Introduction to the Book of Revelation

Introduction:

A. The book of Revelation is scary to most people.
   1. It is a book meant to be taught, therefore understood (Revelation 1:1).
   2. It is a book meant to be read, therefore understood (Revelation 1:3 / cf. Ephesians 3:3-4).
   3. The word Revelation [apokalupsis] means “laying bare, making naked; a disclosure of truth, instruction; concerning things before unknown; used of events by which things or states or persons hitherto withdrawn from view are made visible to all; manifestation, appearance).
   4. The book is inspired, therefore profitable for our studies (II Timothy 3:16-17).
   5. The Lord does not want the book of Revelation to be hidden (Revelation 22:10).

B. Many things in the book of Revelation are symbolic (1:1 "signified"), things that John saw (1:2).

   1. We can tell a difference by seeing literal things, such as the seven churches being addressed in chapters 2-3.
   2. We can tell a difference in literal and figurative language by:
      a. Using common sense (Revelation 14:3-4; I Corinthians 7:2-3).
      b. Recognizing terms such as "like" in Revelation 2:18 "...These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire..."
         ➢ Metaphor - a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. I.E. (Revelation 3:16) the comparison of lukewarm drink and unfaithfulness both being disgusting.
         ➢ Simile - a figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as. [See above example from Revelation 2:18].
   3. Some of the symbols are interpreted for us.
      a. The dragon is Satan behind the scenes in Rome (12:9).
      b. The first beast is the civil persecuting power of Rome (13:1-7). This is the same description of the fourth beast of Daniel 7:17-27, which is the fourth kingdom (Rome) of Daniel 2:31-45.
      c. The second beast (13:11) speaks like the dragon (Satan) and forces all to worship the first beast. Therefore, it is those who enforced the emperor worship.
      d. Studying will show the Harlot named Babylon (17:5; 18), as the Great City which would be the capital city of Rome.
      e. We will find that the 1260 days (11:3), three and a half days (11:9) [1260 divided by 360 is 3.5], as well as the forty two months (13:5) [42 x 30 = 1260] as the same period, which is a limited time of intense persecution (Daniel 7:25, 12:7-13, and Revelation 2:10).
   4. Symbolism of numbers
      a. One has always represented ideas of unity and strength.
      b. Two carries with it the idea of protection and strength.
      c. Three came to be thought of as perfection.
      d. Four became a representation of man's world, for we speak of four winds, four corners etc.
      e. Five and ten are human completeness.
      f. Six is one short of completion.
      g. Seven being the number for completion.
h. Sometimes numbers would be cut in half, i.e. -- 7 in half is 3 1/2, thus only partly complete.
i. Occasionally, numbers would be multiplied for emphasis, such as 10 (mans' number) times 7 (completion) for a number of 70.

I. Some Facts Explaining the Book of Revelation
   A. Revelation 1:1 "...to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass..."
      1. Revelation 1:3 "...for the time is at hand."
      2. Revelation 22:10
   B. Revelation 22:20 "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
      1. As we see in the Old Testament the coming of God can mean a judgment (Isaiah 13:1-13).
      2. Jesus did not know when He was coming to reveal it (Matthew 24:36).
      3. But, Jesus did know when physical things would occur in Jerusalem (24:1ff.).
   C. Written to comfort Christians:
      1. We can see the persecution when reading through about the churches of Asia Minor (chapters 2-3).
      3. Certainly, we can see that the scriptures have given comfort to the afflicted (Romans 15:4).
      4. The major message is be faithful and God will take care of you (Psalms 37:39-40, Romans 8:28, and Romans 8:31).
      5. John pens this book from exile to the isle of Patmos, which was south west of Asia Minor (1:9).

II. Some Historical Facts
   A. Political conditions:
      1. Domition was emperor from 81-96 AD. He bathed his empire in blood.
      2. Rome had captured the world with military might without winning their loyalty.
         a. Emperor worship was seen as a unifying force. The emperors had the status of godhood conferred upon them at death.
         b. Domition did not want to wait until death, and proclaimed himself dominus et deus, Latin for Lord and God. It was considered treason to fail to worship him.
      3. Dating of the book of Revelation [92-96 AD] is summarized in the I.S.B.E.: “Eusebius, in summing up the tradition of the Church on this subject, assigns John's exile to Patmos, and consequently the composition of the Apocalypse, to the latter part of the reign of Domitian (81-96 AD). Irenaeus (circa 180 AD) says of the book, “For it was seen, not a long time ago, but almost in our own generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian” (Adv. Haer., v. 30, 3). The former date answers to the conditions of the book (decadence of the churches; widespread and severe persecution), and to the predilection of Domitian for this mode of banishment (compare Tacitus, History i. 2; Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica, III, 18).”
      4. Why the early date is unlikely:
         a. The Epistle to the Ephesians was written around 62 AD, and presents the church at Ephesus as being a good local group of Christians. It would seem unlikely that the conditions described in Revelation 2:1-7 could have occurred in only two years.
         b. The persecution under Nero was limited to the city of Rome and not over the whole of the empire, as it was during the later date under Domition.
c. Emperor worship was not common during the days of Nero, but we see it as a problem throughout Revelation.
d. Revelation 17:18 refers to Rome, not Jerusalem.

B. Moral conditions:
1. Marriage was unimportant, divorce was easy.
2. There was no value of human life - Abortion, suicide, murder, etc. were common
3. Slaves were considered property to do with as one would.
4. There was no attempt to hide their immorality.

C. Conditions for the church:
1. From the book of James (1:2-3), I Peter (1:6-11), and other epistles; we know that Christians were being persecuted.

2. The Romans had given the Jews religious exemption, and the Romans began considering the Christians to be another segment of Judaism. The Jews argued their differences, and Christians were required to worship the Roman gods.

III. Understanding the Doctrines
A. As Christians, we are told to be able to defend the faith (Jude 3, I Peter 3:15, etc.)
1. Thus, when studying the scriptures it is good to note the false doctrines people try to teach from them.
2. Knowing where error comes from, we can understand the contexts and how to answer those false doctrines.

B. Premillennialism is taught in a large part from the book of Revelation.
1. Defined: the false view that Christ's return will usher in a future millennium of Messianic rule they believe is mentioned in Revelation.
2. Terms like Armageddon, 1,000 year reign of Christ, and the Rapture come from this false doctrine.
3. We will see that this view takes the figurative and makes it literal all the while ignoring the literal and common sense conclusions one would make if they looked at the context of said passages.

C. There is also the postmillennial view.
1. This view says that Christ will return after a 1,000 year peaceful period for the church.
2. This view ignores that the faithful will never have peace so long as the devil is at work (Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 6:46, John 15:18-19, etc.).

Conclusion:
A. If someone can understand literary works they can understand the book of Revelation using the same grammatical and logical rules.
B. Bible students will come to the study of the book of Revelation knowing some things that will aid them such as:
1. Christ will never be on earth again (John 18:36, I Thessalonians 4:14-17, Hebrews 4:14; 7:17; 7:24; and Hebrews 8:4).
2. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide (John 16:13).
   a. Jesus did not know when He would come again (Matthew 24:36).
   b. Since the Spirit spoke His words, the Spirit could not have revealed what Jesus did not know.
1:1 “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”

- We find in John’s introductory words that this Revelation is of Jesus Christ and that God gave it to Jesus. This point is in agreement with what we read throughout the New Testament (John 6:38 and Hebrews 1:1-2).
- The Kingdom of the Lord stands forever (Daniel 2:44-45; 7:13-14; 18, and Hebrews 12:28), but that does not mean Christians will not suffer (Matthew 5:10-12 and II Timothy 3:12).
- While there is persecution at the hand of the Roman government through the aid of the Jews, Christians are assured that these things will shortly come to pass.
- The message was sent to John through signs.

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

- The “who” in this passage is identified as John at the close of verse one.
- John is the one who recorded those things revealed to Him.
- The word of God is communicated to men, by God, through men (I Corinthians 2:9-13 and II Peter 1:20-21).

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

- Those whom read, hear, and keep the words of this book will be blessed.
- We are to be hearers and doers of the word of God (James 1:21-25).
- The time that is at hand is not all things recorded in the book of Revelation being fulfilled, but that time is the comfort the book of Revelation promises to the persecuted saints to whom it is written. As the kingdoms of men would face problems, God’s kingdom would stand.

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

- The Seven churches, to whom John is writing, are identified in chapters two and three as Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.
- There were at least three other churches not listed in chapters two and three that were in Asia Minor. Troas (Acts 20:6-7), Colossae (Colossians 1:2), and Hierapolis (Colossians 4:13). — SEE MAP BELOW (Page 5).
- He which is, was, and is to come is God. See notes under verse eight for discussion.
- When looking at the seven spirits we must think of how the number seven is a number of perfection or completion. Notice the significance of the number seven in the Bible:
  - The # 3 is the numerical signature of God [Father, Son, and H.S.] (Matthew 28:19 and I John 5:7). The # 4 is the numerical signature of nature (four corners of the earth – North, South, East, and West – Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter).
  - 7 colors in a rainbow.
  - There are 7 days in a week (Genesis 2:2).
  - Seven was the basis of the Levitical system.
  - Sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice 7 times (Leviticus 4:17).
Seven Priests, trumpets, seven days, seven times, etc. in the fall of Jericho (Joshua 6:1-6).

- Naaman dipped 7 times (II Kings 5:1-14).
- Seven in the book of Revelation – 7 churches, 7 stars, 7 trumpets, 7 seals, 7 bowls of wrath, etc. About 54 times in the Book of Revelation we find the number 7.
- Revelation 1:4 identifies “the seven Spirits of God” as one who is directing this message along with God the Father. While one may wonder why the plural ending to Spirit, one has to also take the whole passage into consideration. No where in the scriptures do we find a more logical conclusion than this terminology referring to the Holy Spirit. Christ has control of the Holy Spirit of whom He sent to reveal His perfect and complete will (John 16:12-13).
- Along this same line of thought, if you consider verse four to be showing this letter is from God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and then you notice the next verse adds to that Jesus Christ.

