hour - **Re 8:1b**
-
- What an amazing contrast with the scenes and sounds when the first six seals were opened!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. In contrast to all that happened before, the silence must have been striking!
 2. Possibly it signifies awe in heaven
 - a. For what has already been revealed
 - b. Or for what is about to be revealed
 3. Whenever God acts, those on earth should be in awe - cf. **Hab 2:20; Zec 2:13**
 4. Should we not expect a similar reaction from His creatures in heaven? - cf. **Zep 1:7**
-
- So let us read with awe for what has already been revealed, and for what will follow!**

[John then describes what he saw next...]

II. PREPARATION FOR THE SOUNDING OF SEVEN TRUMPETS (2-6)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. Seven angels standing before God - **Re 8:2a**
2. To them were given seven trumpets - **Re 8:2b**
3. There was another angel with a golden censer - **Re 8:3**
 - a. Who came and stood before the altar
 - b. Who was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints
 - c. Upon the golden altar before the throne
4. The smoke of the incense and prayers of the saints - **Re 8:4**
 - a. Ascended before God

- b. From the angel's hand
- 5. The angel then took the censer - **Re 8:5**
 - a. Filled it with fire from the altar
 - b. Threw it to the earth
 - c. Accompanied by noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake
- 6. The seven angels with the seven trumpets then prepared themselves to sound - **Re 8:6**
- **What an audible and visual cacophony in contrast to the half hour of silence!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

- 1. The scene appears to suggest that the sounding of the seven trumpets and things to follow is God's response to the prayers of the saints offered by the angel with the golden censer of incense
- 2. It is reminiscent of what Jesus taught in His parable of the persistent widow: "*And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?*" - **Lk 18:7**
- **Together with Re 6:9-10, isn't it reasonable to infer that the judgment to follow was in response to the cries of God's persecuted people?**

[And so the first four angels sound their trumpets in turn...]

III. THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS (7-12)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

- 1. First trumpet: vegetation struck - **Re 8:7**
 - a. Hail and fire, mingled with blood, thrown to the earth
 - b. A third of the trees burned up, and all green grass burned up
- 2. Second trumpet: seas struck - **Re 8:8-9**
 - a. Something like a great burning mountain thrown into the sea
 - b. A third of the sea became blood; a third of the creatures in the sea died; a third of the ships destroyed
- 3. Third trumpet: rivers and springs struck - **Re 8:10-11**
 - a. A great burning star fell on a third of the rivers and springs of water
 - b. Named "Wormwood", a third of the waters became wormwood; many men died from bitter water
- 4. The fourth trumpet: heavens struck - **Re 8:12**
 - a. A third of the sun, moon, and stars struck
 - b. A third of them were darkened, so that a third of the day and night did not shine
- **Immediately noticeable is that the environment is affected, and yet only a third of it**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

- 1. The first four trumpets may signify natural calamities that God would use in His judgment against apostate Israel who oppressed His people
- 2. "It is much better to regard them as all belonging to one time and one event, namely the destruction of the first great persecutor of the Christian church. Christ, in speaking of the fall of Jerusalem, described it in sufficiently alarming terms; and history fills out the event of about ten years before the fall of the city with scenes of crimes, and terror, robbery, and murder, and carnage sufficient to justify such symbols as these." - **David S. Clark**, *The Message From Patmos*
- 3. The calamities are reminiscent of the Egyptian plagues (cf. **Exo 9-10**), brought now against Jerusalem that is later "*the great city which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified*" - **Re 11:8**
- **That only a third is affected, along with the symbolism of trumpets, suggests that the purpose of these judgments would serve to warn, giving many opportunity to repent**

[Before **the final three trumpets** are sounded by their respective angels (described in chapters nine and eleven), yet another angel is heard and seen by John making **an ominous announcement...**]

IV. THREE-FOLD WOE ANNOUNCED (13)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. An angel (some manuscripts have “eagle”) flying through heaven - **Re 8:13a**
2. Saying with a loud voice: *“Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”* - **Re 8:13b**
-- **An ominous announcement indeed!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. What the first four trumpets portended was bad enough!
2. It appears the worst was yet to come!
-- **Yet all of this was serving as a warning, giving people opportunity to repent!**

CONCLUSION

1. As with **the seven seals**, I believe **the seven trumpets** relate to the events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., as foretold by Jesus prior to His crucifixion - cf. **Mt 23:34-39; 24:1-34; Lk 21:20-36; 23:27-31**
2. In chapter nine, we shall consider what happens when the **fifth** and **six** trumpets are sounded...
 - a. It gets worse
 - b. But remember, this book was revealing what would happen so that the people who got it would know what to do to avoid the imminent judgments to befall **unfaithful Jerusalem** and **pagan Rome**

Likewise, Jesus and His apostles foretold of **the final judgment** in which **the whole world** will be judged, and how we must repent and obey the gospel of Christ to be saved. Are you ready for that great day?

The Book Of Revelation

The Fifth & Six Trumpets (9:1-21)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapter eight, **the seventh seal** was opened, followed by...
 - a. Silence in heaven for a half hour - **Re 8:1**
 - b. The preparation for the sounding of seven trumpets - **Re 8:2-6**
 - c. The sounding of the first four trumpets, with depictions of natural calamities - **Re 8:7-12**
 - d. A three-fold ominous announcement of woe regarding the three remaining trumpets - **Re 8:13**
2. As with **the seven seals**, I believe **the seven trumpets** relate to the events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., as foretold by Jesus prior to His crucifixion - cf. **Mt 23:34-39; 24:1-34; Lk 21:20-36; 23:27-31**
 - a. Just as the first four seals revealed **military conquest, civil war, famine, death**, as instruments of judgment against unfaithful Jerusalem for persecuting the people of God
 - b. So the first four trumpets revealed **environmental devastation** that would accompany the instruments of judgment against unfaithful Israel leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem

[As we read what happens in chapter nine when the fifth & sixth trumpets are sounded, we can appreciate why **the three-fold ominous announcement** was given at the end of chapter eight (**Re 8:13**)...]

I. THE FIFTH TRUMPET: LOCUSTS FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT (1-12)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The “star” fallen from heaven - **Re 9:1-2**
 - a. With the sounding of the fifth trumpet...
 - 1) John saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth
 - 2) To whom was given the key to the bottomless pit
 - b. When the bottomless pit was opened...
 - 1) Smoke like that of a great furnace arose out of the pit
 - 2) The sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke
2. The “locusts” and their power - **Re 9:3-10**
 - a. Out of the smoke locusts with great power came upon the earth
 - 1) Power like scorpions
 - 2) Commanded not to harm the grass, any green thing, or any tree
 - b. The extent and nature of their power
 - 1) Could harm only those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads - cf. **Re 7:3-4**
 - 2) Could not kill, but only torment for five months
 - 3) Men will seek death, but death will flee from them
 - c. The locusts described
 - 1) Their shape like horses prepared for battle
 - 2) On their heads were crowns of something like gold
 - 3) Their faces were like those of men
 - 4) Their hair was like women’s hair
 - 5) Their teeth was like lions’ teeth
 - 6) With breastplates like those of iron
 - 7) The sound of their wings like chariots with many running horses
 - 8) With tails like scorpions, and stings in their tail (though limited in power)

3. The “king” over them - Re 9:11
 - a. The angel of the bottomless pit
 - b. Whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon
- **The first of three woes is past; two more to come - Re 9:12**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. First, consider the following:
 - a. This vision is clearly intended to be figurative, not literal
 - b. For a literal star falling to the earth would annihilate it completely, end of story
 - c. With the first trumpet, 1/3 of the trees and green grass were burned up
 - d. With the fifth trumpet, the scorpions were not to hurt the grass, trees, any green thing
 - e. The scorpions could not harm those with the seal of God on their foreheads - cf. **Re 7:2-3**
 - f. The scorpions’ power was limited: they could not kill, only torment five months
 - g. The scorpions were shaped like horses prepared for battle
 - h. Their king was the angel from the bottomless pit
 - i. Whose names were: **Abaddon** (Heb., lit., Destruction), **Apollyon** (Grk., lit., Destroyer)
 2. Together with the first four trumpets, I suggest the fifth and sixth trumpets signify tools at God’s disposal to bring wrath upon the persecutors of His people
 - a. I concur with others that the vision of locusts from the bottomless pit symbolizes the hellish rottenness and internal decadence that would weaken the enemies of God’s people from within
 - b. Though allowed to go only so far, Satan's influence can have the effect of weakening a nation from within
 - c. **David Chilton** describes the evidence from history that Jews in the Last Days (A.D. 66–70) had literally become demonized (as quoted by **Steve Gregg, Revelation, Four Views**): *“The entire generation became increasingly demon-possessed; their progressive national insanity is apparent as one reads through the New Testament, and its horrifying final stages in the pages of Josephus’ The Jewish War: the loss of all ability to reason, the frenzied mobs attacking one another, the deluded multitudes following the most transparently false prophets, the crazed and desperate chase after food, the mass murders, executions and suicides, the fathers slaughtering their own families and the mothers eating their own children. Satan and the host of hell simply swarmed through the land of Israel and consumed the apostates.”*
- **When mankind forsakes God, one way He judges them is to simply “give them up” to moral uncleanness, vile passions, debased minds, resulting in the fall of civilization - cf. Ro 1:18-32**

[With one “woe” described through the sounding of the fifth trumpet, we now move on to the second “woe”...]

II. THE SIXTH TRUMPET: THE TWO HUNDRED MILLION ARMY (13-21)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The four angels bound at the Euphrates - Re 9:13-15
 - a. With the sounding of the sixth trumpet...
 - 1) John heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God
 - 2) Speaking to the sixth angel who had the trumpet
 - 3) Telling him to release the four angels bound at the river Euphrates
 - b. The four angels released...
 - 1) Who had been prepared for the hour, day, month, and year
 - 2) Who were to kill a third of mankind
2. The army of two hundred million horsemen - Re 9:16-19
 - a. John heard the number of them
 - b. What he saw in the vision...
 - 1) Those on the horses had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, sulfur yellow

- 2) The horses had heads like those of lions
 - 3) Out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone
 - c. The power of this great army...
 - 1) A third of mankind killed by the fire, smoke, and brimstone
 - 2) The power to harm is in their mouth and tails like serpents' heads
 3. The failure of the survivors to repent - Re 9:20-21
 - a. Those not killed did not repent of their idolatry
 - b. Nor did they repent of their murders, sorceries, sexual immoralities, or thefts
- **This is not the end of the second woe; it continues in chapter eleven - Re 11:14**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. As with the vision of the scorpions, the vision of the 200 million horsemen is figurative
 - a. One that would have fearful impact upon the Jews of the first century
 - b. It was across the Euphrates that Israel's conquerors had previously come—Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia - **Jay Adams, The Time Is At Hand**
 - c. Moreover, there were places at this very time where Roman armies were stationed along the Euphrates. Cf. Josephus, Wars 7:1:3. The 10th legion, which participated in the destruction, had been located there. - **ibid.**
 2. Thus it is likely that the 200 million horsemen symbolize **external invasion** as another instrument God would use upon unfaithful Jerusalem
 - a. Together with **natural calamities** (the first four trumpets), the **internal decadence** and **external invasion** (the fifth & sixth trumpets) combined to bring judgment upon apostate Israel
 - b. Even as Jesus foretold would happen to the Jews of His generation - cf. **Mt 12:43-45; Lk 21:20-24**
- **That these visions of the seven trumpets are directed toward unfaithful Jerusalem becomes more apparent as we consider chapters ten and eleven**

CONCLUSION

1. The judgment described in the visions of Revelation can be very unsettling, especially those depicted when the first six trumpets are sounded...
2. But keep these thoughts in mind...
 - a. With the first four trumpets, the environmental catastrophes impacted only a third
 - b. With the fifth trumpet...
 - 1) The scorpions could not harm the grass, trees, or those with the seal of God on their forehead
 - 2) The scorpions were only permitted to torment (not kill) for five months
 - c. With the sixth trumpet...
 - 1) The horsemen were permitted to kill only a third
 - 2) Those not killed refused to repent of their idolatry, murder, sorcery, sexual immorality, and thefts
3. In other words, the visions of the trumpets thus far appeared designed to encourage people in Israel...
 - a. To repent before the judgments depicted by them were to begin
 - b. To take comfort in knowing if they have the seal of God on their forehead (cf. the 144,000 of Israel in chapter seven) they would be able to stand in the day of the Lamb's wrath
4. And the Jewish Christians did...!
 - a. For when Jerusalem was surrounded by Roman armies in 70 A.D.
 - b. They fled the city when given the opportunity to do so during the siege

Sadly, most Jews did not heed Jesus' warnings. We should ask ourselves, are we heeding His warnings and those of His apostles in the New Testament concerning the day in which Jesus will judge the world? - cf. **Ac 17:30-31**

The Book Of Revelation

The Mighty Angel & The Little Book (10:1-11)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapters eight and nine, the first **six trumpets** were sounded, which we interpreted...
 - a. **Trumpets one thru four** as suggesting partial environmental devastation
 - b. **Trumpets five and six** as portending internal decadence and external invasion-- **Signifying the terrible effects of the Roman army as it made its way toward Jerusalem in 70 A.D.**
2. Just as there was an interlude between the **sixth and seventh seals**, so there is now an interlude between the **sixth and seventh trumpets**...
 - a. The interlude before **the seventh seal** included two visions designed to comfort the saints
 - b. The interlude before **the seventh trumpet** includes three visions, with the second “woe” - **Re 8:13; 11:14**

[Chapter ten contains the first vision in this second interlude, in which John first describes...]

I. THE MIGHTY ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE BOOK (1-7)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The mighty angel, the book, and the seven thunders - **Re 10:1-4**
 - a. John describes another mighty angel coming down from heaven
 - 1) Clothed with a cloud
 - 2) A rainbow on his head
 - 3) His face like the sun
 - 4) His feet like pillars of fire
 - 5) A little book in his hand
 - 6) His right foot on the sea, his left foot on the land
 - 7) Who cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars
 - b. When the mighty angel cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices
 - 1) John prepared to write what he heard
 - 2) But a voice from heaven instructs him to seal up the things uttered by the seven thunders, and not write them
2. The mighty angel and his oath - **Re 10:5-7**
 - a. John sees the mighty angel lift his hand to heaven
 - b. The mighty angel swears by God that there will be delay no longer
 - 1) For in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be finished
 - 2) As God declared to His servants the prophets-- **An impressive vision, with things not to be revealed, and a promise of a mystery completed**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The identity of the mighty angel
 - a. The description has led many to believe that this was Jesus Christ Himself - cf. **Re 10:1**
 - b. Yet his initial description as “still another mighty angel” would suggest just “another” great angel
2. The little book in his hand
 - a. Many who believe the mighty angel is Jesus suggest the book is the original scroll with seven seals
 - b. I agree with those who see it as a separate prophecy (**chs. 13-19**) additional to the first (**chs. 4-11**)
3. The significance of the seven thunders may forever remain an enigma
 - a. **Summers** believes that John was forbidden to record their utterances because there would be delay

- no longer and the time for warning was over
- b. **Hailey** suggests that it may indicate that God has many unrevealed weapons in His arsenal of judgments to be used at His discretion, and that man cannot know all of God's ways
- c. It serves as a reminder that we will not always know what God has in store for mankind
- 4. What of the mystery of God declared to His servants the prophets and soon to be finished?
 - a. Remember, that will be done in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel - **Re 10:7**
 - b. Which we will read following the description of Jerusalem's fall in chapter eleven - cf. **Re 11:15**
- **We will leave the "mystery" with its full meaning until we get to that section in chapter eleven**

[Continuing with the first vision of the interlude between the **sixth and seventh trumpet**...]

II. JOHN EATS THE LITTLE BOOK (8-11)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. John is instructed to eat the little book - **Re 10:8-9**
 - a. The same voice from heaven instructs him to take the book from the angel's hand
 - b. The angel tells him to eat the book, which will be sweet as honey in his mouth, but make his stomach bitter
 2. John eats the little book - **Re 10:10**
 - a. Taking it from the angel's hand, he ate it
 - b. It was sweet as honey in his mouth, but his stomach became bitter
 3. The angel again speaks to John - **Re 10:11**
 - a. "*You must prophesy again...*"
 - b. "*...about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.*"
- **Clearly John's service as an apostle is far from over!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The first vision of this interlude appears designed to impress upon John that with the sounding of the seventh trumpet his work will not be over
 2. Indeed, in chapters 12-20 we shall see the revelation of God's judgment against pagan Rome, and ultimately of the whole world!
- **But before then, we will have two more visions to consider in chapter 11 that are part of this interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets**

CONCLUSION

1. The tenth chapter of Revelation is a short one...
 - a. It may leave one with a sense of frustration (why aren't the seven thunders revealed?)
 - b. But also with a sense of anticipation (what mystery of God will be finished when the 7th trumpet sounds?)
2. It reminds me of the words of Moses...

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." - Deu 29:29

So rather than focus on what has not been revealed (e.g., the seven thunders), let us look forward to what will be revealed in subsequent chapters (e.g., the mystery of God), with the intention of doing what we are commanded:

"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near . . . Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." - Re 1:3; 22:14

The Book Of Revelation

The Temple Of God & The Two Witnesses (11:1-14)

INTRODUCTION

1. In the interlude between **sixth** and **seventh trumpets**, we first saw the vision of...
 - a. The mighty angel with the little book - **Re 10:1-7**
 - b. John eating the little book as instructed - **Re 10:8-10**
 - **With the proclamation to John: “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.” - Re 10:11**

2. The interlude continues in chapter eleven with two more visions...
 - a. The first includes John himself and the temple of God - **Re 11:1-2**
 - b. The second involves two witnesses - **Re 11:3-14**
 - **Both of these visions relate to where the physical temple was presently located: “the great city...where also our Lord was crucified.” (i.e., Jerusalem) - Re 11:8**

[Chapter eleven is key to my understanding how chapters 4-11 pertain to judgment upon **unfaithful Jerusalem**, while chapters 13-19 relate to judgment on **pagan Rome**. For this reason, we shall cover this chapter in two lessons beginning with the vision of...]

I. THE TEMPLE OF GOD (1-2)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The command to measure the temple and its occupants - **Re 11:1**
 - a. John is given a reed like a measuring rod
 - b. Told to measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there
2. The command not to measure the outer court - **Re 11:2**
 - a. Told not to measure the court outside the temple
 - b. For it has been given to the Gentiles, who will tread the holy city underfoot forty-two months
- **Thus the temple, the altar, and those who worship there are measured, while the unmeasured court (and city) outside the temple would be trod underfoot by the Gentiles for 42 months**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. **Steve Gregg notes:** “In Ezekiel 40–47 a man measures the temple with a measuring rod. In Revelation 11 John himself is given a reed for the same purpose. In both cases, the action depicts the defining of the true spiritual temple in view of the impending destruction of the physical structure in Jerusalem (by Babylonians in Ezekiel’s day, by Romans in John’s).” - **Revelation, Four Views**
2. **Steve Gregg again:** “As there was an interlude between the sixth and seventh seals, depicting the preservation of the 144,000 Jewish believers who escaped and survived the holocaust of A.D. 70, so here also, between the sixth and seventh trumpets, there is this interlude conveying the same thought in different symbols.” - **ibid.**
3. The significance of **the 42 months**
 - a. “Here the forty-two months or three and a half years evidently refers to the time of the siege, sack, and pillage of Jerusalem by the Roman armies.” - **David S. Clark, The Message Of Patmos**
 - b. “We first find this term in Daniel when Jerusalem was oppressed three and a half years by Antiochus Epiphanes, and the term may well have taken on a symbolical meaning expressing a period of oppression. - **ibid.**
- **This vision may illustrate that while the city of Jerusalem will undergo great persecution during**

the Jewish War, which lasted about 3 1/2 years (42 months), the true temple of God will not be destroyed (i.e., the church, cf. 1Co 3:16; Ep 2:19-22)

[From the measuring of the temple of God and its occupants, our attention is now turned toward...]

II. THE TWO WITNESSES (3-14)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. Prophesying for 1260 days - Re 11:3-6
 - a. Two witnesses given power to prophesy, clothed in sackcloth
 - 1) Identified as the two olive trees and two lampstands standing before God
 - 2) Those trying to harm them are devoured by fire from their mouths
 - b. Having power:
 - 1) To shut heaven so no rain falls during their prophesying
 - 2) To turn water to blood
 - 3) To strike the earth with plagues as they desire
2. Killed and dead for three and a half days - Re 11:7-10
 - a. Their testimony finished, the beast will kill them
 - 1) The beast that ascends from the bottomless pit
 - 2) Who will make war against them and overcome them
 - b. Their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city
 - 1) Spiritually called Sodom and Egypt
 - 2) Where our Lord was crucified
 - c. The peoples, tribes, tongues, and nation who dwell on the earth
 - 1) Will see their bodies three and a half days
 - 2) Will not allow them to be put into graves
 - 3) Will rejoice over them, make merry, and exchange gifts, because the two prophets had tormented those who dwell on the earth
3. Raised and ascended to heaven - Re 11:11-14
 - a. After three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them
 - 1) They stood, and great fear fell on those who saw them
 - 2) A loud voice from heaven tells them to "Come up here"
 - 3) They ascend to heaven in a cloud as their enemies saw them
 - b. In that same hour there was an earthquake
 - 1) A tenth of the city fell
 - 2) Seven thousand men were killed
 - 3) The rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven
 - c. The second woe is past; the third woe is coming quickly

-- **Most expositors concede that the two witnesses present a particularly difficult challenge**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The vision of the two witnesses identified as two olive trees and two lampstands is reminiscent of the OT vision of Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor - **Re 11:3-4; cf. Zec 3-4**
2. Their fiery power, ability to stop rain, turn water to blood, are reminiscent of Elijah and Moses - **Re 11:5-6; cf. 1Ki 17-18; Exo 7**
3. Perhaps they represent the apostolic witness at that time - cf. **Ac 1:8**
 - a. The number two perhaps signifying the strength of their witness (e.g., "two or more witnesses")
 - b. They certainly had great power to confirm their message - cf. **Mk 16:19-20; He 2:1-4**
 - c. Those that persecuted them did so at their own peril; consider what happened to Herod Agrippa I who had James killed and Peter imprisoned - cf. **Ac 12:1-4,20-24**
4. When their testimony would be completed, there would be a time of persecution

- a. By **“the beast”**, which I understand as Satanic forces often manifested in human government as later applied to pagan Rome - cf. **Re 13:1-18; 17:7-17**
 - b. By those of **“the great city”**, identified here as Jerusalem - cf. **Re 11:8**
 - c. The unbelievers of all nations will delight in the persecution of Christians - cf. **Re 11:9-10**
 - d. However, the witnesses (i.e., the apostles) will be victorious, symbolized by their resurrection and ascension to heaven
5. At the same time (“in the same hour”) there will be a great destruction of the city (Jerusalem, where our Lord was crucified)
- a. A tenth of the city fell, 7000 people killed, causing others to be fearful and give glory to God
 - b. Now the actual destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was much worse, so this may allude to a preliminary warning by God for unfaithful Jerusalem to repent (which many appeared to do)
 - c. But obviously and sadly the repentance in the city overall was short-lived
- **The vision of the two witnesses is indeed a difficult passage, but the main message is clear: God’s witnesses would overcome, and those that persecute them do so at their own peril for the God of heaven is just (and we must leave vengeance to Him) - cf. Ro 12:17-19**

CONCLUSION

1. With the vision of the measuring of the temple and the two witnesses, **“the second woe is past” - Re 11:14**
2. Recall the ominous warning at the end of **the fourth trumpet**: *“Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!” - Re 8:13*
 - a. The first woe is past after **the fifth trumpet** sounds, announcing the locusts from the bottomless pit, which I suggested depicts the internal decadence that would weaken the enemies of God’s people (unfaithful Jerusalem) from within - **Re 9:12**
 - b. The second woe is past after **the interlude** between the sixth and seventh trumpets, which announced judgment upon the city of Jerusalem - **Re 11:14a**
 - c. The third woe is now proclaimed as *“coming quickly”* - **Re 11:14b**
3. We shall consider what I believe is *“the third woe”* in our next study when we consider the rest of **chapter eleven**, which if correct is actually a cause for thankful praise on the part of faithful Christians...!

In the meantime, we do well to consider how we today treat the words of God’s witnesses. The church in Jerusalem *“continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (Ac 2:42)*. Are we doing the same, especially in regards to the gospel they preached? Note carefully Peter’s climax and command in the first gospel sermon he preached in Jerusalem:

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

- Ac 2:36-39

Have you obeyed Peter’s command to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins?

The Book Of Revelation

The Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed! (11:15-19)

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we considered the **interlude** with **three visions** between the **sixth and seventh trumpets**
 - a. The first vision of the mighty angel and the little book, with instruction for John to eat the book
 - b. The second vision which called upon John to measure the temple but not the outer court
 - c. The third vision of the two witnesses and their ultimate triumph-- **Like the interlude between the sixth and seventh seals, these visions seem designed to offer comfort to faithful Christians who would be living during the difficult times described by the seals & trumpets**
2. The second interlude ended, it is time for the third woe and final trumpet..
 - a. John does not actually say what the “third woe” was
 - b. Only that it was “coming quickly”, and then proceeds to the seventh trumpet - **Re 11:14-15**-- **Which leads me to think that the “third woe” relates to the announcement when the seventh trumpet sounded**

[If my understanding is correct, what is “woe” to the nations is actually cause for “praise” from the followers of Jesus Christ! To see how this is possible, let’s first examine the text of **Re 11:15-19**...]

I. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET: THE KINGDOM PROCLAIMED (15-19)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. Victory proclaimed - **Re 11:15**
 - a. The seventh angel sounded his trumpet and there were loud voices in heaven
 - b. Saying, “*The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!*”
2. The twenty-four elders worship God - **Re 11:16-18**
 - a. The elders fell on their faces and worshiped God - cf. **Re 4:9-11; 5:8-10,11-14**
 - b. Giving thanks to the Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come
 - c. Because He has taken His great power and reigned
 - d. The nations were angry, and His wrath has come
 - e. And the time has come
 - 1) That the dead should be judged
 - 2) That His servants the prophets, the saints, and those who fear His name should be rewarded
 - 3) That He should destroy those who destroy the earth
3. The temple of God opened in heaven - **Re 11:19**
 - a. The temple of God was opened in heaven
 - b. The ark of His covenant was seen in the temple
 - c. There were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail-- **The seventh trumpet announces the reign of God and His Christ, and the great praise in heaven as a result, with a surprising revelation regarding the ark of the covenant!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. We have reached what I believe is **the climax of the first half of Revelation**, in which we have been shown judgment against unbelieving Israel, in particular the city of Jerusalem

- a. Through the visions of the **seven seals** and **seven trumpets** we learn of the arsenal at Christ's disposal: conquest, war, famine, pestilence, natural calamities, moral decay, external invasion
- b. Just as God used such instruments in His dealings with the nations in the Old Testament, so His Son would use His power to reign over the nations with a rod of iron - cf. **see II. below**
2. Truly, *"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"* - **Re 11:15**
 - a. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, as foretold by Jesus in **Matthew 24**, **Mark 13**, and **Luke 21**, exemplified the power of His reign over the nations
 - b. His victory over Rome described later in Revelation will also confirm His power and dominion as King of kings and Lord of lords - **Re 17:14**
3. We have seen visions designed to comfort saints being oppressed by their enemies, especially martyrs
 - a. God has taken notice of their suffering, and while persecution may temporarily be their lot, victory will ultimately be theirs! - **Re 7:9-17**
 - b. Those who suffer death at the hands of their enemies are promised salvation and the blessing of being in the presence and care of the Lord - **Re 6:9-11**
 - c. Nothing can totally stop their witness, and nothing can keep God from remaining true to His covenant with them! - **Re 11:3-14**
4. So also has the time come for the dead to be judged - **Re 11:17-18**
 - a. Which may refer to the martyrs seen earlier, who were now vindicated - cf. **Re 6:9-11**
 - b. His servants the prophets and the saints to be rewarded
 - c. And for the destruction of those who destroy the earth (land), e.g., Palestine by the Roman army?
5. The physical temple in Jerusalem, which along with the ark (that had disappeared long before) was once the focal point of God's worship and reign, would be no more in Jerusalem
6. The temple of God and ark of the covenant are seen in heaven, perhaps symbolizing that the worship and reign of God through His Christ (Jesus) has become universal rather than localized in a physical city and nation - **Re 11:19**; cf. **Jn 4:20-24**
- **My conclusion is this: That Jesus is truly "the ruler over the kings of the earth" (Re 1:5) and "the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Re 11:15) was to be evidenced by the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.!**

[One may ask, "Is this consistent with the reign of Christ as taught elsewhere? Isn't He the Prince of peace?" This may be a good time to review what is taught in the Scriptures about the reign of Christ as King of kings...]

II. THE NATURE OF THE MESSIAH'S REIGN

A. PROPHESED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. **Psalms 2** (quoted by the apostles in **Ac 4:25-28**)
 - a. The Lord's anointed would break the nations with a rod of iron, dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel - **Psa 2:6-9**
 - b. Kings and judges are admonished to serve the LORD and kiss (worship) the Son - **Psa 2:10-12b**
 - c. All who put their trust in Him are blessed - **Psa 2:12c**
2. **Psalms 110** (one of the most often OT passages quoted in the NT)
 - a. The Messiah would rule in the midst of His enemies, execute kings in the day of His wrath, judge among the nations - **Psa 110:1-2,5-6**
 - b. His people (which I take to be the church that submits to His authority) would be volunteers in the day of His power, serving Him in the beauty of holiness - **Psa 110:3**
- **Important to note is that the Messianic reign would involve His ruling and judging among the nations while His people serve as a royal priesthood and proclaimers of God's grace through the gospel of Christ - cf. 1Pe 2:9-10**

B. PROCLAIMED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth - **Mt 28:18**
 2. He is head over all things to the church - **Ep 1:20-22**
 3. He is the only Potentate (Sovereign), the King of kings and Lord of Lords - **1Ti 6:14-15**
 4. He is the ruler over the kings of the earth - **Re 1:5**
 5. He received power over the nations from His Father to rule them with a rod of iron - **Re 2:26-27**
 6. He will overcome those who make war with Him - **Re 17:14**
 7. He will deliver the kingdom to God when He puts an end to all rule, authority, and power - **1Co 15:21-24**
 8. But He must reign till He has placed all enemies under His feet, the last enemy being death (i.e., at the resurrection) - **1Co 15:25-26**
- **Important to note is that Christ has all authority and rules over the nations even now by holding them accountable for their deeds**

CONCLUSION

1. How does Jesus exercise His kingly reign over the nations...?
 - a. From the prophets of the OT (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, etc.) we learn that God providentially used such methods as conquest, war, famine, pestilence, natural calamities, moral decay, external invasion
 - 1) Judging not just Israel and Judah, but also Edom, Moab, Syria, Tyre; i.e., surrounding countries
 - 2) And also judging world empires like Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece
 - b. From the first half of Revelation, we learn that similar things would lead to downfall of unfaithful Jerusalem (which it did in 70 A.D.)
 - c. In the second half of Revelation, we will see how Jesus will judge pagan Rome...
 - 1) Whom Satan deceived to persecute the people of God
 - 2) With important lessons for us should Satan deceive the nations in which we live today
2. Perhaps you are left with the question: **“If Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords who judges the nations, then how is He the Prince of peace?”** I can think of at least two ways...
 - a. He holds wicked nations accountable, and brings about their ultimate downfall
 - 1) Think of Germany, Japan, and Italy during WWII
 - 2) In which the outcomes of major battles were often affected by the weather - cf. **Job 38:22-23**
 - b. He offers an inner peace the world cannot give to all who will follow Him - **Jn 14:27**
 - 1) Even in a world filled with tribulation - **Jn 16:33**
 - 2) A peace that surpasses all understanding - **Ph 4:6-7**

If you desire that inner peace that only Jesus can give, then freely submit to His authority as King of kings and Lord of lords by obeying His gospel (**Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:36-39; 22:16**).