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

- Jesus is the faithful witness (John 8:14).
- Jesus is the first to be resurrected (I Corinthians 15:20 and Colossians 1:18).
- Jesus is head over all things (Matthew 28:18 and Ephesians 1:20-23).
- Jesus shed His blood that our sins could be remitted (Matthew 26:28 and Hebrews 10:10; 15-22).
1:6 “And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

- Jesus, through His death, has made us kings and priests (I Peter 2:5; 9) unto God. Thus, we are servants who offer worship and service to the Almighty (Romans 12:1-2).
- In all things God is to be glorified (I Corinthians 10:31).

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

- When the Lord returns all will know He has (I Thessalonians 4:13-17, II Timothy 4:1, and II Peter 3:10-12).
- This passage destroys the premillennial view that Christ will secretly come and take 144,000 back with Him in a “rapture”.

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

- God has always been and will always be, Almighty (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12-13, Psalms 90:1-2; 93:2, John 1:1-3, Revelation 1:4; 17-18; 22:12-13).

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

- Those denying that the kingdom has come have to struggle with what John is saying.
- The saved are added to the kingdom (Colossians 1:12-13), thus John is brethren to all saints.
- This epistle is written from the isle of Patmos [see map on page 7] where John has been exiled, thus he truly is partaking in the persecution of the saints. This verse points out that it is for the sake of the word of God that John has been punished.

1:10 “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.”

- Here John speaks begins to point out that he had a vision. This passage brings what Paul expressed to the Corinthian brethren to mind (II Corinthians 12:1-7).
- The Lord’s Day of the New Testament would have been the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
- The voice would have been loud and clear, like a trumpet.

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

- The voice identifies Himself [see notes on verse eight].
- Instruction is given to write what is seen and send it to the seven churches in Asia.
- Notice that interpreting this vision is not what John is to do (II Peter 1:20).

1:12 “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.”
When John looked he saw seven golden candlesticks [lamp stands], which are the seven churches (Revelation 1:20).

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

- In the midst of the seven churches John saw one who appeared to be Christ. This surely fits into the fact that Christ knows what is going on in His church (Revelation 2:1).
- The long garment would symbolize a priest (Exodus 28:4), of which Christ was (Hebrews 3:1; 4:14).
- The golden band holding the garment around the chest would symbolize royal rank.

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

- His hair appearing would symbolize His purity (Isaiah 1:18).
- His eyes likened unto a flame of fire would show that they pierce through and are all-seeing eyes (Hebrews 4:13).

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

- His feet symbolized feet that had been tried in fire (I Peter 1:7).
- His voice being likened unto many waters shows power (Colossians 1:14-17).

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

- The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches (Revelation 1:20), shown in the hand of Christ to illustrate His control of the message being sent.
- Out of His mouth is an image illustrating that from Him comes the Gospel (Romans 1:16 and Hebrews 4:12).
- The total sum of the whole appearance shows that Christ is wonderful in appearance, and bright like the sun.

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

- John was in awe and fell at the feet of the Lord, and again we see the Lord identifying Himself through His attributes.
- Christ is reassuring, telling John not to fear, Jesus is harmless (Hebrews 7:25-28). Christ is the Good Shepard appearing for a reason (John 10:1-18).

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

- Death is where we lose our bodies, Hades is where our souls await the Lord (Luke 16:19-31). Christ is Lord over both having overcome both (Acts 2:24-27).
1:19 “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”

- Again, as in verse eleven, John is instructed to write what he sees.

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

- Jesus shows what the symbols meant to John, as we have already noted in our studies (vs. 12; 16).

Studies in the Book of Revelation
Chapter Two

Chapter one of this great book of the Bible makes for a wonderful key to understanding the remainder of the book of Revelation. For example, we know from chapter one that John is writing to the seven churches which are in Asia (1:4). Thus, as we begin our study of chapter two we will find that John will address Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira. Of these four congregations, only Smyrna has a completely positive message sent to her. This shows us how rampant error and weakness can spread through congregations. As we study chapters two and three, let’s be sure to make modern day applications and learn from the examples that are set forth both good and bad.

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

- Ephesus was the greatest city in the province of Asia that we are studying. All roads west of the Euphrates River and Mesopotamia met in Ephesus. This city was 40 miles south of Smyrna, 80 miles south of Troas, and 20 miles north of Miletus. It was 60-70 Miles from Patmos where John was exiled to and writing from (Revelation 1:4; 9). Ephesus was famous for it’s idolatry. The temple of Diana (Artemis the Greek Goddess), the goddess of the moon, of chastity, modesty, and childbirth was in Ephesus. She was also praised for her hunting prowess. The building was 425 feet long, 220 feet wide, with columns standing 60 feet tall and is one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Idolatry is surely condemned throughout the inspired text (Leviticus 19:4, Psalms 115:1-9, Habakkuk 2:18-20, Acts 17:16-31, I Corinthians 6:9-10, and I Corinthians 10:14).

- We learn about Ephesus in the book of Acts chapters eighteen and nineteen. Apollos, an eloquent man, taught the baptism of John (Acts 18:24-25) which was no longer valid, is noted for preaching in the area of Ephesus and is credited with forming disciples there who were not properly converted. Aquila and Priscilla corrected this false teaching (Acts 18:26-28). The twelve that began the church in Ephesus had been taught only the baptism of John. Paul corrected that and baptized them into Christ as the church at Ephesus began (Acts 19:1-7).

- The writing of this is to the messenger of the church of Ephesus. Thus, implication would lead us to realize that some teaching from these words would occur.
As learned in chapter one, the seven stars in the right hand of Jesus are the messengers whom the Lord controls and the seven golden candlesticks are the churches of Asia Minor (1:20).

Jesus as the head of the church, (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23, and Colossians 1:18), walks in the midst of the seven churches knowing what is going on (1:13).

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

Jesus states that He knows their works, as Jesus is all-knowing or omniscient (Matthew 9:4 and Hebrews 4:13).

Jesus compliments them by acknowledging their work (I Corinthians 16:1-3 and I Thessalonians 1:7-8), perseverance (James 1:2-4), hatred for error (Psalms 119:104), and trying of false teachers (Acts 20:28-31, II Corinthians 11:12-15, and I John 4:1). Keep in mind that being where this great goddess Diana was would be a challenge all in itself (Acts 19:27).

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

The church in Ephesus has taken on the burdens and persevered for the Lord’s sake without growing weary and ceasing. This is commendable. But…

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

Sound doctrine is great and Ephesus had this. But, they failed having left their first love. We must serve God with all we have (Matthew 22:36-38). Some congregations think that mostly right is right enough, but God does not say that (James 2:10).

What a shame it is to fight the good fight of faith and forget why you are doing so!

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

Remember… The work of a preacher of the Gospel is to bring about a remembrance (I Timothy 4:6).

The church at Ephesus had to remember where they once were in the faith and go back to that, thus they were needful of repentance.

The “or else” is clear. If they did not repent the Lord would remove them from their place in His body the church. They would be delivered unto Satan (I Timothy 1:20).

2:6 “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”

Again, they are accredited for hating false doctrine.

As we will see in the exhortation to Pergamos (2:15) the Nicolaitans were false teachers. History dictates that the Nicolaitans LIKELY followed the doctrine of Gnosticism which is the doctrine of salvation by knowledge. Only knowledge of the truth (John 8:32) and action upon that knowledge gives salvation (James 2:24-26). Gnosticism places the salvation of the soul merely in the possession of a quasi-intuitive knowledge of the mysteries of the universe and of magic formulae indicative of that knowledge. Gnostics were "people who knew", and their knowledge at once constituted them a superior class of beings, whose present and future status was essentially different from that of those who, for whatever reason, did not know. Gnosticism is a collective name for a large number of greatly-varying and pantheistic-idealistic [the view according to which God and the world are one] sects, which flourished for some time before the first century
down to the fifth century, and which, while borrowing the phraseology and some of the tenets of the chief religions of the day, and especially of Christianity, held matter to be a deterioration of spirit, and the whole universe a deprivation of the Deity, and taught the ultimate end of all being to be the overcoming of the grossness of matter and the return to the Parent-Spirit, which return they held to be facilitated by the appearance of some God-sent Savior still to come, who yet never has.

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

- The ending plea, as we will see throughout the instructions to the churches, is to listen and act upon what is being said.
- Overcoming the obstacles this world presents is the goal in finishing the course, while keeping the faith (II Timothy 4:6-8).
- The tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God is mentioned also in Revelation 22:2 and 22:14, in which we come to understand from those passages is the reward of eternal life.

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

- Smyrna was 40 miles north of Ephesus. It was the second great city of Asia with a population in the days of John of around 200,000. It was a sea coast city now called Izmir which is now a Turkish city that boasts populations of over 1,000,000. Smyrna was an ancient city which was thought to be first inhabited by the Hittites. Smyrna was known as a city that was a friend to Rome and was known for its emperor worship. Once a year it was required that every Roman citizen burn a pinch of incense on the altar and say, "Caesar is Lord". Those who did so received a certificate to show he had performed his religious duty. Those who refused to say this were persecuted and killed because they refused to acknowledge Caesar as "Lord of all". Smyrna also had statues of the goddess Demeter (Ceres to the Romans, goddess of harvest, earth, marriage, and social order) and Poseidon (Neptune to the Romans) the god of the sea. These statues represented their domination of both land and sea.
- Polycarp was an elder at Smyrna. "Polycarp was arrested and ordered to say "Lord Caesar" and to offer incense to the image of Emperor Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161). Upon refusing to do so, Polycarp was then asked to swear by the fortune of the emperor, to deny Christ. He was sentenced to death by burning because he would not comply with the wishes of the authorities. He is remembered for his offer to teach the Roman soldiers, and for saying, 'Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury; how then can I blaspheme my King and Savior?' About ten other Christians were martyred at the same time" (Jenkins, Ferrell, Studies in the Book of Revelation, p. 50).
- Again, we see that the angel or messenger of the church is addressed.
- Christ is identified as the first and the last. While the attribute of being everlasting applies to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; we can see that Christ is the one identified because He alone was resurrected (Luke 24:1-8, I Corinthians 15:1-10, and Colossians 1:12-18).

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

- Christ says that he knows their works as he told the brethren in Ephesus.
He knows their tribulation, of which Christians are sure to face. However, there is comfort in the fact that Jesus overcame tribulation and we can too (John 16:33). Tribulation will help us build our endurance and hope (Romans 5:1-5).