Then serve as His volunteers in the day of His power as **“pilgrim priests”** (see below), to minister the grace of our Lord to a sinful world by proclaiming the gospel of God’s grace accompanied by good works:

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

- **1Pe 2:9-12**

The Book Of Revelation

The Woman, The Child, & The Dragon (12:1-17)

INTRODUCTION

1. With chapter twelve a transition is made...
 - a. Between Christ's judgment on Jerusalem (chs. 6-11)
 - b. And His judgment on Rome (chs. 13-19)
2. To expedite the transition, we are told of **Satan's effort** to destroy the work of Christ and His church
 - a. That failed to prevent the coming of Christ and His ascension to power
 - b. That led to a failed war in heaven between the angelic forces of good and evil
 - c. That failed to destroy the Messianic community at its beginning
 - d. That would then involve an attempt to deceive the world to destroy the Messianic community

[Let's begin with reading the text, noticing the main points in outline form, proposing questions to be answered...]

I. THE TEXT IN OUTLINE FORM

A. THE WOMAN WITH CHILD... (1-2)

1. A great sign appeared in heaven, in which a woman is clothed:
 - a. With the sun
 - b. With the moon under her feet
 - c. A garland of twelve stars on her head
2. Being with child, she cried out in labor and pain to give birth
-- **Who is this woman? Who is the child?**

B. THE DRAGON READY TO DEVOUR THE CHILD... (3-4)

1. Another great sign appeared in heaven: a great, fiery red dragon
 - a. With seven heads, ten horns, seven diadems on the heads
 - b. With a tail which threw a third of the stars of heaven to the earth
2. Standing before the woman, ready to devour the child as soon as it is born
-- **Who is the dragon?**

C. THE OUTCOME OF THE CHILD AND THE WOMAN... (5-6)

1. The male child is born
 - a. Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron
 - b. Who was caught up to God and His throne
 2. The woman fled into the wilderness
 - a. Where she has a place prepared by God
 - b. Where she is fed for 1,260 days
- **Who is this child? Who is this woman? Where did the woman flee? For how long?**

D. A WAR IN HEAVEN... (7-9)

1. Involving Michael and his angels with the dragon and his angels
2. The dragon and his angels did not prevail
 - a. No place was found for them in heaven any longer
 - b. The dragon and his angels were cast to the earth
 - c. The dragon identified

- 1) That serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan
 - 2) Who deceives the whole world
- **When did this war in heaven take place?**

E. A LOUD VOICE IN HEAVEN... (10-12)

1. Proclaiming victory for Christ and His brethren
 - a. Salvation, strength, the kingdom of God, and the power of Christ have come
 - 1) For the accuser of the brethren has been cast down
 - 2) Who had accused them before God day and night
 - b. How the brethren overcame the accuser:
 - 1) By the blood of the Lamb
 - 2) By the word of their testimony
 - 3) They did not love their lives to the death
 2. A call to rejoice, along with a warning
 - a. For those in heaven, rejoice!
 - b. For the inhabitants of the earth and sea, woe!
 - 1) For the devil has come down to them having great wrath
 - 2) Knowing that he has only a short time
- **When did this victory occur? Who had reason to rejoice? Who had reason to weep?**

F. THE DRAGON'S ATTEMPT TO PERSECUTE THE WOMAN... (13-16)

1. Cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child
 2. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle
 - a. That she might fly into the wilderness to her place
 - b. Where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time
 - c. Safe from the presence of the serpent
 3. The serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman
 - a. Hoping to cause her to be carried away
 - b. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing up the flood
- **Again, who is this woman? Who helped the woman? Where did the woman flee? How long?**

G. THE DRAGON'S INTENT TO PERSECUTE HER OFFSPRING... (17)

1. Enraged with the woman he cannot reach, the dragon goes to make war with the rest of her offspring
 2. The rest of her offspring identified:
 - a. Those who keep the commandments of God
 - b. Those who have the testimony of Jesus Christ
- **Who are the rest of her offspring? Where do we read the results of the dragon's efforts?**

[With the text and related questions fresh on our minds, permit me to offer my understanding and answers to the questions raised...]

II. INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT

A. THE IDENTITY OF THE CHARACTERS IN THIS TEXT...

1. I suggest **the woman** represents the spirit of faithfulness in God's messianic community (perhaps best exemplified by Mary) who kept covenant with God
 - a. Called "the daughter of Zion" in prophecy (cf. **Mic 4:10; 5:2ff; Isa 66:7ff**)
 - b. She produced not only Christ, but His first disciples as well, beginning with the faithful Jewish Christian community that escaped the fall of Jerusalem by fleeing into the wilderness (cf. **Re 12:13-16**)
2. **The male child** is obviously Jesus Christ

- a. Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron - **Re 12:5; cf. Psa 2:9; Re 2:27; 19:15**
 - b. Who was caught up to God and His throne - **Re 12:5; Lk 24:51; Ac 1:9-11**
 - c. And received glory, dominion, a kingdom that all should serve Him - **cf. Mt 28:18; Dan 7:13-14**
 3. **The great, fiery red dragon is Satan - Re 12:9**
 - a. Who deceives the whole world
 - b. With great power (symbolized by having seven heads, seven diadems, ten horns)
 - c. Who failed to prevent Christ from establishing His church (kingdom)
 4. **The rest of her offspring are the disciples of Christ other than those in the faithful Jewish Christian community - Re 12:17**
 - a. Who keep the commandments of God - **cf. Re 14:12; 22:14; Mt 28:19-20**
 - b. Who have the testimony of Jesus Christ - **cf. Re 1:9; 6:9; 1Jn 5:10**
- **With the identity of the characters in this text before us, we are ready to summarize the chapter**

B. A SUMMARY OF THIS CHAPTER...

1. The chapter reveals why a period of great tribulation was about to come upon Christians, especially in Asia Minor where the seven churches were located - **cf. Re 2:10**
 2. Satan was frustrated by being thwarted at every turn
 - a. Satan failed to devour the child as soon as He was born - **Re 12:4; cf. Mt 2:13-21**
 - b. Satan failed to prevent Christ from being caught up to God and His throne to rule the nations with a rod of iron - **Re 12:5; cf. Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22; 1Pe 3:22; Re 2:26-27**
 - c. Satan and his angels lost the war against Michael and his angels in heaven - **Re 12:7-8**
 - 1) Many believe this “war” took place before the creation
 - 2) But in the context it may have been a battle following the ascension of Christ - **cf. Ep 6:12**
 - d. Satan was cast out of heaven to the earth, his defeated angels with him - **Re 12:9-10**
 - e. Satan was overcome by those he accused (in heaven?), through the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and that they did not love their lives to the death - **Re 12:10-11; cf. Re 6:9**
 - f. Satan was unable to defeat the woman (the faithful Jewish Christian community) that escaped the fall of Jerusalem by fleeing into the wilderness in Palestine for 1260 days (time, times and a half a time, i.e., 3 and a half years) - **Re 12:13-16; cf. also Re 12:6**
 3. Satan therefore changed his attention from Jewish Christians in Palestine to Christians in Roman lands, i.e., the woman's offspring - **cf. Re 12:17**
- **While heaven rejoices, woe is pronounced to those on earth (is this the “third woe”?), because Satan knows his ability to deceive the nations is limited - cf. Re 12:9; 13:14; 19:20; 20:3,8,10**

CONCLUSION

1. Again, chapter twelve serves as a transition between the two major sections of Revelation...
 - a. The first describing judgment upon **unfaithful Jerusalem - Re 6-11**
 - b. The latter describing judgment upon **pagan Rome - Re 13-19**
2. It reveals how the persecution of the early church increased exponentially ...
 - a. When at first it was mostly at the hand of **unfaithful Jerusalem** (cf. the book of Acts)
 - b. But then exploded in intensity once Satan deceived the **pagan Roman empire**

The forces and means that Satan would use to try to destroy the church via the Roman empire will be introduced in chapter thirteen...

The Book Of Revelation

The Two Beasts (13:1-18)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapter twelve, John described visions that serve as **a transition** between...
 - a. Earlier visions that depicted judgment upon unfaithful Jerusalem - **Re 6-11**
 - b. Later visions that will depict judgment upon pagan Rome - **Re 13-19**
2. We interpreted the visions of chapter twelve as depicting **Satan's failed attempts**...
 - a. To prevent Christ from being born on earth and beginning His reign from heaven - **Re 12:1-5**
 - b. To win the war in heaven with his angels against Michael and His angels - **Re 12:7-12**
 - b. To destroy the church in Palestine during the judgment upon unfaithful Jerusalem - **Re 12:6,13-17a**
3. **Enraged by his defeats** in heaven and in Palestine...
 - a. Satan proceeds to make war with the rest of the woman's offspring
 - b. Faithful Christians such as those in Asia Minor, to whom the book was written - **Re 12:17b**

[Chapter thirteen introduces the forces and means by which Satan would use to try to destroy the church throughout the Roman empire, beginning with...]

I. THE BEAST FROM THE SEA (1-10)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The beast described - **Re 13:1-3a**
 - a. Seen by John as rising up out of the sea
 - b. Having seven heads, ten horns, ten crowns on his horns, and on his heads a blasphemous name
 - c. Like a leopard with feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion
 - d. His power, throne, and great authority given him by the dragon
 - e. One of his heads was mortally wounded, but healed
 2. The activity involving the beast - **Re 13:3b-8**
 - a. All the world marveled and followed the beast
 - 1) Worshipping the dragon who gave authority to the beast
 - 2) Worshipping the beast because of his apparent invincibility
 - b. What the beast was given
 - 1) A mouth speaking great things and blasphemies
 - 2) Authority to continue (make war) for forty-two months
 - c. With this authority:
 - 1) He blasphemed God, His name, His tabernacle, and those dwelling in heaven
 - 2) He was granted to make war with the saints and overcome them
 - 3) He was given authority over every tribe, tongue, and nation
 - 4) All who dwell on earth would worship him, unless their names are in the Book of Life of the Lamb
 3. A note of caution - **Re 13:9-10**
 - a. If anyone has an ear, let him hear
 - b. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword
 - c. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints
- **An awesome "beast from the sea"; to whom or what does it refer?**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The identity of the beast from the sea becomes clearer when we get to chapter seventeen, but also by comparing the visions in the book of **Daniel** (chapters 2 & 7)
2. I agree with those who say this beast from the sea is the Roman Empire, personified in its persecuting emperors (such as Nero and Domitian)
3. The beast is described as having a head that was mortally wounded, which may allude to the fact Nero was already dead if the book was written in the spring of 70 A.D. - cf. **Re 17:11** “**the beast that was**”
4. This beast would be granted authority to make war with the saints and overcome them - **Re 13:7**
5. The saints are warned to have patience and faith, and not to respond with warfare - **Re 13:9-10**
- **The “beast from the sea” is the Roman empire personified in its persecuting emperors**

[We are next introduced to...]

II. THE BEAST FROM THE LAND (11-18)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. This beast described - **Re 13:11**
 - a. Seen by John as coming up out of the earth
 - b. With two horns like a lamb, but speaking like a dragon
2. The activity of this beast - **Re 13:12-17**
 - a. He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence
 - b. He causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast
 - 1) Performing great signs, making even fire come down from heaven
 - 2) Deceiving the world by the signs
 - c. He tells the world to make an image to the first beast
 - 1) To which he is granted power to give breath
 - 2) So the image could both speak and cause those who do not worship it to be killed
 - d. He causes all to receive a mark on the right hand or on their foreheads
 - 1) Without which none can buy or sell
 - 2) Which is the name of the beast, or the number of his name
3. A note of wisdom - **Re 13:18**
 - a. Let those with understanding calculate the number of the beast
 - b. For it is the number of a man: His number is **666**
- **A terrifying “beast from the land”; to whom or what does it refer?**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The beast from the earth or land may represent the **Roman Concilia**
 - a. A committee set up in Asia Minor where the seven churches were located to enforce emperor worship at the time the Revelation was given - **Summers**
 - b. This they did by requiring a certificate that proved the bearer had been seen sacrificing to the idol of the emperor, without which one could not buy or sell in the marketplace - **ibid.**
 - c. The “**mark of the beast**” likely refers to the certificate proving they had worshiped the emperor
2. The number 666 may represent **Nero** or **simply the Roman emperor**
 - a. The significance of 666 should not be underestimated, as John encourages those with understanding to calculate the number
 - b. Unfortunately, through many ingenuous and fanciful ways people have come up with the number to represent just about anyone (e.g., the Pope, Hitler, Ronald Reagan, etc.)
 - c. Keeping the context of Revelation and its time in view, the number 666 may be a **cryptogram** referring to “*Lateinos*” (which in Greek can be calculated to 666); and in turn points to the ruler of the Latin or Roman empire - **Schaff, History Of The Christian Church, Vol. 1, p. 177**

- d. In Hebrew the number can be calculated to mean “*Neron Caesar*” - **David Clark, Jay E. Adams**
 - e. Taken more symbolically, the number may simply signify evil raised to its highest power as was the case in emperors like Nero and Domitian - **Homer Hailey, Ray Summers**
- **The “beast from the land” is the Roman Concilia that promoted emperor worship, without which one could not get the certificate (the mark of the beast) to buy or sell**

CONCLUSION

1. In this chapter we learn the means by which Satan would try to destroy the church after failing to do so in Palestine...
 - a. He would use the political and religious power of the Roman empire
 - b. To enforce emperor worship and kill those who would not worship the emperor
 - c. But Satan’s power to deceive as he did would not last long (“forty-two months”) - **Re 13:5; 20:1-3**
2. Who would not succumb to Satan’s deception and worship the beast...?
 - a. Those whose names were written in the Lamb’s book of life - **Re 13:8**
 - b. I.e., those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb through their obedience to the gospel!
 - c. Even though it may have meant martyrdom for them - cf. **Re 13:7**

In chapter fourteen, we will notice **visions** and **proclamations** that would encourage the saints in Asia Minor to remain faithful even unto death... - cf. **Re 2:10**

But how about us Christians today? Will we remain faithful to Christ should Satan again deceive the nations? - cf. **Re 20:7-10**

The Book Of Revelation

Visions, Proclamations, & Harvests (14:1-20)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapter thirteen we learned the means by which Satan would try to destroy the church after failing to do so in Palestine...
 - a. By using the political and religious power of the Roman empire
 - b. To enforce emperor worship and kill those who would not worship the emperor
 - c. But Satan's power to deceive as he did would not last long ("forty-two months") - cf. **Re 13:5; 20:1-3**
2. Who would not succumb to Satan's deception and worship the beast...?
 - a. Those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life - **Re 13:8**
 - b. I.e., those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb through their obedience to the gospel!
 - c. Even though it may have meant martyrdom for them - cf. **Re 13:7**

[In chapter fourteen, we notice **visions** and **proclamations** that would encourage the saints in Asia Minor to remain faithful to the Lord even unto death (cf. **Re 2:10**), beginning with...]

I. THE 144,000 ON MOUNT ZION (1-5)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. Standing with the Lamb - Re 14:1
 - a. 144,000 together with the Lamb on Mount Zion
 - b. With the Father's name written on their foreheads - cf. **Re 7:3**
 2. Singing a new song - Re 14:2-3
 - a. John heard a voice from heaven
 - 1) Like the voice of many waters
 - 2) Like the voice of loud thunder
 - b. John heard the sound of harpists playing their harps
 - c. The 144,000 sang a new song
 - 1) Before the throne, the four living creatures and the elders
 - 2) Which none could learn except the 144,000 redeemed from the earth
 3. Described more fully - Re 14:4-5
 - a. They are virgins, who had not defiled themselves with women
 - b. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes
 - c. They were redeemed from among men, the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb
 - d. They are without fault before the throne of God, with no guile in their mouths
- **What a scene of bliss and blessed redemption in heaven for followers of the Lamb!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. I suggest this is a picture of saints triumphant in heaven - cf. **He 12:22-23**
2. Perhaps in particular the blessedness of faithful Jewish Christians depicted earlier - cf. **Re 7:1-8**
 - a. The 144,000 of Israel who had been sealed with the Father's name on their foreheads
 - b. Prior to the great day of the Lamb's wrath - cf. **Re 6:16-17** (i.e., the destruction of Jerusalem)
 - c. Those sealed were then on earth, now they are in sealed in heaven!
3. Both the number and descriptive terms are symbolic
 - a. For taken literally, women would be excluded, also married men (including the apostle Peter!)
 - b. They were called "virgins" in the sense of being "unpolluted by idolatry" - **David Clark**

- c. Or possibly, for “their refusal to associate with the harlot Babylon” - **Steve Gregg**
- **A wonderful scene illustrating the blessedness promised for those who will persevere in their faithfulness to God!**

[The scenes in heaven that would encourage such faithfulness continue with...]

II. THREE ANGELIC PROCLAMATIONS (6-13)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The first proclamation - Re 14:6-7
 - a. By an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel
 - 1) To preach to those who dwell on the earth
 - 2) To every nation, tribe, tongue, and people
 - b. Saying with a loud voice...
 - 1) *“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come”*
 - 2) *“Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water”*
 2. The second proclamation - Re 14:8
 - a. By another angel which followed the first
 - b. Saying...
 - 1) *“Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city”*
 - 2) *“Because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication”*
 3. The third proclamation - Re 14:9-11
 - a. By a third angel which followed the first two
 - b. Saying with a loud voice...
 - 1) *“If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand...”*
 - 2) *“He himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation”*
 - 3) *“He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...”*
 - a) *“In the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb”*
 - b) *“The smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever”*
 - c) *“They have no rest day or night”*
 - d) *“Who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name”*
 4. Followed by a word of wisdom and a beatitude - Re 14:12-13
 - a. Here is the patience of the saints: those who keep...
 - 1) The commandments of God
 - 2) The faith of Jesus
 - b. A voice from heaven saying...
 - 1) *“Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’”*
 - 2) *“Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”*
- **Visions certainly encouraging those who remain faithful to God and the Lamb!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. These three visions followed by a word of wisdom and a beatitude make a clear distinction
 - a. Between those who will worship God and those who will worship the beast
 - b. Between those who will fear God and those who commit fornication with Babylon the harlot
 2. Consider their different ends:
 - a. Those who remain faithful to God and Jesus may die but will be blessed for eternity
 - b. Those who succumb to the beast and Babylon will be tormented for eternity
- **Visions like these may help us understand how the early Christians were so faithful despite great persecution in the early history of the church!**

[The chapter concludes with a depiction of two harvests...]

III. THE TWO HARVESTS (14-20)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. Reaping the earth's harvest - **Re 14:14-16**
 - a. The Son of Man sitting on a white cloud
 - 1) With a golden crown on His head
 - 2) With a sharp sickle in His hand
 - b. An angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice:
 - 1) *"Thrust in Your sickle and reap"*
 - 2) *"For the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe"*
 - c. He who sat on a cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and it was reaped
 2. Reaping the grapes of wrath - **Re 14:17-20**
 - a. An angel came out of the temple in heaven, also having a sharp sickle
 - b. Another angel, having power over fire, cried to the angel with the sickle:
 - 1) *"Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth"*
 - 2) *"For her grapes are fully ripe"*
 - c. So the angel...
 - 1) Thrust his sickle into the earth
 - 2) Gathered the vine of the earth
 - 3) Threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God
 - d. The winepress was trampled outside the city
 - 1) Blood came out of the winepress
 - 2) Up to the horses' bridles, for 1600 furlongs (about 184 miles!)
- **Two different "harvests", with two different outcomes**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. These two harvests may be different ways of describing the same judgment about to come upon those who follow the beast (the persecuting emperor of the Roman empire)
 2. Or the first may depict that Jesus will safely harvest His own while God's wrath is being poured out on His enemies
 3. I do not believe either represents that which will occur when Jesus comes at the end of time (though they may certainly foreshadow that great event)
- **Like the angelic proclamations they reassured the Christians of John's day that God's hour of judgment was soon to come upon their enemies (the pagan Roman empire)**

CONCLUSION

1. With such visions and proclamations as those found in chapter 14, the saints in Asia Minor would be more likely to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ despite the persecutions they would face
2. Though written to encourage the faithfulness of Christians in the 1st century, they should also encourage Christians in the 21st century, especially this wonderful promise...

Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

- Re 14:13

When it comes for us to die, will it be *"in the Lord"*?

The Book Of Revelation

Prelude To The Seven Bowls Of Wrath (15:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapters twelve & thirteen, the adversaries against the church after the destruction of unfaithful Jerusalem in 70 A.D. were identified...
 - a. **The dragon** (Satan himself, who deceives the whole world) - **Rev 12:1-17**
 - b. **The sea beast** (the Roman empire in the person of the persecuting emperor) - **Re 13:1-10**
 - c. **The land beast** (the Roman Concilia, a religious committee that enforced emperor worship) - **Re 13:11-18**
2. In chapter fourteen, the people of God were reassured of ultimate victory through...
 - a. The vision of the Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion - **Re 14:1-5**
 - b. The proclamations of three angels - **Re 14:6-13**
 - c. The visions of reaping the earth's harvest and the grapes of wrath - **Re 14:14-20**

[Now **the full out-pouring of God's wrath** is about to be shown. But first, chapter fifteen is a "prelude" to the seven bowls of wrath to be described in chapter sixteen..]

I. PRELUDE TO THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (1-4)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. Prelude to a great and marvelous sign in heaven - Re 15:1-2
 - a. Which John first announced as involving seven angels
 - 1) Having the seven last plagues
 - 2) In which the wrath of God is complete
 - b. John then describes a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those standing on it
 - 1) Who have the victory over the beast, his image, mark, and number of his name
 - 2) Standing on the sea of glass with harps of God
 2. The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb - Re 15:3-4
 - a. Those on the sea of glass were singing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb
 - b. A song which praises Lord God Almighty, King of the saints
 - 1) For His great and marvelous works
 - 2) For the truth and justice of His ways
 - 3) For He is worthy of reverence and glory
 - 4) For all nations shall come and worship before Him
 - 5) For the manifestations of His judgments
- **A great and marvelous sign preceded by great and marvelous songs!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. We are introduced to the idea of seven angels who will be given seven bowls
 - a. Who will then pour out the seven last plagues (chapter sixteen)
 - b. In which the wrath of God is complete (likely toward the pagan Roman empire)
 2. But before the seven angels appear and are given their bowls
 - a. John sees those victorious over the beast (the persecuting Roman emperor)
 - b. In heaven praising God with hymns of Moses and the Lamb, for His righteous judgments
 - c. A scene reminiscent of Israel praising God for their victory over Egypt after crossing the Red Sea - cf. **Exo 14:30-15:21**
- **Would not this scene encourage saints in Asia Minor to endure persecutions they would face?**

[With the vision of those victorious over the beast praising God thus described, we are now introduced to...]

II. SEVEN ANGELS AND SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (5-8)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The seven angels - **Re 15:5-6**
 - a. The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven is opened
 - b. Out of the temple come the seven angels having the seven plagues
 - 1) Clothed in pure bright linen
 - 2) Having their chests girded with golden bands
 2. The seven golden bowls - **Re 15:7-8**
 - a. One of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels:
 - 1) Seven golden bowls
 - 2) Full of the wrath of God who lives forever
 - b. The temple was filled with smoke
 - 1) From the glory of God and from His power
 - 2) No one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues were completed
- **A scene such as this certainly portended imminent judgment!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. This scene appears to convey that the time of God's longsuffering was over
 2. The outpouring of His wrath would be a manifestation of His righteous judgment
 3. God was about to avenge His saints, for many others the time to repent would soon be too late!
- **From what follows in chapter 17, I understand this to pertain God's judgment on pagan Rome**

CONCLUSION

1. The stage has been set...
 - a. Those who have been victorious over the beast (the persecuting Roman emperor) are in heaven praising the Lord God Almighty for His righteous judgments
 - b. Seven angels stand ready to pour out the bowls of wrath with their seven plagues
2. If you had lived during the time Rome persecuted the church, where would you want to be...
 - a. In heaven praising God even if had cost your life to be faithful to God?
 - b. On earth, alive because you had succumbed to the pressure to worship Caesar?

The next chapter should help you make the right decision if you ever face a similar decision today between obeying God or obeying what political forces there might be against Christians.

As Peter and the rest of the apostles said, when they were faced with such a decision: *"We ought to obey God rather than men."* - cf. **Ac 5:27-29**

The Book Of Revelation

The Seven Bowls Of Wrath (16:1-21)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapter fifteen, the stage was set leading to the vision of the outpouring of God's wrath...
 - a. Those who overcame the beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name are seen in heaven praising God for His righteous judgments - **Re 15:1-4**
 - b. Also seen are seven angels with seven golden bowls containing the last seven plagues - **Re 15:5-8**
2. Now in chapter sixteen, the full outpouring of wrath upon the enemies of God is depicted...
 - a. Notice that these are not partial judgments, as with the seven trumpets described earlier (**chs. 8-11**)
 - b. In the pouring out of these plagues "*the wrath of God is complete*" - **Re 15:1**

[Upon whom these bowls of wrath were to be poured out we shall see as we examine the text, beginning with...]

I. THE PRONOUNCEMENT (1)

A. BY A LOUD VOICE FROM THE TEMPLE (1a)

B. TO THE SEVEN ANGELS TO POUR OUT THE BOWLS OF WRATH (1b)

[With the pronouncement, one by one the seven angels pour out...]

II. THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (2-21)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. First bowl: Terrible sores - **Re 16:2**
 - a. The bowl is poured out upon the earth
 - b. Loathsome and foul sores came upon those who had the mark of the beast and who worshipped his image
2. Second bowl: Sea of blood - **Re 16:3**
 - a. The bowl is poured out on the sea, turning it into the blood of a dead man
 - b. Every living creature in the sea died
3. Third bowl: Rivers and springs of blood - **Re 16:4-7**
 - a. The bowl is poured out on the rivers and springs, turning them to blood
 - b. The angel of the waters declares God's justice
 - 1) His judgments are righteous
 - 2) For it is just due upon those who shed the blood of saints and prophets
 - c. Another voice from the altar also proclaims God's judgments as true and righteous
4. Fourth bowl: Men scorched - **Re 16:8-9**
 - a. The bowl is poured out on the sun, giving the fourth angel power to scorch men with fire
 - b. Men were scorched with great heat
 - 1) They blasphemed the name of God who had power over these plagues
 - 2) They did not repent or give glory to Him
5. Fifth bowl: Pain and darkness - **Re 16:10-11**
 - a. The bowl is poured out on the throne of the beast, his kingdom became full of darkness
 - b. Men gnawed their tongues because of the pain
 - 1) They blasphemed God

- 2) They did not repent
 6. Sixth bowl: Kingdoms gathered at Armageddon - Re 16:12-16
 - a. The bowl is poured out on the great river Euphrates
 - 1) Its water was dried up
 - 2) Preparing the way for the kings of the east
 - b. Three unclean spirits like frogs appear
 - 1) Out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet
 - 2) Which are spirits of demons, performing signs
 - 3) Who gather the kings of the earth to the battle of that great day of God Almighty
 - c. Jesus offers both a warning and a blessing
 - 1) He is coming as a thief
 - 2) Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments, lest he walks naked and others see his shame
 - d. The unclean spirits gather the kings of the earth to the place called Armageddon
 7. Seventh bowl: Great earthquake; the great city divided and Babylon remembered; cataclysmic events - Re 16:17-21
 - a. The bowl is poured out on the air
 - 1) Followed by a loud voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, declaring, *"It is done!"*
 - 2) There were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and a mighty earthquake unlike any before
 - b. The great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell
 - c. Great Babylon was remembered, to receive the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath
 - d. Great cataclysmic events occur
 - 1) Every island fled away and the mountains were not found
 - 2) Great hail fell upon men, and they blasphemed God because of the hail
- **The description of these seven bowls as they are poured out certainly indicate the fierceness of God's wrath!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. Affected by these plagues are those who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image - **Re 16:2**
 2. God's judgment upon them is righteous and just, because they had been guilty of shedding the blood of saints and prophets - **Re 16:5-6**
 3. Amazingly, their response was to blaspheme God, refuse to repent and give Him glory! - **Re 16:9,11,21**
 4. I believe the seven bowls of wrath depict a judgment upon pagan Rome
 - a. One that was more final than the judgment depicted earlier with the seven seals and seven trumpets against unbelieving Jerusalem (**Re 6-11**)
 - b. While God would not destroy unbelieving Jerusalem completely, the judgment against pagan Rome as a world empire would be total
 - c. "**Jay Adams** joins **David S. Clark** in understanding the Babylon of Revelation to be pagan Rome and this bowl judgment to be the preparation for the downfall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century A.D." - **Steve Gregg, Revelation: Four Views**
 5. Regarding Armageddon: "It is a place famous for battle and slaughter...It would mean in those days what Waterloo means to us, and would be used in the same way...Any great disaster to a warring nation is an Armageddon. The Confederacy met its Armageddon at Gettysburg, and the Germans met their Armageddon at the Marne...Its use here would indicate a place or scene of great slaughter. I take it that it is used here in the symbolical sense, but meant that Rome was coming to her Armageddon where she would go down in battle and slaughter." - **David S. Clark, ibid.**
- **Chapters 17-19 will elaborate upon the judgments upon the beast, the false prophet, and Babylon, identifying them in more detail and describing their ultimate downfall**

CONCLUSION

1. While many view the bowls of wrath depicting events related to the coming of Jesus yet to occur, it is important to remember...
 - a. The Book of Revelation is mostly about things that were soon to take place in the days of John
 - b. Don't forget these key verses that place the setting of what this book is about - **Re 1:1,3; 22:6,10**
2. Nonetheless, we should carefully study passages like this chapter lest we fail to take seriously the lessons of not remaining faithful to God and His Son Jesus Christ, for the great day of judgment is yet to come! - **Ac 17:30-31**

The Book Of Revelation

Mystery Of Babylon And The Beast Revealed (17:1-18)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapter sixteen, the full outpouring of God's wrath was depicted...
 - a. Upon those who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image - **Re 16:2**
 - b. Upon the throne of the beast and his kingdom - **Re 16:10**
 - c. Upon the great city Babylon - **Re 16:19**
2. Chapter seventeen is a key chapter in the book of Revelation...
 - a. For the mystery of the great harlot and the beast is explained
 - b. And one's understanding of this chapter will affect their overall interpretation of the rest of the book

[So let us carefully consider what the apostle John is told in this chapter, beginning with...]

I. THE SCARLET WOMAN AND THE SCARLET BEAST (1-6)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. John is approached by an angel - **Re 17:1-2**
 - a. One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls
 - b. Who offers to show him the judgment of the great harlot
 - 1) Which sits on many waters
 - 2) With whom kings of the earth have committed fornication
 - 3) With whom inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication
 2. John is shown the scarlet woman on a scarlet beast - **Re 17:3-6**
 - a. He is carried away by the angel in the Spirit into the wilderness
 - b. There he sees a woman sitting on a scarlet beast
 - 1) The scarlet beast described
 - a) Full of names of blasphemy
 - b) Having seven heads and ten horns
 - 2) The woman described
 - a) Arrayed in purple and scarlet
 - b) Adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls
 - c) In her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication
 - d) On her forehead the name written: *MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH*
 - e) Drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus
 - 3) John marveled with great amazement when he saw her
- **Who wouldn't marvel, wondering what the scarlet woman and the scarlet beast represented?**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. We might marvel with amazement together with John
 2. Regarding the scarlet woman on a scarlet beast
- **But we need not marvel long as to what they represent!**

[For as we continue to read chapter seventeen, an angel offers to tell John "*the mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns*" (**Re 17:7**) ...]