Jesus says he knows their poverty and then tells them that they are rich. Our lack of physical wealth means nothing spiritually. Christ died so that we could become spiritually rich (II Corinthians 8:9).

There was a group of individuals with misplaced knowledge and understanding of the scriptures. While Jews in the flesh, these individuals were working against the true children of the Lord. Being a Jew makes no one a child of God (Galatians 3:26-29 and Galatians 6:15-16).

The reason that Jesus says these false individuals were of the synagogue of Satan is that they deny the Lord, yet proclaim to be His people. Lying and rejection of the Lord are marks of those in the kingdom of darkness (Matthew 12:30 and John 8:44).

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

- There is nothing to fear when the Lord is on your side (Romans 8:28-31, II Timothy 1:7, and I John 4:18).
- Jesus points out that some of them would be cast into prison. Prisons were not uncommon places for the faithful to be found (Acts 16:22-36, Acts 22:3-4; 26:10, and II Corinthians 6:1-6).
- The time period of ten days is used to show that this specific persecution will be short.
- The Lord exhorts them to be faithful not just for a short period of time, but until they die that they might have the crown of life given to those who overcome and remain faithful (I Peter 1:3-9).

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

- A very similar statement is made likened unto what the Lord said in conclusion to the church at Ephesus (2:7).
- Instead of the approach Jesus used to Ephesus of promising the tree of life, here we find the same point made from another direction. You will be saved from the second death (Revelation 20:6; 14; 21:8), when you are delivered into eternal life. Knowing that there is a reward at the end of something helps us to keep pressing on. Thus, both Ephesus and Smyrna are told the same thing, but in different ways.

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

- Pergamos [Pergamum] was north east of Smyrna and about 15 miles inland from the Aegean Sea.
- This city is known for her invention of the writing material “parchment” during the time in which the educated world wrote everything on papyrus produced in Egypt. When Egypt cut off supplies of papyrus, the scholars of Pergamum had to find another medium to write on. Experiments subsequently led to the discovery that the prepared skins of pigs and deer were excellent substitutes for papyrus, thus parchment was born.
- Pergamum had one of the most famous libraries in the world numbering some 200,000 volumes of material written on parchment. Ironically enough, Cleopatra later took Pergamum's library away, by permission of Mark Antony, and added it to the one in Alexandria.
- Pergamum was the capital city of the province of Asia in the ancient Roman Empire. After the break-up of Alexander the Great's empire the King of Pergamum, in his will, gave the city to
Rome. The people of the city were happy enough to fulfill his wish; they entered the Roman Empire by choice.

- Pergamum could not rival either Ephesus or Smyrna in its volume of trade, but it laid claim to some distinctions. Pergamum was the center of worship for Aesculapias the god of healing. The temple had it’s medical wards, its medical schools, and it attracted sufferers from all over the Roman Empire. This god’s characteristic name was “savior”, and to the Christian, for whom there was but one Savior, the title was offensive. More significantly still, the emblem of Aesculapias was the serpent. The temple of this god was infested with tame snakes. If you wanted healing there, you were allowed to sleep the night in the temple, and the touch of a snake as it glided over you was held to heal; the snake’s touch was regarded as the touch of the god himself. But to the Christian, a god whose incarnation took the form of a snake could only be that “old serpent Satan.” You have seen medical badges that have the serpents on them; and now you can know where that came from.

- There was the worship of Zeus. His altar stood on a hill one thousand feet high which rose behind the town. Eight hundred feet up, a ledge jutted out from the mountain, and on it stood the altar of Zeus, ninety feet square and twenty feet high. All day long this altar smoked with the smoke of endless sacrifices. It dominated the city, like a pillar of cloud by day and a column of fire by night. Could this be the origin of the phrase, “Satan's throne”? It certainly was the city of the worshipping of other god’s! They also worshipped the god’s Apollo, Athene, Aphrodite, Bacchus the god of wine, and of Dionysus whose worship involved obscenities. Yet again, Emperor Worship was also in Pergamum. Is it any wonder why Christ called this place "Satan's throne”?

- The messenger of Pergamos [Pergamum] is addressed by “he which hath the sharp sword with two edges” (Revelation 1:16).

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

- Now, we read of the third church addressed and we read for a third time that Jesus knew their works. Does this not bring about two significant points? The first being that Christ knows what His body is doing and the second being that works truly are significant in the salvation of our souls.

- Jesus gives a distinction to the town of Pergamum. He says that this is where Satan’s seat [throne] is. The word “seat” in the KJV is derived from the Greek word “Strong’s #2362 thronos”. Translated in the NKJV and the ASV of 1901 as “throne”. Defined as: “a chair of state having a footstool; assigned in the NT to kings, hence, kingly power or royalty - Thayer”. One can only imagine, with that distinction, what the saints must have been facing in their vocations and lives outside of the assembling times with the Saints. Jesus warned that His work would be done among the evil of the world (Matthew 10:16-25 and John 17:13-20).

- Antipas is mentioned only in this one verse of the Bible. All we know from this is that he was a faithful brother who died for the cause of Christ among the saints there. What a terrible event that would be to witness.

2:14 “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.”
Balak (king of Moab) hired Balaam (a prophet) to stop the progress of the children of Israel (Numbers 22-24). Balaam taught Balak to have the children of Israel to eat meat sacrificed to idols, to commit fornication, and it worked (Numbers 25:1-6).

The brethren in Pergamum had those there that taught false doctrine, and they put up with it. False doctrine is not be left alone (Romans 16:17-18).

2:15 “So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.”

These brethren also put up with the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which the Lord does hate. See earlier comments for more detail (2:6).

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

When one person or a congregation is wrong, they must repent. If not, the word of God will do the judging (John 12:48; cf. Hebrews 4:12).

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

Overcome and Christ will give of the “hidden manna” (Matthew 4:4 and John 6:31-35; cf. Exodus 16:12ff). A white stone of acquittal will also be given to them (I John 1:9). White representing pure and clean.

In that pure stone will be a new name written of which the only man to know that name is he whose name is written. In ancient times a trial was decided and the innocent were notified of their acquittal by the dropping of a white stone into an urn while the guilty received a black stone. The secrecy of the name on the stone indicates that ones salvation matters only to oneself and is not a badge of bragging rights. To take this verse to be talking of the names written in the “Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 21:27) is to conclude that somehow everyone that has their name added to the book, sees their name in that book, under a literally new name. When in fact, the new name just represents a new identity of person just as we gain in our conversion (Romans 6:3-6, II Corinthians 5:17, and Ephesians 4:22-24).

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

Thyatira was located halfway between Pergamum and Sardis, near the Lycas River. Today, Thyatira is known as Akhisar. It is located in Anatolian, Turkey. It was built on the side of a sloping hill. This town was a gateway to Pergamum. This city had many natural resources. One was the madder-root which was abundant here, and allowed them to make dyes for clothing. Lydia was from Thyatira (Acts 16:13-15). This town was known for its commercial prosperity. It was also a city of many other trades: Wool workers, Linen workers, Makers of outer garments, Tanners, Leather workers, Dyers, Bakers, Slave dealers, and Bronze metal workers were some of the professions that were found in this town. The city was also like the other cities we have noted, in that they had the practice of Idolatry among them. The major “god of choice” was Apollo the god of the sun. The various trades had their own "guardian" gods to which they offered sacrifices. To practice a certain trade you would have to belong to a certain “guild”. Since each guild had their own god they worshipped, this posed a serious problem to Christians seeking to earn a
living. Joining these guilds put Christians in compromising positions also because of the parties that would be held in which everything from drinking to fornication occurred.

- Again, the messenger of the church in Thyatira is addressed.
- The imagery of eyes like unto fire and feet like fine brass are also found in chapter one (vs. 14-15).

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

- Again, we find that Jesus knew what was going on among this local church. He knew their works. Their love for the Lord would have been shown through their obedience or disobedience (John 14:15). Their service would have been required to please the Lord (Matthew 4:10 and Romans 12:1). Faith is evident through one’s works or lack thereof (James 2:14-26). Their patience [endurance] would help them to last through persecutions.
- Their last works were more than their first works, so they were not like Ephesus leaving their first love (Revelation 2:4), they have grown and matured (I Peter 2:1-3 and II Peter 3:18).

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

- Although some good was going on, the Lord did not overlook the bad.
- They allowed a woman denoted as "Jezebel" [compare to Jezebel, Ahab's wife (I Kings 21:25)] to convince some of the brethren to seemingly take part in these trade guilds which had gatherings that included idolatry, partying, and even lead to drunkenness and fornication. If it was not these trade guilds they were joining in, it was something like them.
- She called herself a “prophetess”. They should have not listened (Matthew 7:15-16 and I John 4:1). A woman should not have been in the position to lead these brethren astray (I Timothy 2:11-12). She got them to fornicate (I Corinthians 6:18) and to eat meat sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:28-29). They should not have “suffered” [allowed] this to go on.

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

- The Lord was longsuffering enough to allow time for repentance (II Peter 3:9), but she had opted not to change.

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

- The word translated “bed” means sickbed. Christ was going to strike this woman ill.
- The followers of this woman are going to pay for their deeds as well. Her children are those who were following in her steps, much like when Jesus used that language in John 8:44.

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

- In continuation of the fact that the followers of this woman would be punished, her followers are called her children. They will pay for what they are following. Just because one is led astray
does not pardon them from those sins they are led to commit. You reap what you sow (Romans 2:5-6 and Galatians 6:7-8).

- This church would serve as an example to others showing that the Lord knows what is going on and He will not overlook sins (Acts 17:30).

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

- Some did not hold to this doctrine, they denied ungodliness (Titus 2:11-14), thus they have not know the depths of Satan.
- The Lord would not allow them to be burdened any further (I Corinthians 10:13).

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

- The faithful were to hold fast that which is right (I Thessalonians 5:21, II Timothy 1:13, and Hebrews 4:14; 10:22-23) until the Lord deals with the sins among them.

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

- Governments have power over us in earthly ordinances (Romans 13:1-5 and I Peter 2:13-16) so long as those laws do not interfere with God’s law (Acts 5:29). But, we see how in these congregations the government did things contrary to the will of God (i.e. Emperor Worship), and how these governments punished them for not following ungodly laws of men. While a nation can kill a Saint they cannot take a soul (Matthew 10:28). There will be a time in which the tables will be turned (II Timothy 2:11-12).
- By our living faithful and preaching the truth, we in essence condemn the world just as did Noah (Hebrews 11:7).