II. THE MYSTERY OF THE BEAST AND WOMAN EXPLAINED (8-18)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The beast explained - Re 17:8-14

- a. The beast that John saw:
 - 1) Was, is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition
 - 2) Will be marveled by those by those whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world when they see it
- b. Here is the mind which has wisdom:
 - 1) The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman sits
 - 2) There are also seven kings
 - a) Five have fallen, one is, the other has yet to come
 - b) When the seventh comes, he must continue a short time
 - 3) The beast that was, and is not, is himself the eighth
 - a) He is of the seven
 - b) He is going to perdition (destruction)
 - 4) The ten horns are ten kings
 - a) Who have received no kingdom as yet
 - b) But receive authority for one hour with the beast
 - c) Who are of one mind, and give their power and authority to the beast
 - 5) These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them
 - a) For He is Lord of lords and King of kings
 - b) Those with Him are called, chosen, and faithful

2. The woman explained - Re 17:15-18

- a. The waters upon which she sits are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues
- b. The ten horns (ten kings) on the beast
 - 1) Will hate the harlot
 - a) Make her desolate
 - b) Eat her flesh and burn her with fire
 - 2) For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose
 - a) For them to be of one mind
 - b) To give their kingdom to the beast
 - c) Until the words of God are fulfilled
- c. The woman John saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth

-- **Quite a bit of information is provided to help us identify the scarlet beast and scarlet woman**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. As indicated in the introductory material, my understanding of this book focuses on the fact that John is given this revelation at a time when the beast **"is not" - Re 17:8,11**
 - a. Whatever explanation one gives for the beast, **it did not exist** at the time the Revelation was given!
 - b. It had existed, and was to come, but at the time John was shown the vision, it **"is not"**!
2. One plausible explanation is that the seven (actually eight) kings represent Roman emperors, starting with Augustus
 - a. This would make **Nero the fifth king**, whose death in 68 A.D. left the empire in an uproar and may be the **"deadly wound"** referred to earlier - **Re 13:3,12,14**
 - b. Discounting Galba, Otho, and Vitellius whose insignificant reigns were short-lived during the turmoil, the sixth king (**"one is"**) would be **Vespasian** who restored order to the empire
 - c. This would make **Titus** the seventh emperor and **Domitian the eighth**
3. The beast that **"was, and is not, and will ascend"** (NKJV) therefore depicts the persecuting Roman emperor, seen first in the person of **Nero** (the beast who **"was"**) and later in the person of **Domitian** (the beast who **"will ascend"**)

4. The ten kings who gave their power and authority to the beast appear to be vassal kings that supported the emperor in times of persecution
 5. The identity of the harlot is still an open question in my own mind
 - a. I used to lean toward the view that the harlot represents **Jerusalem**, often supported in her persecution of the church by the Roman empire but then destroyed herself by Rome in A.D. 70
 - 1) It is interesting to compare such verses as **Re 17:6; 18:20,24; 19:2** with Jesus' statements in **Mt 23:31-39**
 - 2) As foretold by Jesus in both Matthew and Revelation, God was about to avenge His apostles and prophets on this city “*who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her*” (**Re 18:20; Mt 23:37**).
 - 3) I still believe that Jerusalem is the focus of chapters 6-11.
 - b. Many understand the harlot to represent the commercial and pagan spirit of **Rome** (not the literal city itself, for she was never destroyed as described in later chapters) which was instrumental in opposing the people of God
 - 1) There is much to be said for this view. **Re 17:2,18; 18:3,9,11** certainly seem to fit Rome
 - 2) I now lean toward this view in keeping with the idea of Rome as the focus of chapters 13-19
- **If Rome and its emperors are indeed the focus of chapters 13-19, then the “beast” represents the persecuting emperors (e.g., Nero, Domitian), and “Babylon the harlot” represents the commercial and pagan spirit of Rome where many Christians died for their faith in Christ**

CONCLUSION

1. While the identity of the beast, the kings, and the harlot might be unclear in the minds of some, the outcome of the conflict described in this chapter is certain
2. In what may be described as the theme of this book, we are told that:

“These will make war with Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.” (Re 17:14)

Comforting words indeed to early Christians who were persecuted by both the Roman emperor and unbelieving Jerusalem!

The Book Of Revelation

The Fall Of Babylon The Great (18:1-24)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapter seventeen, the mystery of the great harlot and the beast was explained...
 - a. Wherein I viewed the “**beast**” to represent the persecuting emperors of Rome (e.g., Nero, Domitian)
 - b. And that “**Babylon the harlot**” who sits on the beast represented the commercial and pagan spirit of Rome where many Christians died for the faith in Christ
2. Now in chapter eighteen, we read of **the fall of “Babylon the Great”**...
 - a. With the fall of Babylon **proclaimed** in verses 1-8
 - b. Followed by the fall of Babylon **mourned** in verses 9-20
 - c. Ending with the fall of Babylon **justified** in verses 21-24

[So let’s begin with...]

I. THE FALL OF BABYLON PROCLAIMED (1-8)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. By an angel from heaven - Re 18:1-3
 - a. John sees an angel coming down from heaven
 - 1) Having great authority
 - 2) Illuminating the earth with his glory
 - b. The angel cries mightily with a loud voice
 - 1) “*Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen...*”
 - 2) And has become:
 - a) A dwelling place of demons
 - b) A prison for every foul spirit
 - c) A cage for every unclean and hated bird
 - 3) With her:
 - a) The nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication
 - b) The kings of the earth have committed fornication
 - c) The merchants of the earth have become rich
2. By a voice from heaven - Re 18:4-8
 - a. Calling God’s people to come out of her
 - 1) Lest they share in her sins and her plagues
 - 2) For her sins have reached to heaven and God has remembered her iniquities
 - b. Calling for judgment to be rendered her
 - 1) Render her just as she rendered them
 - 2) Repay her double according to her works
 - 3) In the cup she has mixed, mix double for her
 - 4) To the degree she glorified herself and lived luxuriously...
 - a) Give her torment and sorrow
 - b) For she says in her heart she is a queen and will not see sorrow as a widow
 - 5) Her plagues will come in one day...
 - a) Death, mourning, and famine
 - b) Utterly burned with fire
 - 6) For strong is the Lord God who judges her

- **Proclamation of her fall from two sources: 1) an angel from heaven, and 2) a voice from heaven**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. In this proclamation of the fall of Babylon (i.e., Rome) we see God's justice at work - **Re 18:2-3,5-8**
 - a. Babylon had become a home for demonic spirits
 - b. Babylon had defiled the nations, kings, and merchants
 - c. Babylon would receive double according to what she had done to others
 2. In this proclamation of the fall of Babylon (i.e., Rome) we see God's mercy at work - **Re 18:4**
 - a. God has forewarned His people to come out of her
 - b. Lest they find themselves on the receiving end of her plagues
- **Similar to how Jesus warned His disciples of the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Lk 21:20-24), so here God's people are forewarned of the judgment coming upon Babylon (Rome)**

[The proclamation of judgment is then followed by...]

II. THE FALL OF BABYLON MOURNED (9-20)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. By the kings of the earth - **Re 18:9-10**
 - a. Those who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her
 - b. They shall weep and lament when they see the smoke of her burning
 - c. They shall stand afar off for fear of her torment, saying:
 - 1) *"Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city!"*
 - 2) *"For in one hour your judgment has come."*
 2. By the merchants of the earth - **Re 18:11-17a**
 - a. They shall weep and mourn over her
 - b. For no one buys their merchandise anymore
 - c. All that they longed for, both rich and splendid, they shall find no more
 - d. The merchants shall stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing:
 - 1) *"Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls!"*
 - 2) *"For in one hour such great riches came to nothing."*
 3. By the traders and travelers on the sea - **Re 18:17b-19**
 - a. They stood at a distance, crying when they saw the smoke of her burning, *"What is like this great city?"*
 - b. Throwing dust on their heads, they cried out, weeping and wailing:
 - 1) *"Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth!"*
 - 2) *"For in one hour she is made desolate."*
 4. By not by the holy apostles and prophets - **Re 18:20**
 - a. They are to rejoice over her
 - b. For God has avenged them on her
- **Divine justice bringing grief to those who profited by her wealth, and joy to those who had suffered from her sins and persecution**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. If Rome (in particular her commercial and immoral spirit) is the "harlot", then this chapter may describe the fall of Rome in 476 A.D.
2. Statements in **Re 18:3,9-19** seem to fit Rome better than Jerusalem
 - a. "all the nations...the kings of the earth"
 - b. "the merchants of the earth...all who had ships on the sea"
3. The fall of "Babylon" was due to her treatment of apostles, prophets, and saints - **Re 18:20,24**

- a. When Revelation was written (ca. 70 A.D.), Rome had already killed Peter and Paul, along with thousands of other Christians
 - b. By the time of Rome's fall (476 A.D), there had been at least ten periods of persecutions by Rome against the church
- **Rome, just as much as does Jerusalem, certainly qualifies as "Babylon, the harlot!"**

CONCLUSION

- 1. In this chapter we get a picture of what the early Christians faced...
 - a. Persecution by political forces with the aid of corrupted commercial enterprises
 - b. Yet given promises similar to that Paul wrote to the church in Rome: "*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.*" - **Ro 12:19**
- 2. Should we ever find ourselves living in similar circumstances...
 - a. Let the Book of Revelation be a guide and source of comfort
 - b. With its warnings and its promises that can be applied to ourselves

Especially the words of our Lord of lords and King of kings...

***"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."* - Re 2:10**

The Book Of Revelation

Exaltation & Victory! (19:1-21)

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapter eighteen, the fall of “Babylon the Great” was...
 - a. Proclaimed by a mighty angel with great authority - **Re 18:1-8**
 - b. Mourned by kings and merchants who had benefited through her corruption - **Re 18:9-19**
 - c. To be rejoiced over by those in heaven for her murder of apostles, prophets, and saints - **Re 18:20-24**
2. In chapter nineteen, we read of **exaltation** and **victory**...
 - a. Heaven exulting over the fall of Babylon the harlot - **Re 19:1-6**
 - b. Heaven rejoices over the pending marriage of the Lamb - **Re 19:7-10**
 - c. Christ the warrior king on a white horse with His armies in heaven - **Re 19:11-16**
 - d. The fall of the beast, the false prophet, and their forces - **Re 19:17-21**

[“In the previous chapters we have seen the dragon, and the beast, and the false prophet persecuting the church, but in this chapter we see them completely overthrown, and the divine captain of our salvation leading his followers to victory.” - **David Clark**, The Message From Patmos. So let’s begin by noticing how...]

I. HEAVEN REJOICES OVER THE FALL OF BABYLON (1-5)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. A great multitude in heaven - **Re 19:1-3**
 - a. Praising God, attributing salvation, glory, honor, and power to Him
 - b. Declaring His judgments on the great harlot as true and righteous
 - 1) For she corrupted the earth with her fornication
 - 2) He has avenged the blood of His servants which she shed
 - c. Praising God, for her smoke rises up forever and ever
 2. The twenty-four elders and four living creatures - **Re 19:4**
 - a. Falling down and worshipping God who sits on the throne
 - b. Saying “*Amen, Alleluia!*”
 3. A voice from the throne - **Re 19:5**
 - a. Calling upon all God’s servants and those who fear Him
 - b. Calling upon both small and great to praise God
- **A scene reminiscent of that seen in chapters four & five!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The first vision in this chapter illustrates the great joy in heaven when Babylon the great is judged
 2. She was judged for good reason:
 - a. She corrupted the earth with her fornication! - **Re 19:2; cf. Re 14:8; 17:1-2; 18:3**
 - b. She shed the blood of God’s servants - **Re 19:2; cf. Re 17:6; 18:24**
- **A scene that confirms the prayers of those seen in chapter six would be answered! - cf. Re 6:9-11**

[But the joy in heaven was not limited to judgment upon Babylon the harlot. What John described next would certainly add to reasons for heaven to rejoice with great joy...]

II. PREPARATION FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB (6-10)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. A great multitude in heaven - **Re 19:6-8**
 - a. Sounding like many waters and mighty thunderings
 - 1) Praising the Lord God Omnipotent for His reign
 - 2) Calling to be glad and rejoice and give God glory
 - b. For the marriage of the Lamb has come
 - 1) His wife has made herself ready
 - 2) She was arrayed in fine linen, which is the righteous acts of the saints
 2. A fellow servant - **Re 19:9-10**
 - a. Telling John to write: *“Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”*
 - b. Proclaiming: *“These are the true sayings of God.”*
 - c. When John fell at his feet to worship him, he is rebuked:
 - 1) *“See that you do not do that!”*
 - 2) *“I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus.”*
 - 3) *“Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”*
- **Two reasons to rejoice: 1) God’s omnipotent reign, and 2) the upcoming marriage of the Lamb!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. More evidence of God’s omnipotent reign will be soon be evident
 - a. With the fall of the beast and the false prophet later in the chapter - **Re 19:20**
 - b. With Satan ultimately joining them in the lake of fire and brimstone - **cf. Re 20:10**
2. But before then we have the announcement of the marriage supper of the Lamb
 - a. The bride metaphor is often applied to the church’s relationship with Christ
 - 1) Those in Christ are to be married to Christ - **Ro 7:4**
 - 2) They have been “betrothed” to Christ - **2Co 11:2**
 - b. But now “the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready”
 - 1) Through the righteous acts of the saints - **Re 19:7-8**
 - 2) With the aid of the blood of Christ, of course - **cf. Re 7:13-14**
 - c. In keeping with Jewish custom at that time, before a wedding a marriage supper is celebrated
 - 1) As depicted in Jesus’ parable of the marriage feast - **cf. Mt 22:1-14**
 - 2) Here in Revelation, the marriage supper is shown to take place in heaven
 - d. The marriage itself is not shown or described, but later the “New Jerusalem” is described as...
 - 1) *“the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God”* - **Re 21:2**
 - 2) *“prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”* - **Re 21:2**
 - 3) *“the bride, the Lamb’s wife”* - **Re 21:9**
 - 4) *“the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God”* - **Re 21:9-10**
3. We also have what is an interesting rebuke of John - **Re 19:10**
 - a. John fell at his feet to worship the one speaking to him, he is rebuked
 - 1) Later he will do the same to an angel, and is similarly rebuked - **Re 22:8-9**
 - 2) In both cases He is told *“Worship God”*
 - b. The apostle Peter gave a similar rebuke to Cornelius - **Ac 10:25-26**
 - 1) Who had fallen at Peter’s feet and worshipped him
 - 2) To which Peter said: *“Stand up; I myself am also a man”*
 - c. If one was rebuked for falling down at the feet of angels and an apostle...
 - 1) How can one justify falling down at the feet of a pope, bishop, priest, etc.?
 - 2) By saying it is not “worship”? Consider the definition of “worship”
 - 3) Grk., **proskuneo** - *“to prostrate oneself before someone as an act of reverence, fear, or supplication”* - **Louw-Nida**

-- **With the announcement of the marriage supper of the Lamb, it would serve to motivate the churches who received this letter to remain faithful to Christ**

[As would the next vision, which is one of...]

III. CHRIST THE WARRIOR KING ON A WHITE HORSE (11-16)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. His awesome description - Re 19:11-13
 - a. As heaven opened, John sees Christ sitting on a white horse
 - 1) He called "*Faithful and True*"
 - 2) In righteousness He judges and makes war
 - b. As described by John:
 - 1) His eyes were like a flame of fire
 - 2) On His head were many crowns
 - 3) He had a name written that no one knew but Himself
 - 4) Clothed with a robe dipped in blood
 - 5) His name is called The Word of God
2. His great rule and reign - Re 19:14-16
 - a. Followed by the armies of heaven
 - 1) Clothed in fine linen, white and clean
 - 2) Sitting on white horses
 - b. From His mouth, a sharp sword to strike the nations
 - 1) He Himself will rule the nations with a rod of iron
 - 2) He Himself treads the winepress of Almighty God's fierceness and wrath
 - c. On His robe and thigh a name written: "*King of kings, and Lord of lords*"

-- **A graphic description of Jesus' authority and power over nations!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. In his introduction, John described Jesus as "the ruler over the kings of the earth" - **Re 1:5**
 2. Jesus also claimed to have authority to rule over the nations - cf. **Re 2:26-27**
 3. Such authority over His enemies had been foretold in the Psalms - cf. **Ps 2** and **Ps 110**
 4. Paul wrote that Jesus was "*far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*" - **Ep 1:21**
 - a. Also, that Christ "*...must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.*" - **1Co 15:25-26**
 - b. And Jesus is "*...the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords*" - **1Ti 6:15**
- **In judging unfaithful Jerusalem (Re 6-11) and pagan Rome (Re 13-19), Jesus manifested His kingly reign and authority over those who rebelled against Him and persecuted His followers**

[Which leads us to the final vision in chapter nineteen, with...]