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

- Christ has all authority given unto Him by the Father (Matthew 28:18). Those individuals and nations that do not serve God will pay a price (Psalms 9:16-17). There is a blessing for nations that serve the Lord (Psalms 33:12).

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

- Those who serve Christ will have Christ (Revelation 22:16-17).

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

- Again, we see the conclusion to this church is similar to that of the others. If you have ears, listen to what the Lord is saying. Ignoring divine instructions will always have eternal consequences (Matthew 7:21).
Chapter two gives us much insight of the problems the saints were facing and involved with at the close of the first century. Roman persecution and false doctrine surely troubled the saints. Now we will read of the congregation in Sardis who was dead, Philadelphia who had an open door before them, and Laodicea who was neither hot nor cold making the Lord sick of their lukewarm religion. Again, let us learn from these congregations so that we can follow the right way and keep ourselves from evil.

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

- Sardis was about 30 miles southeast of Thyatira and 50 miles east of Smyrna. Sardis was the capital city of Lydia.
- The city was on Mt. Tmolus which was 1500 ft. high off the plain. At the base flowed the river Pactolus which served as a moat, rendering the city practically impossible to invade. The city was overtaken twice (549 BC by Cyrus and 218 BC by Antiochus the Great). Because of only one way into the city, through the south, Cyrus the Persian King in 549 BC gave a reward offer to anyone who found a way to scale this seemingly impossible hillside to penetrate. One of Cyrus’s soldiers noted a Lydian guard drop a helmet down the side and then climb down a narrow crevice to retrieve it. That soldier remembered that crevice and later that night lead a band of soldiers up that crevice to the unguarded side of what was thought to be a safe side of the mountain. That night Cyrus’s army overtook the city.
- The city was destroyed by an earthquake in AD 17 and rebuilt with the help of a non-tax for five years by the Roman Empire through the Emperor Tiberius.
- The people of Sardis primarily worshipped Cybele who was “mother earth” or the goddess of nature.
- “The ancient city was noted for its fruits and wool, and for its temple of the goddess Cybele, whose worship resembled that of Diana of Ephesus. Its wealth was also partly due to the gold which was found in the sand of the river Pactolus, and it was here that gold and silver coins were first struck. During the Roman period its coins formed a beautiful series, and are found in abundance by the peasants who till the surrounding fields. The ruins of the buildings which stood at the base of the hill have now been nearly buried by the dirt washed down from above. The hill upon which the acropolis stood measures 950 ft. high: the triple walls still surround it. The more imposing of the ruins are on the lower slope of the hill, and among them the temple of Cybele is the most interesting, yet only two of its many stone columns are still standing. Equally imposing is the necropolis of the city, which is at a distance of two hours' ride from Sert, South of the Gygaean lake. The modern name of the necropolis is Bin Tepe or Thousand Mounds, because of the large group of great mounds in which the kings and nobles were buried. Many of the mounds were long ago excavated and plundered.”

3:2 “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.”
The very first instruction to correct the problem is to be watchful (Matthew 24:42, I Corinthians 16:13, I Thessalonians 5:1-11, II Timothy 4:5, and I Peter 5:8 [cf. Ezekiel 33:1-10]).

Secondly, there were a few things going on that were right and those things needed to be strengthened for they too are ready to die. In these things Christ should be the source of their strength (Philippians 4:13).

Their works were not found to be complete or up to what they should be.

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

As the Prodigal Son remembered his life in his father’s house, the church at Sardis needs to remember where they once were (Luke 15:17-21). A like admonishment was given to the church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:5). Once they have recalled they need to hold on securely to those things wherein they once stood and bring about true repentance (Matthew 3:8 and II Corinthians 7:9-10).

If true repentance is not reached, the Lord will come upon them in a judgment at an unknown time.

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

There are some who are still walking worthy among this congregation. Just like Noah in the days prior to the flood (Genesis 6:6-10 and I Peter 3:20-21). The Lord would have spared the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah if there would have been found ten righteous souls there (Genesis 18:32).

There is no shame in being among the few (Matthew 7:13-14 and Matthew 20:16).

Walking among the few certainly shows the true faithfulness of those whom were not joining the crowd.

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

Those whom overcome shall have the Lord standing before the Father and confessing their names (Matthew 10:32-33).

These who stand fast will be clothed in white raiment representing purity as they are rewarded with eternal life.

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

Again, a similar conclusion to that we have seen over and over again to the churches of Asia Minor. The point made is to listen to what the Lord is saying.

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

This city originally known as Rabbath-ammon and was beautified by Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.). The city was renamed in honor of the king of Pergamos “Attalus II”. He was given the title of "Philadelphus" because of his loyalty to his elder brother, Eumenes II, who was the king of Lydia. Philadelphia comes from the Greek word, "philadelphos" which means, "one who loves his brother."
Philadelphia was located about 25-30 miles southeast of Sardis. Philadelphia was located on a main trade route from west to east. It soon became a wealthy trading center. This city lied in the Cogamis valley. This valley served as a natural line of communication from Pergamum to Philadelphia via Sardis. Philadelphia was first built by the Greeks to spread the Greek language and culture to the countries of Mysia, Lydia, and Phrygia. Philadelphia had the characteristics of a border town. This city was also known as Neocaesarea in the first Century. It was also known as "Little Athens" because of the temples and other public buildings that were so grand. Philadelphia was also a rich farming region. The city was destroyed by a great earthquake in 17 A.D. just like Sardis and 10 other cities in this area. It was later rebuilt with the help of the Roman Emperor, Tiberius who waived their taxes for 5 years and contributed heavily to them as they were rebuilding.

- Jesus is the most holy [pure, clean, etc.] (II Corinthians 5:19-21, Hebrews 4:14-15, and I Peter 1:18-19).
- Christ is true (Strong's #228 “that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name, in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name, real, true genuine” – Thayer). Christ is God (Matthew 1:22-23), God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), therefore Christ cannot lie. The word is truth (John 17:17), Christ is the word (John 1:1), therefore Christ is the truth (John 14:6).
- A key represents a form of authority. Christ has all authority (Matthew 28:18). The significance of mentioning the key of David can only have reference to the kingdom. The keys of the kingdom were shared by Christ (Matthew 16:18-19) and used in Acts chapter 2 to bring the kingdom into existence.

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

- Again, as we have seen repeatedly (Revelation 2:2; 2:9; 2:19; 3:1), Christ is very much aware of what is going on in the way of the works of brethren. This is how our works will be brought into judgment (II Corinthians 5:10).
- The open door is not Calvinism meaning they cannot fall away. The open door is a door of opportunities (Acts 14:27, I Corinthians 16:5-9, II Corinthians 2:12, and Colossians 4:3).
- Why is a door of opportunity given to them? They had little strength (possible money, numbers, etc.), but they still worked for the Lord.

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

- Jews were at one time God’s chosen people (Deuteronomy 7:7-8), but at this time if you were to be God’s people it had to be of a different birth (Galatians 3:22-29). Jesus addressed this issue with some who thought their heir to Abraham’s seed was sufficient (John 8:31-47). Smyrna had a similar problem (Revelation 2:9). How does that make them of the synagogue of Satan? Well, if they are not with the Lord, they are against the Lord (Matthew 12:30).
- Christ is not promoting the worship of man, but is telling them that soon these individuals will humble themselves before the feet of the brethren. Similar promises are made in the O.T. such as Isaiah 60:13-14.

3:10 “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”
“Kept” Strong’s # 5083 “tereo tay-reh’ –o”: “to attend to carefully, take care of; to guard; to observe to reserve…” –Thayer. Notice the following passages with the same Greek word (Matthew 19:17, Matthew 28:20, John 8:51, John 14:15, II Timothy 4:7-8, and I John 2:5).

The hour of temptation (trial) is a period in which there would be trials in their lives that will affect them and all the world, but Christ will strengthen them to be able to overcome (Philippians 4:13).

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

Christ admonishes the brethren to hold on to their faithfulness and not to allow anyone to take their faith from them. Christ will quickly (readily) be there to strengthen and protect. To lose the crown would be to lose eternal life; see: Revelation 2:10.

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

In the ancient of days one who died having given outstanding service would have his name inscribed in a pillar as one who served faithfully in the temple of their god. This, like chapter twenty-one, has the church at hand, not Heaven. The church is the temple of God (I Timothy 3:15). There would be no more going out because the glorified church is a place of security (Revelation 21:1ff.).

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

Again, a similar conclusion to that we have seen over and over again to the churches of Asia Minor. The point made is to listen to what the Lord is saying.

3:14 “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”

The city of Laodicea was located in the Lycus River Valley together with Hierapolis and Colossae. This valley is a natural route of travel from east to west. It was 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia. The city was founded in the third century BC by Antiochus II and was named after his wife “Laodice”.

This city was known for producing a type of black wool cloth from the sheep they had and this put them in the clothing business. It also manufactured a type of ointment used for eye diseases. This city was known for its wealthy citizens. Bankers and all types of rich folks lived there. This city was lacking terribly in an adequate water supply they little they had was hot springs that emitted lukewarm water. From evidence of mineral deposits in their aqueduct system some scholars have concluded these hot springs to be their primary water source. Laodicea was the banking center of Asia Minor having much gold there. This city also had a medical school.

In AD 60 the city was devastated by an earthquake. They were so wealthy and proud that they declined Roman assistance and rebuilt the city themselves during the reign of Nero. This pride and self-wealth also played a big role in the attitude of brethren in Laodicea.

Paul addressed this church through the letter to the church at Colossae (Colossians 4:16).

Christ is the “Amen” – what he says will be; follows with the next statement that Christ is the “faithful and true witness” for there is no unfaithful part of him and as true witness he is truth.

The record proves that Christ is true and so are His words (John 19:31-37).
He is “the beginning of the creation of God” or the originating source of creation. This verse is simply stating that Christ is the CAUSE of the creation… As Thayer put it “…that by which anything begins to be…”

Some would have you to believe that this creation period included the creation of Christ and they use Revelation 3:14 to try and justify their claim. However the Bible teaches that Christ has always been (Micah 5:2), will always be (Revelation 1:8), and that He has created the earth (John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:13-18, Hebrews 2:9-10, and Hebrews 11:3).

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

- Jesus knows their works and their works say something about them.
- They are Not cold (completely dead), not hot (completely alive), they were lukewarm (doing some work, but not as they should have been). They were in the middle.

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

- As lukewarm water is not good (water the town had as a supply), neither is the condition of the church. It is sickening to the Lord so much that He wants to “spue” [vomit] them out of His mouth. Partial service is not pleasing to the Lord (Mark 12:28-30).
- Serving the Lord is more than lip service (Luke 6:46 and Titus 1:16).

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

- Physical wealth is sometimes a set back for ones salvation (I Timothy 6:6-11 and Matthew 19:16-24).
- In the case of these brethren they thought their physical wealth solved all of their problems.
- The terms Jesus used to summarize their spiritual wealth shows their were spiritually bankrupt.

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

- Christ counseled [advised] them to buy of Him gold tried in the fire. They needed the type of faith that withstands and endures (I Peter 1:6-7).
- The needed the white raiment representing the clothing of purity (Revelation 3:5).
- Finally, eye salve as they were known for the ointment that helped physical vision now they need spiritual vision (Acts 28:25-27).

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

- The Lord loves His people and thus His rebuke is to bring them back to Him (Proverbs 27:5 and Hebrews 12:6-13).

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

- First off, we must realize that these words are written to saints who are unfaithful. The world often times applies this to alien sinners, but this is not the case.
What the passage does teach is that the spiritual fellowship we have with the Lord when faithful (I John 1:7), can be restored just as was the relationship with the Prodigal Son and his father (Luke 15:11-32).

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

- The idea in this passage is not that of a special seat with Christ (Matthew 20:20-23).
- The teaching of this passage is one of reward to those that overcome the things present in this world that tempt us and lead us away from God.

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

- Finally, and once again, listen to what the Spirit is teaching to the churches. We can conclude the seven of these letters by learning from the good and bad that these brethren did.

Studies in the Book of Revelation

Chapter Four

We have concluded John’s inspired words that directly applied to seven of the congregations in Asia Minor. Now we are going to have a metaphorical scene of the throne of God above all creatures and things created, affirming that God rules both in Heaven and earth (Genesis 14:19, Daniel 5:21, and Acts 17:24). God’s power or knowledge is not limited to one realm or the other (Jeremiah 23:23-24). Jesus has been given this authority (Matthew 28:18). Finally, we will see that all creatures owe God reverence as He is the creator and sustainer of life.

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

- John’s usage of the phrase “after this” shows transition from one point to another. He does this also in other transitions throughout the book of Revelation (7:1; 7:9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1).
- What John saw was a door opened in heaven. In words similar to the account of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1) and Stephen (Acts 7:56), God allows John to have a revelation. The opening of this metaphorical door suggests that something is now being seen that John and / or others have not seen.
- Similarly to verses one and two of chapter four, John writes of his being in the spirit and hearing a voice he likened unto a trumpet [loud and clear] in the tenth verse of chapter one.
- The voice indicates that there is going to be a revelation of things to come (Isaiah 42:9 and Acts 2:23).
4:2 “And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.”

- John being in the spirit reveals this is something not of the flesh. Again, similar to what he said in the tenth verse of chapter one and similar to what Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren (II Corinthians 12:1-4).
- The vision was of a throne in Heaven and one sitting on that throne. We know that it is God who sits upon the throne of power and dominion in Heaven with Christ at His right hand (Hebrews 8:1; 12:2). Heaven itself is God’s throne (Matthew 5:34).

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

- A jasper stone represents itself clear as crystal (Revelation 21:11), thus representing the holiness of God.
- A sardine stone was “transparent red (like a cornelian)” [3], thus representing the nature of fury and judgment of the Lord (Hebrews 12:29).
- The rainbow that shined as an emerald represents God’s covenant with man in which He said He would never destroy the earth by flood again (Genesis 9:12-17).
- Thus, we have a pure God who shows judgment and mercy (Psalms 89:14).

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

- The people of Israel were divided into twelve tribes. The chosen Apostles of the Lord were twelve. Thus, the twenty-four seats and overseers symbolize the total representation of the people under both covenants.
- The white garments represent purity and the crowns represent victory. Thus, people under both covenants enjoy redemption that came at the cost of the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:11-12).

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

- As we see lightnings and thunderings we can realize that Moses ascended unto God at Mt. Sinai, and God showed forth similar things to him and the people of Israel (Exodus 19:16).
- Revelation 1:4 identifies “the seven Spirits of God” as one who is directing this message along with God the Father. While one may wonder why the plural ending to Spirit, one has to also take the whole passage into consideration. No where in the scriptures do we find a more logical conclusion than this terminology referring to the Holy Spirit. In our current context we find that the seven Spirits of God are shown as seven lamps of fire. The work of the Holy Spirit is to illuminate [reveal] the truth, therefore this imagery displays this fact (John 16:12-13). In contrast to the lighting and thunder, the Spirit is the comforter (John 14:26; cf. Romans 15:4).

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

- In chapter twenty-one John says in the first verse “…and there was no more sea.” Between chapter four here and what John describes in chapter twenty-one the separation of God and the saints has ended. That is because what John is going to reveal through chapter twenty and verse
eleven is going to happen during the Roman rule, but after chapter twenty and verse eleven John will begin revealing things of eternal life and damnation.

- The four beasts (most accurately translated as creatures) that surround the throne in this vision have sight of things before and behind them. Isaiah’s and Ezekiel’s descriptions of these creatures we are and will read about help us to identify these as God’s angels (Isaiah 6:1-7 and Ezekiel 1:5-18; 10:20).

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

- The description of the angels here is that of strength, service, intelligence, and vision.
- Remember they are not lions, etc., but likened unto them.

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

- As we looked at Isaiah’s description to identify these angels, we now need to consider what to look at the eyes within to mean, if anything. It is actually rather simple. John shows these beings have sight of all things before and behind, now we find that they see within themselves as well. This tool of introspection will aid them in obedience (II Corinthians 13:5) and in worship (cf. I Corinthians 11:28) to the everlasting God, which is also shown in this verse to be done continually day and night.

4:9-11 “And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

- As these verses tie together, we shall examine them collectively. As the angels worship the Lord, so do the 24 elders (representing those from both covenants).
- The casting forth of their crowns that show victory, they are showing that this is possible only through God.
- The creator and sustainer of life (Acts 17:28) is due His reverence, thus He is worthy of worship from all created beings (Psalms 148:2-5; Isaiah 40:26).
We just read of the scene of the throne of God in which we see that God is worthy of worship from all of creation. In this chapter we will learn of He who is worthy to loose the sealed book. The characteristics describing this individual (Lion of the tribe of Judah, Root of David, Lamb, Redeemer, etc.) reveals that Jesus is the worthy one. In chapter six we will see six of the seven seals and then the seventh unsealed in chapter eight.

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

- John’s heavenly vision (4:1) continues.
- John sees the one sitting on the throne (God – Hebrews 12:2) holding a book in His right hand. The book John would was a sealed scroll. It would have had so much written therein that the front was not enough, so the backside of the scroll was used as well. This is very similar to what we read from Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:8-10). Since there are seven seals this would reveal that what is contained therein is perfect (complete).

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

- The question by this mighty angel shows that the seals are not just something that anyone can loosen to reveal the contents of the message. A certain worthy person is necessary to open this sealed scroll.

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

- That individual is not anyone who has been created. No man in heaven, on the earth, or one who is dead is worthy. As we lead into revealing who is worthy, it is proper to note that those mentioned here in verse three will bow to someone (Philippians 2:9-10).

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

- This vision causes sorrow on the part of John.

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

- One of the twenty-four we read of in chapter four (4:4) comforts John. He reveals that there is one who is worthy to unseal the scroll.
  - The Lion (signifying strength) of the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14).
  - The Root of David (Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15, Romans 1:3-4, and Revelation 22:16).
  - The fact that Christ has prevailed shows He has overcome death (Acts 2:24-32).
- By this elder saying Jesus had prevailed to open the book, that implies this is one work Christ was to accomplish.

5:6 “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”
The Lamb that had been slain is certainly Jesus (Isaiah 53:7, John 1:29; 36, and I Peter 1:18-19).

The eyes represent the vision or omniscience of Christ (Matthew 9:4) and the horns represent strength (Deuteronomy 33:17) for Christ had all authority (Matthew 17:1-5).

The Seven Spirits sent into all the earth are once again brought into our studies. Revelation 1:4 identifies “the seven Spirits of God” as one who is directing this message along with God the Father. Christ has control of the Holy Spirit of whom He sent to reveal His perfect and complete will (John 16:12-13).

The Lamb will be the one to open the seals (6:1ff.).

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

Now John sees Christ taking the book from the hand of the Father. Certainly we can see that Jesus is only taking what the Father has already given – authority (Matthew 28:18).

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

The four creatures and the elders representing both covenants fall down before Christ and offer worship unto him. The harps represent musical praise and even if they were literal that would not authorize mechanical worship upon earth. For, what is in Heaven is not that which is authorized upon earth (cf. Matthew 22:24-30). The golden vials represented the prayers of the saints (Psalms 141:2). Our prayers (the prayers of saints) go before the Lord (I Peter 3:12).

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

This new song (a song John had not previously heard) sung before John was a song that reveals an important fact about our Lord. The song demonstrated that the blood of Christ redeemed all men (Matthew 26:28, Romans 5:9, Ephesians 1:5-7; 2:13, Colossians 1:13-14, and Revelation 1:5).

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

Jesus, through His death, has made us kings and priests (I Peter 2:5; 9 and Revelation 1:6) unto God. Thus, we are servants who offer worship and service to the Almighty (Romans 12:1-2). We are already kings and priests, thus we already are reigning on earth. According to the Greek term translated reign “basileuo” we reign “metaphorically to exercise the highest influence, to control.” [2]

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

John’s vision is now adding to the scene already set before us an innumerable amount of singing angels. The angels serving the Lord are certainly great in number (Hebrews 12:22).