IV. THE FALL OF THE BEAST, THE FALSE PROPHET, AND THEIR FORCES (17-21)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The declaration of an angel - Re 19:17-18
 - a. John sees an angel standing in the sun, crying with a loud voice
 - b. Speaking to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven:
 - 1) "*Come and gather together for the supper of the great God.*"
 - 2) "*eat the flesh of kings...captains...mighty men...horses...all people, free and slave, both small and great*"
2. The end of the beast and false prophet - Re 19:20-21
 - a. John saw the beast, the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered to make war against Him who sat on the horse and His army

- b. John saw the beast and false prophet captured
 - 1) The false prophet who worked signs in the presence of the beast - cf. **Re 13:11-18**
 - 2) By which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image
 - 3) Both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone
 - c. The rest of their forces were killed
 - 1) With the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse
 - 2) All the birds were filled with their flesh
- **A graphic vision vividly depicting the demise of those who had persecuted the early church**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. This vision appears designed to reinforce the idea that Christ in His kingly rule will defeat those who have been persecuting His people
 2. Just as **Babylon the harlot** would be destroyed (**Re 17:16-18:24**), so the **beast and false prophet** would be overcome!
 3. Notice the two instruments used by Jesus to defeat the beast and false prophet:
 - a. **A sharp sword out of His mouth** to strike the nations (**Re 19:15**) - a reference to the power of the Word of God to convict and convert sinful man? - cf. **He 4:12**
 - b. **A rod of iron** by which He rules the nations (**Re 19:15**) - a reference to His ability to place and displace those in positions of power? - cf. **Ro 13:1-2**; also **Dan 4:17,24-26,34-35**
- **Thus this vision demonstrates what was stated earlier: “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.” - Re 17:14**

CONCLUSION

1. If chapters 13-19 indeed depicts **the Roman empire** in its persecution against the church, then this section with its imagery was possibly fulfilled when the empire fell in 476 A.D.
2. If heaven rejoiced over the fall of Babylon (**Re 19:1-5**), we can just imagine the exultation in heaven when the beast and false prophet were cast into the lake of fire!
3. **But one enemy yet remains**, the one responsible for deceiving the nations to allow for Babylon the Harlot, the beast, and the false prophet: the one known as the dragon, the serpent of old, who is **the Devil and Satan!**
4. What happens to Satan is revealed in the next chapter

But from what we have read in chapter nineteen, on whose side would you want to be in this great conflict?

Would you not want to follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is also called The Word of God?

Do you not want to have the blessing of being called to the marriage supper of the Lamb?

And when the marriage of the Lamb and His bride (the church) takes place, to be a part of that great body of believers who have been saved by blood of the Lamb?

If so, then obey the gospel of Christ through faith in Jesus, repentance of sin, confession of faith in Christ, baptism into Christ for the remission of your sins, and then remain faithful unto death to receive the crown of life!

The Book Of Revelation

The 1000 Year Reign (20:1-6)

INTRODUCTION

1. Previous chapters illustrated the defeat of agents used by Satan to persecute God's people in the first century...
 - a. The fall of Babylon - cf. **Re 18:1-19:10**
 - b. The fall of the beast, the false prophet, and their armies - cf. **Re 19:11-21**
2. Now in chapter twenty, we see described...
 - a. What happened to Satan, the dragon who gave authority to the beast and the false prophet in their efforts to wage war against the saints - cf. **Re 12:9,17; 13:1-17**
 - b. What happened to those Christians killed by the agents of Satan - cf. **Re 16:6; 17:6; 18:24**

[What happened to Satan and those Christians he killed through his agents is described as taking place during a 1000 year period commonly referred to as "**The Millenium**". Let's first consider what is said about Satan...]

I. SATAN BOUND FOR 1000 YEARS (1-3)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. John sees an angel come down from heaven - **Re 20:1**
 - a. Having the key to the bottomless pit
 - b. With a great chain in his hand
 2. The angel binds Satan for a thousand years - **Re 20:2-3**
 - a. Casting him into the bottomless pit, shutting him up and setting a seal on him
 - b. So that he should deceive the nations no more for a thousand years
 - c. But afterward he will be released for a little while
- **A long but temporary limitation placed on Satan**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. It most likely depicts a long period of time in which Satan is no longer able to **deceive the nations** as he did during the time of the Roman empire - cf. **Re 12:9; 13:14**
 - a. "The nature of the binding itself is not absolute, so as to preclude every activity of Satan. It is specifically limited in the passage to the devil's power to deceive the nations (v. 3) for the duration of the period." - **Steve Gregg, Revelation: Four Views**
 - b. "...the imagery of "binding Satan" conveys the fact that Satan has been rendered incapable of successfully resisting the forward advance of God's kingdom." - **ibid.**
 - c. In other words, Satan could still tempt people on an individual basis to sin - e.g., **1Pe 5:8-9**
 2. If so, it began following the end of Roman persecution and would continue for a long time in the future
 - a. The number 1000 is often used figuratively in Scripture; for example...
 - 1) Israelites were to keep the covenant for 1000 generations - **Deut 7:9**
 - 2) Is it literal when God says that the cattle on 1000 hills are His? - **Ps 50:10**
 - 3) God will remember His word for 1000 generations (but no more?) - **Ps 105:8**
 - b. So for a long period of time Satan would not be able to deceive the nations like he did with unfaithful Jerusalem (**Re 6-11**) and pagan Rome (**Re 13-19**)
 - c. Afterward he is released and once more deceives the nations for a short time - cf. **Re 20:7-9a**
 - d. But then Satan also is defeated once and for all - cf. **Re 20:9b-10**
- **It is important to remember that the 1000 year binding of Satan relates to his ability to deceive the nations**

[Now let's direct our attention to what is said about those who were killed by the agents of Satan...]

II. SAINTS REIGN WITH CHRIST FOR 1000 YEARS (4-6)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. John sees souls upon thrones, to whom judgment was committed - **Re 20:4**
 - a. Who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and the word of God
 - b. Who had not worshiped the beast or his image
 - c. Who had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands
2. These souls lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years - **Re 20:5-6**
 - a. The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished
 - b. This is the first resurrection
 - 1) Blessed and holy are those who have a part in the first resurrection
 - 2) Over such the second death has no power
 - 3) They shall be priests of God and of Christ
 - 4) They shall reign with Christ a thousand years

-- **Imagine how this would have encouraged Christians facing Roman persecution in the 1st century!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The focus of this passage is not on the reign of Christ per se, but rather:
 - a. The binding of deceptive Satan
 - b. The reign of resurrected souls with Christ
2. Note carefully what is said about these souls
 - a. It is their **souls** that are “resurrected”, not their bodies
 - b. This “resurrection” is described as the “first resurrection”
 - c. Implying that there is a “second resurrection” (likely that of the body) - cf. **Jn 5:28-29**
 - d. And over such the “second death” (i.e., the lake of fire, cf. **Re 2:11; 20:14**) has no power
 - e. They shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years - cf. **1Pe 2:9; Re 1:6**
3. Note carefully what is not said about the reign of these souls
 - a. Nothing is said about them reigning on the earth
 - b. They could just as easily be reigning with Christ in heaven!
 - c. As Jesus had promised in His letters to the churches - cf. **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**
4. In the rest of the New Testament...
 - a. There is no mention of a 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth!
 - b. Instead, Christ is reigning now from heaven!
 - 1) He has all authority in heaven and on earth - **Mt 28:18**
 - 2) He is Lord of all - **Ac 2:36; 10:36**
 - 3) He is Lord of the living and the dead - **Ro 14:9**
 - 4) He is head over all things - **Ep 1:20-22**
 - 5) He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords - **1Ti 6:15**
 - 6) Angels, authorities, and powers have been made subject to Him - **1Pe 3:22**
 - 7) He is truly the ruler over the kings of the earth - **Re 1:5**
 - c. His kingdom (reign) was always intended to be spiritual, not physical
 - 1) He resisted when people tried to make Him an earthly king - **Jn 6:15**
 - 2) He said that His kingdom was not of this world - **Jn 18:36**
 - 3) His kingdom was not to come with observation, but to be within you - **Lk 17:20-21**
 - 4) His apostles taught that kingdom was spiritual in nature - **Ro 14:17**
 - d. His second coming is not to establish His kingdom, but to deliver it to God!
 - 1) When Christ comes and the dead are raised, that is the end! - **1Co 15:22-24**

- 2) He will deliver the kingdom to God, when He has put to an end all rule, authority and power
- **1Co 15:24**
- 3) He reigns now, and must do so until all enemies are put under His feet - **1Co 15:25; Ps 110:1**
- 4) The last enemy to be destroyed will be death, which will occur when our bodies are raised from the dead - **1Co 15:26,51-54**

-- **The New Testament (including Revelation) teaches that Christ is reigning now from heaven!**

CONCLUSION

1. In chapter twenty we learn that after the beast and false prophet are destroyed...
 - a. Satan himself loses his ability to deceive the nations for a long time
 - b. Meanwhile, those he had killed experience the blessing of reigning with Christ and serving as priests of God and Christ in heaven
2. But chapter twenty has much more to reveal concerning...
 - a. The future release of Satan
 - b. Another effort by Satan to deceive the nations and destroy the people of God
 - c. His ultimate defeat and eternal torment with the beast and the false prophet
 - d. The great white throne judgment in which all will stand before God to be judged

Which we will examine more closely in our next lesson. But even now everyone should ask, “Am I ready to stand before God in the day of judgment?”

To be sure that you are, please go to the following website and carefully read about “[The Gospel Of The Grace Of God](http://executableoutlines.com/gospel%20of%20grace.htm)” (<http://executableoutlines.com/gospel%20of%20grace.htm>).

The Book Of Revelation

The Release Of Satan & Day Of Judgment (20:7-15)

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously in chapter twenty (Re 20:1-6) John described how he saw...
 - a. That Satan would lose his ability to deceive the nations for a long time (“1000 years”)
 - b. That the faithful saints who had suffered greatly during Satan’s deception of the nations in the first century would serve as priests and reign with Christ during this time
2. Now in chapter twenty (Re 20:7-15) John describes...
 - a. The future release of Satan
 - b. Another effort by Satan to deceive the nations and destroy the people of God
 - c. His ultimate defeat and eternal torment with the beast and the false prophet
 - d. The great white throne judgment in which all will stand before God to be judged

[It is possible that we might find ourselves living in the time described in **verses 7-10**. It is certain that we will find ourselves facing the judgment of **verses 11-15**. So let us give careful consideration to what is said, beginning with...]

I. SATAN’S FINAL ATTEMPT AND DEFEAT (7-10)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. His release from prison - Re 20:7-8
 - a. After the thousand years were completed
 - b. He will go out to deceive the nations
 - 1) Those in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog
 - 2) To gather them to battle
 2. His final attempt and defeat - Re 20:9
 - a. To have the nations surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city
 - b. But fire from God out of heaven devoured those Satan had deceived
 3. His eternal torment - Re 20:10
 - a. The devil who deceived the nations was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone
 - b. The same place where the beast and the false prophet are
 - c. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever
- **The devil, together with the beast and false prophet are given their due!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. After the “1000 years” are over, Satan is released for a short time where he once again seeks to “*deceive the nations*” to persecute the people of God - cf. **Re 13:14; 20:3,8,10**
2. The mention of “*Gog and Magog*” is likely an apocalyptic reference to forces of evil at Satan’s disposal during this time, not any particular nation or nations - e.g., **Ezek 38-39**
3. But the final attempt of Satan is quickly thwarted by the Lord, and the devil is cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet were - cf. **Re 19:20**
4. If any section of Revelation pertains to the time just prior to the Lord’s final coming, I believe it to be this one
5. The description is brief, for the book was written for the benefit of Christians in Asia Minor about things to shortly come to pass - cf. **Re 1:1-4; 22:6,10**
6. The Christians of John’s day would not experience this last attempt of Satan

-- **But these few verses assure them (and us) that Satan himself would ultimately be defeated!**

[We may wonder whether we might be living during the last time Satan will deceive the nations. Current trends in our day certainly cause me to consider the possibility. But even if not, we still need to be ready for...]

II. THE FINAL JUDGMENT (11-15)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. The One on the great white throne - **Re 20:11**
 - a. John sees a great white throne and Him who sat on it
 - b. Before whose face the earth and heaven fled away so no place was found for them
 2. The judgment of the dead - **Re 20:12-13**
 - a. John sees the dead, small and great, standing before God
 - b. Books were opened, including the Book of Life
 - 1) The dead were judged according to their works
 - 2) The dead were judged by the things written in the books
 - c. All the dead were judged, each according to his works
 - 1) For the sea gave up the dead who were in it
 - 2) For Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them
 3. The lake of fire - **Re 20:14-15**
 - a. Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire (which is the second death)
 - b. Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire
- **A judgment that determines the ultimate destiny of all mankind**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The One on the great white throne is likely Jesus Christ - **cf. Mt 25:31-32**
 - a. Whose words will judge us in the last day - **Jn 5:22-23,27; 12:48**
 - b. By whom God has ordained to judge of the world - **Ac 10:42; 17:30-31**
 - c. Before whom we must stand to be judged - **Ro 2:16; 14:10; 2Co 5:10; 2Ti 4:1**
 2. That no place is found for earth and heaven suggests their annihilation - **cf. Re 20:11**
 - a. Also that stated later - **cf. Re 21:1**
 - b. Which is one possible interpretation of **2Pe 3:7-13**
 - c. Also supported by that found in **He 12:25-27**
 3. The books opened by which we will be judged could be either:
 - a. The books of the New Testament containing the words of Jesus, His apostles and prophets
 - b. Books that have recorded everything we have done in this life
 4. The Book of Life contains the names of those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb
 - a. Such as Euodia, Syntyche, and Clement - **cf. Php 4:2-3**
 - b. Also Old Testament individuals such as Moses - **cf. Exo 32:32**
 - c. For the blood of Christ cleanses the faithful under the Old Covenant as well as the New - **He 9:15**
 - d. Note well: one's name in the Book of Life can be blotted out! - **cf. Re 3:5; 22:19**
 5. None will escape this judgment!
 - a. For the sea will give up the dead in it - **Re 20:13**
 - b. Death and Hades will give up all the dead that are in them - **Re 20:13**
 - c. Indeed, all will be raised, either to "*eternal life*" or "*eternal condemnation*" - **Jn 5:28-29**
 6. Those cast into the "*lake of fire*", described as "*the second death*"
 - a. Where the beast and false prophet are - **Re 19:20**
 - b. Where Death and Hades will be - **Re 20:14**
 - c. Those whose names were not written in the Book of Life - **Re 20:15; 21:8**
- **A judgment for which we want to make sure our names are in the Lamb's Book of Life!**

CONCLUSION

1. Studying **Revelation 20:7-15**, we might best ask ourselves...
 - a. Should we find ourselves living in the time in which Satan will be released and try one last time to deceive the nations to persecute the people of God, will we remain faithful to Jesus even unto death?
 - b. When we find ourselves standing before the judgment seat of Christ, will our names be in the Lamb's book of life?
2. With the aid of the Book of Revelation together with all of God's Word, the answer to both questions can be a resounding "YES!"
 - a. By the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit we can be born again and live a life that will prevent us from experiencing "the second death"
 - b. Hearing words as these on the day of judgment: *"Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."* - **Mt 25:21**

In our next two lessons we shall consider a beautiful depiction of what *"the joy of your lord"* will entail...!