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

The song these angels declared was about the worthiness of Christ. The worthiness of Christ in this verse is a result of His work to save mankind through His offering of Himself as a sacrifice (John 10:15-17). Though certainly Christ being God is worthy of power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing based solely upon His being Deity and creator of all things (John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:16-17); He has gone beyond “the call of duty”. Thus, His worthiness is honored not just
in reception of these things, or just in worship, but also to the subject matter of this chapter – His being the one honored to unseal the book God the Father had in His hand.

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

- This verse is very reminiscent of the one hundred and forty-eight chapter of the book of Psalms. All of creation owes praise to God and His Son Jesus Christ.

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

- The four creatures (4:6) agreed (Amen) and the leaders joined in the worship of God!

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Studies in the Book of Revelation  
Chapter Six

In chapter five we learned of John’s vision: (5:1) “And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.” We then learned that there was only one worthy to open the sealed document: (5:5) “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.” That one individual was Jesus Christ. Now we enter into a chapter that deals with what was revealed in that book as six of the seven seals are removed. You have heard of the “Four Horseman of the Apocalypse”, this is where they (Premillennialists, etc.) get their perversions from.

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

- John’s vision shows Jesus (John 1:29) opening one of the seals. Then he hears one of the creatures (4:7-8) speaking loudly saying “Come and see.”

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

- Clearly Christ is shown here on this first horse. White represents purity and other passages in the book of Revelation make Christ the one on the symbolic white horse (19:11-16). Christ and those assembled with Him are the victorious ones who will overcome (17:14). For consideration to the bow representing battle notice the following prophesy, from the book of Isaiah, about God’s punishment on His people (Isaiah 5:25-28).
- Notice that all of these horseman are permitted to ride and not doing so on their own authority.
6:3 “And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.”

- Now the second of the four creatures in Heaven asks John to “come and see” what is revealed beyond the second seal.

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

- The fact that peace can be taken from earth shows this horse and rider is revealed while there is still an earth, thus this vision is not one pointing to the Second Coming of Christ (II Peter 3:10).
- With the first horse and rider representing Christ we must follow that this too has some spiritual nature in its meaning. Red represents blood. The warfare of Christians is not carnal (II Corinthians 10:3-4). So, the shedding of blood certainly does not pertain to the Christians work in the kingdom.
- The book of Revelation is written to churches facing persecution. Thus, we must conclude this is the horseman of physical persecution. Christians are promised that their faithfulness will result in the facing of persecution (Matthew 5:10-12 and II Timothy 3:12).

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

- The third beast now speaks at the opening of the third seal saying “come and see”.
- John sees a black horse and one that sat upon that black horse with a pair of scales in his hand. Black represents mourning, pain, suffering, etc. We will see how the scales mean something in verse six.

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

- From the midst of the four creatures John hears a voice. That voice indicates why type of hardship the third horseman brings.
- The third horseman represents economic hardship which will show another form of persecution on the Christian (Revelation 2:9). Consider that a penny was noted by Christ as a days wage (Matthew 20:2). Here we see that economic persecution will come through a Christian having to spend a days wage for the very basic of foods.

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

- Now we come upon the fourth seal and the fourth creature extends the invitation to John to see what is contained therein.

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

- The fourth horse and rider thereon comes in the color of a pale horse. This symbolizes illness and disease that brings about death. The term translated “Hell” here in the KJV is “Hades - the realm of the dead”. It is where one goes when this life ends and is comprised of both Paradise and Torment (Luke 16:19-31).
This fourth horseman is given authority to end human life. We die naturally, by way of battle, starvation, etc. (Hebrews 9:27). It is to Adam and Eve we owe our thanks [sarcasm] for this horse and horseman (I Corinthians 15:21-22), but to Christ we can be truly thankful life beyond this earth.

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

- Now we see Christ opening the fifth seal and no creature has brought it to John’s attention.
- John now sees the souls of them who had died for the sake of the word of God (Matthew 23:31, Acts 7:52-60, Acts 12:1-2, I Thessalonians 2:14-16, and Hebrews 11:36-40). This too serves as proof that there is life beyond death prior to the Judgment Day (Hadean Realm).

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

- Those slain servants of the Lord are crying out asking the Lord how long it will be until justice is served. The faithful realize that God is the judge and the day or reckoning belongs to Him (Matthew 5:44-48 and Romans 12:18-21).

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

- The Lord responds by giving these servants who have been slain a white robe showing righteousness. Then the sad message comes – not yet, more blood is yet to be shed. Sometimes people have a problem with the longsuffering of God (II Peter 3:9). They ask “how long will God let these things go on.” However, consider that some who persecute the saints still have souls and the ability to obey the Gospel. In this account the Apostle Paul serves as a great example (Acts 22:1-16; cf. Acts chapter 9). Christ came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), our task of taking the Gospel to them is a task that requires time and opportunity.

6:12-17 “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.” 6:13 “And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.” 6:14 “And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” 6:15 “And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.” 6:16 “And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” 6:17 “For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

- Very symbolic language now appears and many construe this as a fight of good and evil with Christ on the white horse. Language very much like this has appeared when talking about the fall of Babylon (Isaiah 13:1ff.), Idumea (Isaiah 34:1-6), and Jerusalem (Matthew 24:27-31). Seeing that all of the other accounts wherein this language is used show physical judgment by God on a people, we cannot but conclude that this is the same type of judgment and not the final Judgment Day wherein Christ will judge mankind. After all, you will not be able to hide under a rock from the Lord in the Judgment Day. God said that His people would try to hide under the rocks when He punished them in the days of Isaiah (Isaiah 2:19), this was not the Second Coming.
It is very possible to conclude this is God’s judgment on Rome (397 AD).

The question “who shall be able to stand?” seems to trouble many students of this text. However, God asked the same thing by Nahum in regards to Him punishing Nineveh (Nahum 1:1; 6).

Studies in the Book of Revelation

Chapter Seven

Chapter six concluded with the opening of the sixth seal and the question: “who shall be able to stand?” We will now take our focus from the Heaven above and place it to the earth beneath in the first half of this chapter. John will reveal in this chapter God’s protection of His people. Let us remember that the book of Revelation is set in a period of trials and tribulation for God’s people and more to come (1:1; 2:10; 3:10; 6:10-11). As Christians we long to finish this life to reach our home eternal in the Heavens (John 14:1-3 and II Corinthians 5:1). This chapter also is a dwelling place for Premillennialists.

We would do well to recall that Premillennialism teaches the kingdom is yet to come (will come at the return of Christ), the there are 144,000 who will be eternally saved in Heaven, there will be a battle on earth, and that Christ will reign on earth for 1,000 years. Some Premillennialists also attempt to say the book of Revelation (along with Daniel and other prophecies) show us when Christ will return. These doctrines are simple to prove false. The kingdom has come (Isaiah 2:2-3, Daniel 2:31-45, Mark 9:1, Acts 1:8, Luke 24:47, Acts 2:1ff., Colossians 1:13, and Revelation 1:9). God has not chose 144,000 to be saved, but is willing that all should be saved through the Gospel (II Peter 3:9 and Mark 16:15-16). If God has already chosen His list of the saved - the preaching of the Gospel would be in vain. We know that Christ will not lead a battle on earth or set His kingdom upon the earth, for He himself will never step foot on this earth again (I Thessalonians 4:13-18, Hebrews 4:14, 7:14; 17, and 8:4 cf. John 18:36). It is also clear that Christ is not aware of the time of His return (Matthew 24:35-36).

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

As we read verse one we realize that this is another part of what John has revealed unto him.

John saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth to prevent the four winds from blowing on the earth and sea. We see in the Old Testament that these winds represent God’s power of destruction (Jeremiah 49:36). Also, when we read of the destruction of Jerusalem we see the four winds and the involvement of the angels (Matthew 24:31). We should recall that there was to be a great hour of trial upon the whole world (Revelation 3:10). This of course shows it is not just Jerusalem, but the power of the Roman army and their destruction on the kingdoms of the earth.

In verse two we learn that these four winds are designed to hurt the earth as we have seen throughout the prophets of old and the words of Christ.

7:2 “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. 7:3 “Saying,
Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.”

- In these two verses we find the destruction of God upon the earth (not the final destruction) being held back until the servants of God are sealed.
- This seal of protection is not different from what God has done in the past (Ezekiel 9:4-5). A seal shows such things as ownership (Song of Solomon 8:6) and sanctification [being set apart] (Ephesians 1:13-14). We have a seal (confirmation, authentication, or proof) that God knows those whom are His (II Timothy 2:19).
- With the information we have gathered we can conclude that the seal the angel is wanting upon the figurative foreheads of the elect is the confirmation of those who belong to the Lord and will be protected from God’s judgment on this earth. This is similar to what Moses had the children of Israel do during the Passover (Exodus 12:1-12).

7:4 “And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. 7:5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 7:6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7:7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 7:8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.”

- Two groups of people are written about in the book of Revelation when you break it down. Those sealed of God (such as in this context) and those with the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:15-18).
  The number of the mark of the beast symbolizes three times imperfection (666; Revelation 13:18), while the 144,000 is $12 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$. Twelve is multiplied by itself and then three times the complete number (10). The two times multiplied number of twelve represents the foundation of Israel (12 tribes) and the foundation of the church (12 apostles). We have talked about the twenty-four elders and how they represent both dispensations (5:8). Consider these passages in light of the sealing upon the forehead (Romans 12:2 and Revelation 22:4).
- This number of saved (144,000) is made up of those in Heaven and those on earth. To take the number literally here the other reference(s) would have to be literal later in John’s revelation as well (14:1-4). This poses numerous problems to all the Premillennial false doctrines.
- While the twelve tribes listed most certainly has a ringing of the Old Testament, we cannot overlook the fact that Christians are referred to in the same light as we are the Zion of God today (James 1:1). Thus, the 144,000 symbolically represents God’s children including all Christians.
- The names given above are those of the decedents of Jacob and Joseph. Ten of the tribes were the children of Jacob (I Chronicles 2:1-2) with the exception of Levi who would be a people of the priesthood (Deuteronomy 10:8-9). Joseph was not a tribe throughout the Old Testament, but his children were. However, you will note in John’s rendering here that both Dan and Ephraim are not listed. Dan (a child of Jacob) left his inheritance (Judges 18) and Ephraim (a child of Joseph - Numbers 1:10) led Israel away into idolatry through Jeroboam (I Kings 11:26; 12:27-28). Thus, Levi is listed as is Joseph to make the twelve.