The Book Of Revelation

All Things Made New (21:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

1. Chapter twenty ended with...
 - a. The ultimate defeat and eternal torment of Satan together with the beast and false prophet - **Re 20:10**
 - b. The present earth and the heaven having fled away, with no place found for them - **Re 20:11**
 - c. The great white throne judgment in which all stand before God to be judged - **Re 20:11-14**
2. Chapter twenty-one begins with **John's final vision**...
 - a. Of a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had passed away - **Re 21:1**
 - b. Of the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God - **Re 21:2**

[Thus begins John's description of **the eternal destiny of the redeemed**. This would have been great interest to the original recipients of this book, and should certainly be of great interest to us today! Let's begin with...]

I. THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH (1)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. John sees a new heaven and a new earth - **Re 21:1a**
2. The first heaven and earth had passed away, and there was no sea - **Re 21:b**
- **Remember what was said earlier about the earth and the heaven - cf. Re 20:11**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The description of a new heaven and new earth is used to provide great hope and comfort to Christians concerning their eternal destiny
2. This is certainly nothing new, for both Old and New Testament provided similar promises to increase anticipation of the future
 - a. Isaiah's prophecy to Israel, concerning new heavens & a new earth - **Isa 65:17; 66:22**
 - b. Peter's reference to the promise of new heavens & new earth - **2Pe 3:13**
3. Many think that it refers to refurbished heavens & earth, but I lean toward a completely new creation
 - a. Jesus said heaven and earth will "pass away" - **Mt 24:35**
 - b. Hebrews says that things that are made will be removed - **He 12:26-27**
 - c. John said "fled away", "found no place for them", they had "passed away" - **Re 20:11; 21:1**
 - d. "no more sea" has been variously explained, but I like this one:
 - 1) "The sea to the ancients was not so much expressive of majesty and grandeur, as something dangerous, destructive, restless." - **David S. Clark, The Message From Patmos**
 - 2) "Isaiah says, *'But the wicked are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.'* (Isa 57:20) - **ibid.**
 - 2) "But that heavenly life will be calm and peaceful, no storms to break, no uncanny dangers to lurk and threaten." - **ibid.**
 3. So perhaps it simply indicates a very different creation of this "new earth"
- **If a totally "new creation", it will certainly be suitable for our resurrected bodies that will be spiritual, immortal and incorruptible! - cf. 1Co 15:42-44,50-53**

[At this point one might wonder, "But I thought we would spend eternity with God in heaven!". Let's continue to examine what is said here in Revelation, especially regarding...]

II. THE NEW JERUSALEM (2)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven - **Re 21:2a**
2. It was prepared as a bride adorned for her husband - **Re 21:2b**
- **Remember what was said earlier about the New Jerusalem - cf. Re 3:12**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The description of the holy city, New Jerusalem, also provides great hope and comfort to Christians concerning their eternal destiny
2. This likewise is certainly not a new concept, for the writer of Hebrews makes mention of it:
 - a. As that city which Abraham and the patriarchs looked forward to - **He 11:10,13-16**
 - b. As that city which Christians looked forward to - **He 12:22-24; 13:14**
3. **Note carefully:** that John describes this city as "*coming down out of heaven from God*" - **Re 21:2a**
 - a. As Jesus said, "*which comes down out of heaven from My God*" - **Re 3:12**
 - b. As would be described later again as, "*descending out of heaven from God*" - **Re 21:10**
4. **Note well:** This hope, the holy city New Jerusalem is currently in heaven
 - a. A hope perhaps referenced to by both Paul and Peter - **Col 1:5; 1Pe 1:4**
 - b. But when ultimately realized by the redeemed, three times it is described as coming down "*out of heaven from God*"!
- **As we will see, the redeemed will not spend eternity in heaven with God, but God will spend eternity with the redeemed in the holy city, New Jerusalem, which "comes down out of heaven"!**

[So let us continue to see how this all is described further by a loud voice from heaven...]

III. THE PROCLAMATION FROM HEAVEN (3-4)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. "*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men*" - **Re 21:3**
 - a. "*He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people*"
 - b. "*God Himself will be with them and be their God*"
2. "*God will wipe away every tear from their eyes*" - **Re 21:4**
 - a. "*There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying*"
 - b. "*There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away*"
- **Words of great promise and comfort, for those for whom the words are intended!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. Again, note carefully what it is said about holy city, the New Jerusalem - **Re 21:3**
 - a. "*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men*"
 - b. God's dwelling place will be with men
2. Notice the direction of the relationship between God and the redeemed
 - a. God is with men, He will dwell with them, He will be with them
 - b. Not we will be with God, but that He will be with us!
 - c. Where? In this holy city, the New Jerusalem, which three times is described as "*coming down out of heaven*" - **Re 3:12; 21:2,10**
 - d. Where? In the new heaven and new earth referenced to by Peter! - **2Pe 3:13-14**
3. And of course, notice how God will wipe away every tear from our eyes - **Re 21:4**
 - a. By removing any more occurrence of death, sorry, crying, pain
 - b. Such former things have passed away, just like the old heaven and old earth! - cf. **Re 20:11; 21:1**
- **Here is the ultimate fulfillment of God's desire for mankind! - cf. Lev 26:11-12; 2Co 6:16**

[What wonderful blessings proclaimed for the redeemed who remain faithful unto death! But this proclamation for the righteous is reinforced by God Himself, along with a warning for the wicked...]

IV. THE PROCLAMATION FROM THE ONE WHO SAT ON THE THRONE (5-8)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. *“Behold, I make all things new” - Re 21:5*
 - a. *“Write, for these words are true and faithful”*
 - b. *“It is done!”*
 2. *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End” - Re 21:6-7*
 - a. *“I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts”*
 - b. *“He who overcomes shall inherit all things and I will be his God and he shall be My son”*
 3. *“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars...” - Re 21:8*
 - a. *“Shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone”*
 - b. *“Which is the second death”*
- **Again, words of great promise and comfort, for those for whom the words are intended, along with a terrible warning for others!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. Consider the words *“I make all things new”*, they likely reference:
 - a. The new heaven and new earth, along with the holy new Jerusalem
 - b. How the tabernacle (dwelling) of God is with men (as opposed to men being with God in heaven)
 - c. How God will wipe away death, sorrow, pain, for the former things have passed away
 2. Consider the words *“for these words are true and faithful.”*
 - a. They are repeated again in the next chapter - cf. **Re 22:6**
 - b. Do they serve as “bookends” for what is written between **Re 21:5-22:6**?
 - c. That what is described therein pertains to what is real (true) and trustworthy (faithful)?
 - d. I.e., while much (if not most) of Revelation should be understood as symbolic (cf. “signified”, **Re 1:1**), the words from **Re 21:5-22:6** might actually depict what will be reality!
 - e. They do describe things found in books like Hebrews and 2nd Peter which are not figurative
 3. Consider the wonderful promise to those who *“thirst”* and *“overcome”*
 - a. The fountain of the water of life will be given freely! - cf. **Jn 4:10; Re 7:17; 22:17**
 - b. The one who overcomes shall inherit all things and be God’s son! - cf. **Ro 8:15-17; 1Jn 3:1-3**
 4. Consider the terrible promise for those who are *“cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars”*
 - a. They shall have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone - **Re 21:8**
 - b. To suffer together with the beast, the false prophet, and Satan himself! - cf. **Re 20:10,15**
- **The eternal destiny of both the redeemed and the condemned are summarized in these verses!**

CONCLUSION

1. The words in this section of Revelation describes things that will be new and different...
 - a. A new heaven and new earth, with a holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven
 - b. With the final destiny of those who overcome in Christ, and of those who refuse to believe in Him!
2. In our next study, we will consider more in detail what is promised for those who overcome in Christ...
 - a. The holy city, New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven
 - b. In which God and the Lamb will dwell with the redeemed in Christ

Are we making preparation to spend eternity with God and the Lamb in the holy city, the New Jerusalem?

The Book Of Revelation

The New Jerusalem (21:9-22:5)

INTRODUCTION

1. Chapter twenty-one of Revelation began with a vision of “all things made new”...
 - a. A new heaven and new earth - **Re 21:1**
 - b. With a holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven - **Re 21:2**
 - c. And two proclamations from heaven and the One who sat on the throne - **Re 21:3-8**
2. Chapter twenty-one and chapter twenty-two continue with more detail about...
 - a. The holy city, New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven
 - b. In which God and the Lamb will dwell with the redeemed in Christ

[We continue our study of **the eternal destiny of the redeemed** by noticing what is further said about...]

I. THE NEW JERUSALEM (9-21)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. John is shown the holy city - Re 21:9-11
 - a. By one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the last plagues
 - 1) Who offered to show John “the bride, the Lamb's wife”
 - 2) Who carried him away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain
 - b. He sees the great city, the holy Jerusalem
 - 1) Descending out of heaven from God
 - 2) Having the glory of God
 - 3) With light like a jasper stone, clear as crystal
 2. The construction of the city and its wall - Re 21:12-21
 - a. It had a great and high wall with twelve gates
 - 1) With twelve angels at the gates
 - 2) With the names of the twelve tribes of Israel
 - 3) With three gates each on the east, north, south, and west
 - 4) With twelve foundations, on which were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb
 - b. The measurement of the city, the gates, and the wall
 - 1) The angel had a golden reed to measure them
 - 2) The city is a cube: length, breadth, and height are each 12,000 furlongs (i.e., 1500 miles)
 - 3) The wall is one hundred and forty-four cubits high (i.e., 216 feet)
 - c. The construction of the city: the wall, foundations, gates, street
 - 1) The wall was of jasper; the city was pure gold, like clear glass
 - 2) The twelve foundations of the wall were adorned with precious stones: jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, amethyst
 - 3) The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate one pearl
 - 4) The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass
- **The imagery is uncertain, but the city may be depicted as hovering between heaven and the new earth**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. Try to visualize this holy city in your mind!
 - a. 1500 miles (2414 kilometers), the distance from Orlando to Denver, in length, breadth, and height!

- b. The rainbow-like colors of the wall, the foundations, the city, the gates, and the street
- c. The colors, with varying shades of green, red, blue, gold, and clear crystal!
- 2. What is this glorious city meant to represent?
 - a. Most say it is a picture of heaven itself, and yet:
 - 1) Three times the city is described as “coming down out of heaven” - **Re 3:12; 21:2,10**
 - 2) It comes down to the “new earth”, promised by God - **Re 21:1; cf. 2Pe 3:13**
 - 3) It is viewed by John from a “great and high mountain” - **Re 21:10**
 - 4) Thus clearly distinguished from heaven itself, the present dwelling place of God
 - b. Some say it is a metaphor for the church, the people of God, because:
 - 1) The city is described as a bride, the Lamb’s wife - **Re 21:2,9-10**
 - 2) The church is described elsewhere as the bride of Christ - **2Co 11:1; Ep 5:25-32**
 - 3) The wall has as its twelve foundations the twelve apostles - **Re 21:14**
 - 4) The church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets - **Ep 2:19-22**
 - 5) Yet in the vision there is a distinction made between the city itself, and the saved
 - a) The “nations of the saved” shall walk in its light - **Re 21:24**
 - b) The “gates will not be shut at all by day” - **Re 21:25; cf. Isa 60:11**
 - c) Suggesting people going in and out of the city itself
 - c. I am inclined to view the city as that which is “faithful and true” - cf. **Re 21:5; 22:6**
 - 1) A prophecy that is trustworthy and which pertains to what will be reality
 - 2) Like the new heaven and new earth, the city whose builder and maker is God - cf. **He 11:10,16**
 - 3) The city we seek, which now is in heaven, but is yet to come - cf. **He 12:22; 13:14**
 - 4) Perhaps even the “*place*” of which Jesus spoke to His disciples - cf. **Jn 14:1-3**
- **I view it is a city which is now in heaven, but will come down “out of heaven” to be a part of the new earth where God and the Lamb will dwell with the redeemed for eternally! - cf. Re 21:3**

[The glorious majesty of this city which will come down “out of heaven” is described further as we continue...]

II. THE GLORY OF THE HOLY CITY (22-27,1-5)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. Illuminated by the presence of God and the Lamb - Re 21:22-23
 - a. Its temple are the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb
 - b. It is illuminated by the glory of God and the Lamb
2. Enhanced by those who enter it - Re 21:24-27
 - a. The nations of the saved shall walk in its light
 - b. The kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it
 - c. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day, and there is no night there
 - d. The nations shall bring their glory and honor into it
 - 1) Nothing that defiles, causes an abomination or a lie, shall enter it
 - 2) Only those written in the Lamb’s Book of Life enter it
3. The river of water of life - Re 22:1
 - a. John sees a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal
 - b. It proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb
4. The tree of life - Re 22:2
 - a. On either side of the river was a tree of life
 - b. The tree bore twelve fruits, yielding fruit every month
 - c. The leaves were for the healing of the nations
5. The throne of God and of the Lamb - Re 22:3-5
 - a. There shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it
 - b. His servants shall serve Him
 - 1) They shall see His face

- 2) His name shall be on their foreheads
 - c. There shall be no night there
 - 1) They need no lamp nor light of the sun
 - 2) For the Lord God gives them light
 - d. They shall reign forever and ever
- **An amazing depiction of glory for both the holy city and its occupants!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The temple in this glorious city are "*the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb*" - **Re 21:22**
 - a. There is no temple, unlike there was in heaven described earlier in Revelation - **Re 7:15**
 - 1) For that described earlier in chapter 7 depicted the blessings of the intermediate state
 - 2) But here in chapter 21 depicts the blessings of the eternal state
 - b. Thus in the eternal state, the idea of a temple (i.e., a dwelling place where God dwells, cf. **1Co 3:16**) is replaced by God & the Lamb themselves dwelling among the saved - cf. **Re 21:3**
 2. There is no need for the sun or moon to provide illumination - **Re 21:23**
 - a. As foreshadowed by Isaiah's prophecy - cf. **Isa 60:19-20**
 - b. For the glory of God and the Lamb illuminates it
 3. The glory of this city is enhanced by the kings who bring their glory and honor into it - **Re 21:24**
 - a. Perhaps referring to such righteous kings like those of Judah (e.g., David, Hezekiah, Josiah)
 - b. Perhaps those who reigned with Christ for a 1000 years - cf. **Re 20:4-6**
 - c. Perhaps all the redeemed, who will reign together with Him throughout eternity - cf. **Re 22:5**
 4. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day, and there is no night there - **Re 21:25**
 - a. The twelve gates of pearl shall remain open constantly
 - b. Perhaps implying that the redeemed will actually live outside the city, though with free and constant access to the city because the gates are forever open
 - c. No night there, for the glory of God and the Lamb Himself is its light - cf. **Re 21:23; 22:5**
 5. The nations shall bring their glory and honor into it - **Re 21:26**
 - a. Glory and honor to be added to the glory of God and the Lamb - cf. **Re 21:23**
 - b. Perhaps glory and honor they themselves received at the coming of the Lord - cf. **2Th 1:10-12**
 6. Nothing that defiles shall enter it - **Re 21:27**
 - a. None that cause an abomination or a lie, shall enter it - cf. **Re 21:8**
 - b. Only those written in the Lamb's book of Life enter it - cf. **Re 3:5; 20:15**
 7. The redeemed provisioned for everlasting service - **Re 22:1-5**
 - a. With the water of life - **Re 22:1**
 - 1) A pure river, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb
 - 2) Promised to those who thirst (for righteousness) - cf. **Re 21:6; 22:17; Mt 5:6**
 - b. With the tree of life - **Re 22:2**
 - 1) In the middle of the street (it was in the garden of Eden, but now in the city of God!)
 - 2) Straddling the river of the water of life (from which it gets its nourishment?)
 - 3) Bearing twelve fruits, yielding fruit every month (perpetual provisions for the redeemed!)
 - 4) With leaves for the healing of the nations (no more death for the nations!)
 8. The reign of His servants - **Re 22:3-5**
 - a. The curse which made work difficult is no more - cf. **Gen 3:17-19**
 - b. The throne of God and of the Lamb is present (God's reign continues!)
 - c. His servants serve Him (there will be work, but it will not be laborious)
 - d. They shall see His face (like the angels, they will enjoy His presence) - cf. **Mt 18:20**
 - e. His name will be on their foreheads (they shall be designated as His) - cf. **Re 3:12**
 - f. There shall be no night, no need of lamp nor light of the sun (for God is the light)
 - g. They shall reign forever and ever (the exalted nature of our service!) - cf. **Mt 25:21**
- **A glorious city, with glorious provisions to enable glorious service for a glorious eternity!**

CONCLUSION

1. Granted, we are dealing with a book that contains highly figurative passages...
 - a. John was shown that which is to come in symbols - cf. **Re 1:1**
 - b. We must be careful not to strain the figures beyond their intended purpose
 - c. We should be humble and not overly dogmatic in our interpretation of them
2. And yet we have considered things that may be intended to be taken more literally...
 - a. Twice it is stated: "*These words are faithful and true.*" - **Re 21:5; 22:6**
 - b. "Faithful" means trustworthy, "true" can mean that which pertains to reality
3. Even if **Re 21:1-22:5** are figurative, how shall we envision the hope that we have in Christ...?
 - a. With images of our own imagination?
 - b. With those from uninspired sources (novels, TV, movies)?
 - c. Or with those provided by Jesus Himself, to comfort and encourage His servants?
4. As we look for the city to come (cf. **He 13:14**)...
 - a. A city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God - cf. **He 11:10**
 - b. A city prepared by God, who is not ashamed to be called our God - cf. **He 11:16**

...may we who are disciples of Jesus Christ allow the vision shown by Jesus and seen by John, to excite and encourage us to remain faithful, until we walk through those pearly gates into the glorious city which comes down out of heaven into the new heaven and new earth!