7:9 “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”
Now John sees an innumerable (notice it is not just 144,000) amount of saved individuals standing before God from all nations. Why many nations? First off, God promised His kingdom would be numbered from all nations (Micah 4:1-2). Secondly, the Gospel of Christ that brings salvation is to be preached to all nations giving everyone the opportunity to have Heaven as their eternal home (Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15-16, Romans 1:16, and Titus 2:11-14).

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

- This joyful praise of “Salvation” is sung to God the Father and the Son by the innumerable saved from among all nations.

7:11 “And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God. 7:12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.”

- That which John writes here is similar to what we saw in chapter six. The elders and the angels are praising and worshipping God in Heaven.

7:13 “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

- John is asked by one of the elders to identify those whom are in white robes and John returns the question back to the elder.
- Clearly, those who spoken of are the faithful saints who made it through the Christian life which is full of trials (Acts 14:22, Romans 5:2-5, II Thessalonians 1:4-8, and II Timothy 3:12).
- We as Christians are they who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb (Matthew 26:28, Acts 2:38, and Revelation 1:5).

7:15 “Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 7:16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

- Finally, we conclude this chapter with the awesome fact that eternity will be a time of worship wherein we shall no longer be plagued with the sufferings of this life. We will be in the presence of Him whom the faithful long to see. It is now that we walk by faith (II Corinthians 5:7); it will be then that we see what we have had our hope in. Thus, all the trials of this life are well worth it.
Chapter six concluded with the opening of the sixth seal and the question: “who shall be able to stand?” Chapter seven answered that question by pointing out that the faithful shall be able to stand through God’s protection. The stand would be of those who made it through the great tribulation the Roman government put Christians through. The hope was in Christ with eternity being the reward (Matthew 5:10-12). Now we begin chapter eight with the opening of the seventh seal which will introduce unto us the seven trumpets. The seven seals were the revealing of the message, the trumpets are the warning, and the seven bowls of wrath will be God pouring out His judgment upon the earth.

8:1 “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.”

- The opening of the final seal caused a period of silence (God has not yet acted, thus signifying silence).

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

- The seven angels (stars) are messengers unto the seven churches (1:20). They are given seven trumpets.
- We will see that the first four trumpets affect the planet and the final three will affect mankind directly. The sins of man have a direct effect on others and the earth (Genesis 6:6-7; 12-13, Romans 5:12, and II Peter 3:10).

8:3 “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”

- The golden censer was a bowl used to offer fire sacrifice unto God with sweet smelling incense (Leviticus 16:12-13). This method of worship to God was also at times misused (Leviticus 10:1-2).
- The prayers of saints are accompanied with this golden censer with much incense (Revelation 5:8).

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

- That which is offered is cast to the earth with the voices, thunder, lightning, and earthquake symbolizing God’s response. God’s response is to that of the prayers and worship of the saints desiring for God to act on their behalf (Revelation 6:10; cf. Matthew 6:13). God is clear in that vengeance will be His and the blood of saints will not be forgotten.
- We are talking now of the blowing of trumpets, this action and the overall setting show God’s warning is going to be sounded (Joel 2:1).

8:6 “And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.”
Now the angels prepare to sound forth which will bring God’s warnings to the earth. As you read further you will certainly be reminded of Moses and the warnings God gave through him to Pharaoh (Exodus 7:14-12:30).

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

The first angel sounds forth and hail and fire mingled with blood are cast upon the earth (Exodus 9:18-24). Trees and the grass are burned up. This is a sign showing that God will send forth warnings by destroying vegetation.

8:8 “And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood. 8:9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.”

We now see that God can affect the sea by what seems to be a volcanic eruption through the sounding off of the second angel. With sea life dying there is a lack of food from the sea and 1/3 of the ships are destroyed. How can the Roman government travel, trade, and have food from the sea with such a plaque?

God also plagued the waters of Egypt, though through a different way (Exodus 7:14-19).

8:10 “And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. 8:11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.”

Now the third angel sounds and a star falls from Heaven (something coming out of the sky – meteors, etc. are a possibility).

Wormwood is a bitter wood that will pollute the waters. Thus, the overall meaning of this warning is that the waters will be polluted from above.

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

Throughout God’s word, the darkening of the sun and other forms of light were certain signs of God’s wrath (Exodus 10:21-23, Joel 2:10, and Matthew 24:29).

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

Now a messenger from Heaven makes a very powerful point about what is yet to be revealed. The works of God against the natural resources of Rome are significant, but the remaining three trumpets are yet to sound. The inhabitants of the earth will be directly affected through these messages. Thus, “Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth.”
In chapter eight we concluded the opening of the seals with the seventh one revealing the seven trumpets. We concluded chapter eight ending the warnings concerning the judgment of God that would have an effect on the earth. We observed the following: “The works of God against the natural resources of Rome are significant, but the remaining three trumpets are yet to sound. The inhabitants of the earth will be directly affected through these messages. Thus, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth.” This chapter is full of sharp imagery and symbolism. Let us be careful in examination of these things lest we try and make something more than what God has had written.

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

- Stars represent angels throughout John’s Revelation (Revelation 1:20). Keys are symbols of authority (Matthew 16:19 and Revelation 1:18). Thus, the sounding of the fifth angel occurs and John sees an angel falling (not just coming down, but falling) from Heaven whom possessed authority over the bottomless pit.
- This angel is a king (Revelation 9:11; cf. Ephesians 2:2).
- While we will talk more about this bottomless pit throughout the book of Revelation and find more about it, let us leave that for further studies and just conclude at this point that we must be talking of Satan and Hell from what we see in verse one of chapter nine (Luke 10:18).
- We should also recollect that it is very possible for those doing the works of the devil to be called Satan and sometimes likened unto him (Matthew 16:23 and John 8:44).

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

- When the bottomless pit is opened by the angel that fell from Heaven, smoke arises that shields the sun from shining and darkens the air (II Corinthians 4:3-4).

9:3 “And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 9:4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 9:5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. 9:6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.”

- Locusts (used here symbolically) are pest that are mentioned several times in the Scriptures. They were used as a punishment against Israel by consuming that which they would plant (Deuteronomy 28:38). The Psalmist says that God used Locusts in the same way to punish Egypt (Psalms 105:34-35). However, in verse four we see that what the locusts will harm will not be vegetation.
- Through the reading of verse four we can see that these locusts will serve as a plague upon evil men and very much in line with the context we can see that this is the covering of the hearts of the wicked (Romans 1:28-32). When the seed is sown in the hearts of the wicked it will not be able to bear fruit (Matthew 13:19 and Luke 8:12).
- The sting of the scorpion causes great pain. Those who are lost due to the hardness of their hearts have pain in their lives, for the pleasure of sin is but for a season (Hebrews 11:25).
The seal of God serves as a protection of this from those who are God’s children. Notice our past observation from what was discussed in the third verse of chapter 7: “In these two verses we find the destruction of God upon the earth (not the final destruction) being held back until the servants of God are sealed. This seal of protection is not different from what God has done in the past (Ezra 9:4-5). A seal shows such things as ownership (Song of Solomon 8:6) and sanctification [being set apart] (Ephesians 1:13-14). We have a seal (confirmation, authentication, or proof) that God knows those whom are His (II Timothy 2:19). With the information we have gathered we can conclude that the seal the angel is wanting upon the figurative foreheads of the elect is the confirmation of those who belong to the Lord and will be protected from God’s judgment on this earth. This is similar to what Moses had the children of Israel do during the Passover (Exodus 12:1-12).”

Five months is the average lifespan of a locust (Barnes Notes on Revelation). This symbolizes that this would be for a season. Whatever this symbolizes it will bring about the kind of punishment that will make men wish they were dead. However, they will not die. When righteousness is shielded and men chose darkness over light (John 3:19-20), madness will occur. The consequences of sin bring about horrible things such as disease, starvation, sorrow, etc.

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

The symbolic appearance of these locusts were as horses (representing strength), with gold crowns (representing victory), and their faces were like faces of men (human qualities). This is the deceptive power of sin (Genesis 3:6).

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

The glory and beauty of a woman is shown in these locust through the symbolism of a woman’s hair (I Corinthians 11:15). The ability to devour is shown in the teeth likened unto that of a lion (I Peter 5:8).

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

These locusts are prepared for battle as an army.

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

Again, we see what we saw in verse five. To look at these locusts you would appreciate and fear their beauty, power, numbers, and strength. However, the reality is that they are but for a season.

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

The angel we spoke of in verse one rules over these locusts and his name in Hebrew means destruction and in Greek it means Destroyer.

One would do well to note here how that for a season the Roman Government was used by Satan to bring havoc upon the earth.

9:12 “One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.”
God is not done in telling of the bad that will come upon man. More is to follow.

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

Horns represent strength (cf. Revelation 5:6). Thus, four symbols of strength from the golden altar that stands before God now speak. This likely refers to the prayers that are before God (Revelation 8:3) and the vision could even serve as an answer to those wondering when evil doers will be punished (cf. Revelation 6:9-10).

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

This message to the angel bears truth to the record of history that we have. The Parthians were the dreaded enemy of the Romans to the east, beyond the Euphrates. The Romans were never able to subdue these fierce, nomadic raiders, and lost many battles to them. They seem to represent all of Rome’s fears of enemies that would aid in bringing about the final destruction of Rome (cf. Revelation 16:12).

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

Obviously this verse reveals that God had a plan in waiting. The ministers or messengers in the Euphrates were prepared by God. This is not different than what we see in the Old Testament (Isaiah 10:5-7).

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

200 million are called out as the number in this army. Those who try to equate this to a literal battle of “Armageddon” have a difficult time trying to make this number fit their battle and that verse four speaks of four angels.

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

The breastplates of these horses represent hell (lake of fire and brimstone – Revelation 21:8), while the head is as a lion that devours, and the mouth issues fire, smoke, and brimstone.

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

Only a third of men are killed by that which is coming out of the mouth of the horse. So, we know that this is not the final judgment.

9:19 “For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.”
The symbolism continues to show that the tail is like that of a serpent unlike the locusts which had tails likened unto scorpions. The punishment of these horses went before them and followed behind them.

9:20 “And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. 9:21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

Now the sad reality. This time of punishment has not brought around mankind. Events of historical destruction do not cause people to be saved. Only the Gospel can cause men to change (Romans 1:16).