The Book Of Revelation

The Grand Conclusion (22:6-21)

INTRODUCTION

1. In the first six verses of chapter twenty-two, John's vision of the glorious future for the people of God was completed...
 - a. With a brief description of the river of life, the tree(s) of life, and the throne of God and of the Lamb
 - b. Eternal fellowship with God, stressed in the previous chapter (cf. **Re 21:3-4,7**) was emphasized again
 - c. With the promise of reigning with Him forever and ever - **Re 22:5**
2. The remainder of chapter twenty-two (**Re 22:6-21**) contains the grand conclusion of this wonderful book...
 - a. With statements that the time of its fulfillment was near
 - b. With a reminder of the blessedness of those who do the commandments of Jesus
 - c. With an invitation for all who thirst to drink of the water of life freely
 - d. With a fearful warning not to add to or take away from the prophecies of this book
 - e. With a final promise from Jesus, along with a prayer & blessing from John

[Careful attention to this grand conclusion is very important to properly understanding the message of the book of Revelation, and receiving the future blessings for the righteous described throughout. So let's begin with...]

I. THE TIME IS NEAR, DO NOT SEAL THE BOOK (6-11)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. John is told by the angel that these words are faithful and true - Re 22:6-7
 - a. The Lord God has sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place
 - b. The Lamb proclaims: *"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."*
 2. John attempts to worship the angel - Re 22:8-9
 - a. He falls down at the feet of the angel who showed him these things
 - b. The angel forbids him
 - 1) The angel is his fellow servant, and of his brethren the prophets and of those who keep the words of this book
 - 2) John is to worship God
 3. John is told not to seal the words of the prophecy of this book - Re 22:10-11
 - a. *"For the time is at hand"*
 - b. *"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still"*
 - c. *"He who is righteous let him be righteous still, he who is holy let him be holy still"*
- **Careful attention should be given to the words of this text**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. Consider again the phrase *"these words are faithful and true"*
 - a. It is used twice in reference to the final destiny of the redeemed - cf. **Re 21:5; 22:6**
 - b. Perhaps they serve as "bookends" for what is written between **Re 21:5-22:6**
 - c. To stress that what is described therein pertains to what is real (true) and what can be considered as trustworthy (faithful)
 - d. I.e., while much (if not most) of Revelation should be understood as symbolic (cf. "signified", **Re 1:1**), the words from **Re 21:5-22:6** might actually depict what will be reality for the redeemed!
2. Note that three references are made to the imminent nature of what Revelation foretold

- a. *“things which must shortly take place”* - **Re 22:6**
- b. *“Behold, I am coming quickly”* - **Re 22:7**; cf. **Re 2:5,16; 3:3,11**
- c. *“the time is at hand”* - **Re 22:10**
- d. Taken together with what is said at the beginning of the book (cf. **Re 1:1,3**), a mostly preterist approach to Revelation is the proper way to interpret the book
3. Consider the angel’s rebuke to John when he fell down to worship the angel
 - a. *“See that you do not do that...Worship God.”* - **Re 22:9**; cf. also **Re 19:10**
 - b. In similar fashion Cornelius was rebuked by the apostle Peter - cf. **Ac 10:25-26**
 - c. If angels & apostles rebuked those who fell down before them, shouldn’t “popes, bishops, priests”?
4. Compare what is said to **John** versus that which was said to **Daniel**
 - a. John is told not to seal the words of the prophecy of Revelation, the time was at hand - **Re 22:10**
 - b. Daniel was told to seal up a vision that was fulfilled within a few hundred years, for it pertained to many days in the future - **Dan 8:26**
 - c. Premillennialists interpret Revelation to pertain to events yet to be fulfilled though almost 2000 years have passed; how can events yet to occur today be called “at hand” in John’s day?
5. The statement in **Re 22:11** is a certainly challenging one
 - a. It may simply stress that the judgments throughout chapters 2-19 were imminent
 - b. Opportunity to change was limited, those who have changed for the better should remain so
 - c. Yet the book does not end without providing hope for those willing to repent - **Re 22:17**
- **This passage offers further insight to properly interpreting the book, along with addressing the sinful practice of worshiping men and angels**

[From a passage of scripture containing mostly words spoken by an angel (**Re 22:7** being the exception), we now consider a section containing the words spoken by our Savior...]

II. THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS (12-17)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. Jesus’ first declaration - **Re 22:12-13**
 - a. *“Behold, I am coming quickly”*
 - b. *“My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work”*
 - c. *“I am the Alpha and the Omega”*
 - d. *“The Beginning and the End, the First and the Last”*
2. John’s response - **Re 22:14-15**
 - a. *“Blessed are those who do His commandments (or wash their robes, ESV)”*
 - 1) *“That they may have the right to the tree of life”*
 - 2) *“That they may enter through the gates into the city”*
 - b. *“But outside are...”*
 - 1) *“Dogs, sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, and idolaters”*
 - 2) *“Whoever loves and practices a lie”*
3. Jesus’ second declaration - **Re 22:16**
 - a. *“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches”*
 - b. *“I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”*
4. The grand invitation to all - **Re 22:17**
 - a. *“The Spirit and the bride say ‘Come!’”*
 - b. *“Let him who hears say ‘Come!’”*
 - c. *“Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”*
- **Declarations by Jesus followed by blessings and warnings, with an invitation to everyone to receive the water of life!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. Regarding what Jesus says about “*coming quickly*”
 - a. This is the second of three times He says He is coming quickly - cf. **Re 22:7,12,20**
 - b. Which may have reference to His coming in judgment against the churches - cf. **Re 2:5,16; 3:3,11**
 - c. But also coming in judgment against the forces Satan deceived in the first century in his effort to destroy the church (e.g., unfaithful Jerusalem and pagan Rome)
 2. Regarding “*the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.*”
 - a. Both the Father (**Re 1:8; 21:6**) and Jesus (**Re 1:11,17; 2:8**) are described this way
 - b. As Jesus is the One who is coming quickly, He is the One being described here in **Re 22:12-13**
 - c. An important confirmation of the deity of Christ and the concept of triune Godhead (i.e., trinity)
 3. Those who do Jesus’ commandments (or wash their robes, ESV) will be saved - **Re 22:14**
 - a. For Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him - **He 5:9**
 - b. Jesus stressed keeping His commandments - **Jn 14:15,21–23; 15:10–14; Mt 28:20**
 - c. For is by keeping His commandments that we are saved - **Mk 16:16; cf. Ac 2:36-38; 22:16**
 4. Other quick observations - **Re 22:15-17**
 - a. The reference to “*those outside*” obviously refers to them in the lake of fire - **Re 20:15; 21:8**
 - b. Jesus as the offspring of David (cf. **Re 5:5; Mt 22:42**); the bright & morning star (cf. **Num 24:17**)
 - c. “*Whoever desires*”: God wants everyone to be saved - cf. **Mk 16:15; 1Ti 2:4-6; 2Pe 3:9**
- **Clearly these are words intended for all, encouraging all to be saved rather than lost!**

[This brings us to the final words in the Book of Revelation...]

III. THE FINAL WORDS (18-21)

A. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT...

1. A word of warning - **Re 22:18-19**
 - a. Do not add to the words of this book, or God will add to him the plagues written in it
 - b. Do not take away from the words of this book, or God will take away his part from:
 - 1) The Book (or Tree) of Life
 - 2) The holy city
 - 3) The things written in this book
 2. A word of promise - **Re 22:20**
 - a. The promise of Him who testifies to these things.
 - b. “*Surely I am coming quickly.*”
 3. A word of prayer - **Re 22:21**
 - a. Concerning his Lord: “*Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*”
 - b. Concerning his brethren: “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*”
- **A warning, a promise, a prayer: all three need our careful attention!**

B. OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION...

1. The word of **warning** not to add or take away
 - a. Applies specifically to the Book of Revelation
 - b. But similar to warnings found elsewhere in Scripture - **Deu 4:2; 12:32; Pro 30:6**
 - c. An important principle to heed in regards to all of the Word of God!
2. The word of **promise** regarding the quick coming of the Lord
 - a. This is the third of three times Jesus said He was coming quickly - cf. **Re 22:7,12,20**
 - b. Which likely has reference to His coming in judgment against the churches - cf. **Re 2:5,16; 3:3,11**
 - c. Also coming in judgment against the forces Satan deceived in the first century in his effort to destroy the church (e.g., unfaithful Jerusalem and pagan Rome)
 - d. But in view of eternity, and that He could come at any moment, we can always say that His coming is imminent
3. The word of **prayer** for his Lord and his brethren

- a. Desire for our Lord's coming should be strong - cf. **1Co 1:7; Ph 3:20**
 - b. John's prayer for grace echoes those at the end of Paul's epistles - cf. **Ro 16:20; 1Co 16:23; 2Co 13:14; Ga 6:18; Ep 6:24; Ph 4:23; Co 4:18; 1Th 5:28; 2Th 3:18; 1Ti 6:21; 2Ti 4:22; Tit 3:5; Phm 25**
 - c. May this also be our prayers for one another!
- **A warning, a promise, a prayer: a fitting end for a grand conclusion to such a book!**

CONCLUSION

1. We finally come to the end of this series on Revelation; a wonderful book...
 - a. Written to churches in the 1st century A.D., preserved for the benefit of Christians ever since!
 - b. That challenges and comforts those who remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ until His final coming to raise the dead and judge mankind - cf. **Jn 5:28-29; Ac 17:30-31**
2. Are you ready for the Judgment Day...?
 - a. Is your name in the Lamb's book of life? - cf. **Re 20:15**
 - b. Make sure that you have properly responded to the gospel of Christ - cf. **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:36-41; 22:16**
 - c. Having done so, make sure you remain faithful to the end - cf. **Re 2:10**

So together with the apostle John (and the apostle Paul) may I say:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The Book Of Revelation

Concluding Thoughts

As stated in the introduction to this series of sermon outlines, the book of Revelation is unique in that it contains apocalyptic literature. Filled with figurative and symbolic language, it has been subjected to much abuse by many who have proposed to interpret it, especially by those who take a futuristic approach to the book.

I am persuaded **the key to handling and understanding Revelation** properly is to let the first three chapters set the context in which the book should be interpreted. In those chapters we learn that the book:

- Was intended to be understood (a revelation = an unveiling) - **Re 1:1**
- Was about things that would soon take place, not thousands of years later - **Re 1:1,3; 22:6,10**
- Could be understood even by an individual reading to a public audience - **Re 1:1**
- Is filled with signs and symbols ("signified"), likely understood by the original readers - **Re 1:1**
- Was addressed to seven specific churches in Asia, so any interpretation must first be applicable to those churches and their times - **Re 1:4,11; 2:1-3:22**
- Was written to churches who had already experienced persecution from unbelieving Jerusalem and pagan Rome, with more to come - **Re 2:9-10,13**
- Contains promises to those in the seven churches who overcome by remaining faithful, even to death, which promises are mostly depicted in their fulfillment by visions later in the book - **Re 2:7 (cf. Re 22:2,14); Re 2:11 (cf. Re 20:6,14; 21:8); Re 2:26-27 (cf. Re 20:4-6); Re 3:5 (cf. Re 7:14-17; 20:12,15; 21:27); Re 3:12 (cf. Re 7:15; 21:1-27; 22:4); Re 3:21 (cf. Re 20:4-6; 22:5)**

The theme of the book is clear: Jesus is coming to judge! He now reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords! (**Mt 28:18; Jn 18:36-37; Ac 2:36; 17:7; 1Co 15:24-25; Ep 1:22; 1Ti 6:14-15; 1Pe 3:22; Re 1:5,7; 11:15; 17:14**).

His coming judgment(s) depicted in Revelation involve judging:

- Churches (**Re 1-3**)
- Unbelieving Jerusalem (**Rev 4-11**)
- Pagan Rome (**Rev 12-19**)
- Satan and the world (**Rev 20**).

Efforts to interpret the book should **give special attention to clarifying statements** found throughout the book like these:

- “...where also our Lord was crucified” (**Re 11:8**) - Identifies the city being judged in the first half of the book as Jerusalem.

- *“Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.” (Re 13:18)* - Makes clear that the identity of the beast could be known by the original recipients (likely “Nero Caesar”, or the “Latin One”)
- *“Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.” (Re 17:9-11)* - Identifies the harlot as being supported by Rome. Also, that whatever the beast represented, it **“is not”** at the time of the writing of Revelation. That suggests to me that the book was not written during the time of Nero or Domitian, but more likely during the reign of Vespasian. Similarly, that **“kings”** could not symbolize world empires, for that would rule out the Roman empire as having anything to do with the identity of the beast (since the Roman empire was in existence at that time).
- *“These words are true and faithful” (Re 21:5; 22:6)* - This expression prefaces and concludes the description of the new heavens and new earth, along with the New Jerusalem, the holy city which descends out of heaven from God. **“True”** means “real, genuine” and **“faithful”** means “trustworthy”. This suggests to me the possibility that the description of the eternal state of the redeemed in **Re 21-22** is more realistic and reflective of that which is to come than were the visions seen earlier throughout the book (which were clearly symbolic in most cases). It certainly coincides with other scriptures that are not figurative in their context (cf. **He 11:16; 13:14; 2Pe 3:13-14**).

Despite its challenges, I find the book of Revelation fascinating and filled with much benefit for the Christian today. Studying Revelation, we learn of Christ’s power and sovereignty over the kingdoms of this world. Like other books of the New Testament that may have been written to address specific situations affecting churches in the first century, we can make application to our own lives should we find ourselves facing situations similar to those endured by the Christians of the first century.

And remember, at some point Satan will be released once more to deceive the nations in a last attempt to destroy the church (**Re 20:7-10**). Should we find ourselves living at that time, let us never forget the key passage in this book:

“These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.” (Re 17:14)

So with the aid of Christ and the rest of the New Testament to guide us, let us heed these words of His apostle Peter...

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;” (2Pe 3:13-14)

And may our attitude always be that as expressed by the apostle John at the end of Revelation...

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!
(Re 22:20)

The Book Of Revelation

Bibliography

For more on the overall perspective on Revelation as presented in this series of outlines, I recommend the following works:

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Stuart, M. (1845). *A Commentary on the Apocalypse* (Vol. 2). Andover; New York: Allen, Morrill and Wardwell; M. H. Newman.

* Though not as in depth as typical commentaries, these two books would be the first ones I would recommend

** These two books provide comments on Revelation from four different views. The view that takes a similar approach to understanding and interpreting Revelation that I hold is called "preterist" (more accurately, my view is "**partial preterist**" in that while I hold most of Revelation is past, I believe there are future elements in it as well, such as the final judgment in chapter 20 and the eternal destiny of the wicked and redeemed in chapters 21-22).

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.