Still, mankind after this time has / will serve idols which are not real gods (Psalms 115:1-9 and Acts 17:16-31). Man will ultimately reap what he has sown (Galatians 6:7-8).

Studies in the Book of Revelation
Chapter Ten

The “Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth” was strongly revealed thus far in chapter nine. The work of the Devil through the Roman Empire would have an effect on mankind for a season. But, “the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands.” Now we enter into chapter ten. Just as there was a message of consolation for the church between the sixth and seventh seal (chapter 7), so there is such an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet (10:1 - 11:13). We are told more about the contents of the open book in chapter eleven.

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

In Revelation chapter five: verse two, we read of John who “saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice…” Now in chapter ten we find another mighty (strong) angel revealing something else.

The figurative language used to tell of the garment of this angel shows that he is a heavenly being (cf. Psalms 104:2-4).

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

Unlike the sealed book of chapter five, this book is open. The angel steps foot on both land and sea, this signifies that the message within that little open book applies to the whole earth.
10:3 “And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.”

- The imagery of verse three shows that the angel’s voice was loud and accompanied by seven thunders. Sometimes divine revelation is set forth to be loud like a roaring lion (Amos 3:8).

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

- Here we see that John was ready to write what the seven thunders uttered, but a voice from Heaven (implication of this being the Lord, Matthew 3:17; 17:5) prevents John from revealing those things. Instead, John was to seal up that which the seven thunders uttered and not write about those things.
- We see here for certain that all things are not revealed from God to us (Deuteronomy 29:29), and we know that those things would not have been beneficial to the faith of God’s children (John 20:30-31; 21:24-25).
- With the image of thunder, keep in mind that thunder precedes the storm (I Samuel 7:10), thus signifying that the unrevealed message was a message of Judgment (Exodus 20:18-20).

10:5-7 “And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”

- Again, the image of this angel shows that this message applies to the whole world as he lifts up his hand to heaven in swearing an oath to reveal all of God’s revelation.
- We concluded chapter nine by seeing that man has not repented. God has warned and sent plagues upon the earth as a punishment, but there has been no change.
- Daniel prophesied of the coming Kingdom in the days of the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:31-45). Daniel also prophesied that the Roman Empire would oppose God’s people for a period of time (Daniel 7:17-22).
- The mystery of the downfall of Rome was not yet revealed, but this angel promises that revelation is going to be known. Daniel gives some insight (Daniel 7:27-28), but God will reveal more to unveil the mystery. Man has yet to realize, even in our day, that the Lord reigns in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 5:21; 26, and Revelation 11:15).

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

- Now John is instructed by the Lord to take the open book from the hand of the angel whom stands upon that which symbolizes that the message is to all-the-world.

10:9-10 “And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.”

- John is to take and consume the words of that little book (Psalms 119:112 and Matthew 4:4).
The word of God is wonderful and tastes very sweet. But, along with the promise of hope there is also a promise of doom which can make one’s stomach “bitter” (Ezekiel 2:8-3:3).

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

John is now told that his work is not done. He is going to be a useful tool in the Lord’s vineyard. Thus, he must know that his appointment is to take this message and spread it far and wide.

Studies in the Book of Revelation
Chapter Eleven

In chapter ten we find a break between the sixth and seventh trumpets. This break continues through verse thirteen of chapter eleven. We will find that the people of God are, until verse fourteen, compared to the temple and contrasted between non-Christians who are represented as being in the outer court. The outer court contains those that are not protected by God throughout Roman persecution. There is truly a separation between saint and sinner (Colossians 1:13 and II Corinthians 6:14-17). In the first thirteen verses keep in mind that the churches of Asia Minor are addressed in the book of Revelation (1:4), and the things contained therein would shortly come to pass (1:1; 2:10).

Now, after a consoling, yet sobering message for the church with the interlude of chapters 10-11:13, we are now back to the seventh trumpet which is the last of the three woes. Remember that the three woes were the last three trumpets which would affect man personally, and directly, instead of just his environment (8:13). Just as the opening of the seventh seal was a preview of the seven trumpets, we will now be getting the overview of the seven bowls of wrath.

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

In chapter seven (7:4) the 144,000 (symbolic number representing God’s children) were sealed.
- Two groups of people are written about in the book of Revelation when you break it down. Those sealed of God (such as in this context) and those with the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:15-18). The number of the mark of the beast symbolizes three times imperfection (666; Revelation 13:18), while the 144,000 is 12 x 12 x 10 x 10 x 10. Twelve is multiplied by itself and then three times the complete number (10). The two times multiplied number of twelve represents the foundation of Israel (12 tribes) and the foundation of the church (12 apostles). We have talked about the twenty-four elders and how they represent both dispensations (5:8). Consider these passages in light of the sealing upon the forehead (Romans 12:2 and Revelation 22:4).” (Notes on chapter 7)

The temple at Jerusalem had been destroyed at this point and our context shows this temple to reflect upon the saved; thus we can conclude we are not talking about a physical house of
worry. As we know, the temple of God is the church (I Corinthians 3:16, Ephesians 2:21-22, and I Timothy 3:15).

- The reed would be the word of God as that is what measures us (John 12:48; Hebrews 4:12).
- John here is told to measure the temple. Take a measurement of the brethren. John is on the isle of Patmos (1:9), thus we know that he is not going to measure a physical structure in Jerusalem even if it had not been already destroyed

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

- The Gentiles are outside of the body of Christ, do not measure them.
- Then we see that the holy city (Hebrews 12:22-23) will be trodden under foot by those outside of the temple for the period of forty-two months. The agent of Satan is given forty-two months to persecute God’s people (13:5). The forty-two months is the 3 ½ years and 1260 days we will be reading about in the book of Revelation and we see in the book of Daniel (Daniel 7:25). Remember that numbers are usually not literal in the book of Revelation, but at times they signify something. The 3 ½ years prophesied here symbolizes half of imperfection or completion.

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

- For this same period of time God will supply two witnesses to prophesy. Two is the number of witnesses required by Scripture to establish fact (Deuteronomy 17:2-6 and Matthew 18:15-16). Thus, it is not necessary and does not seem to fit the context, to conclude that there are only two literal witnesses. Verses 1 and 10-11 seem to put the scope on the church or on evangelists, and not just two individuals.

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

- These witnesses are likened unto olive trees and candlesticks before God. Olive oil was used to produce light in the tabernacle (Exodus 27:20) and they are candlesticks as they will shine and bring forth hope through the Gospel (Philippians 2:15-16).

11:5-6 “And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.”

- What do prophets do? They preach the word of God. So, why the image of fire coming out of their mouths to consume? Consider that the word of God judges (John 12:48) and those whom hurt God’s people and reject the Gospel will pay the price (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Consider also the work of discipline among brethren as described by Paul to Timothy as delivering unto Satan those who sin (I Timothy 1:19-20).
- Their power is compared to Elijah’s ceasing the rain (I Kings 17:1) and to what Moses did to Egypt (Exodus 5-12). These witnesses had the ability to confirm what they were teaching (Mark 16:20).

11:7 “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.”
They will finish their work and the beast, who is the Devil’s worker (Rome), will defeat them. We will see that this evil does defeat the saints at one point (Revelation 13:7). This darkens hope, but one cannot forget that God will and always is victorious, even over Rome (Hebrews 12:28-29 and Daniel 2:44-45). This is a time in which emperor worship and all other types of horrible things plagued the earth (13:4-5).

11:8-13 “And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

The witnesses of God are destroyed before all. The spirituality of the Roman controlled city is likened unto Sodom and Egypt. But, the victory will be short lived. The witnesses (or the cause / work of the church for the Lord) will be brought back to life after a short period of time. Rome will rejoice when they think they have accomplished their goal, because the church made them feel uncomfortable and guilty. When Rome would fall, they would see they had not destroyed the church, only forced it underground, and when it emerges, it will be like a resurrection from the dead. The martyrs will then be avenged and be seen as victorious (6:9-10).

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

Now we are going to see the Revelation of the Seventh trumpet. One “woe” ended in Revelation 10:12. The second has concluded as we read now.

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

At the sounding of the seventh trumpet great voices in Heaven proclaim that Christ reigns. The Lord truly has power [authority] upon earth (Matthew 28:20) and God has always reigned in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 5:18-28 and Revelation 17:14).

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

In awe of the demonstration of the power of God, the twenty-four elders (4:4) worshipped Him. The people of Israel were divided into twelve tribes. The chosen Apostles of the Lord were twelve. Thus, the twenty-four seats and overseers symbolize the total representation of the people under both covenants.

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

The declare their reason for worship – God reigns.
11:18 “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”

- It is a blessing to know that God is both a Judge to the unrighteous and a rewarder to the faithful (22:12-14).

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

- Heaven is opened up and the ark of His testament is seen declaring that God keeps His promises. While the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament was kept in the holy of holies (I Kings 8:6) and restricted to the High Priest, we as Christians are able to enter the holy of holies because of Christ (Hebrews 10:18-21).
- The scene is genuine as the description of the throne of God is consistent (Revelation 4:5; 16:17-18).
- In chapter twelve we will receive more details. As we have seen, the book of Revelation often shows the outcome of events and then fills in the blanks of those events.

Studies in the Book of Revelation

Chapter Twelve

The seventh angel is sounding (11:15). The third woe is here (11:14). That woe is listed as (12:12): “…Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” This chapter will speak of Satan’s work and the protection God has in place for the faithful. We have seen the many things the Lord will do to punish the Roman Empire. Now we will see that the work of the Devil will not be stopped by these things, but may be even fueled to a further degree. The Roman’s rejected God’s warnings (9:20-21) and desire to slaughter those who represent the Lord (11:8-10).

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

- The sun, moon, and stars represent God’s celestial [heavenly] lights (Jeremiah 31:35; cf. Ecclesiastes 12:12 and Isaiah 13:9-10).
- Obviously the number twelve represents one of two dispensations. Our context will lead us to conclude this is a symbol representing Israel as the woman.

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

- Beautifully symbolized, we have Israel seen here in childbirth. It is through Israel that Christ will be born (Genesis 22:18, Isaiah 49:1-5; 50:1, and Hebrews 7:14).

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Class notes on the book of Revelation by Brian A. Yeager © 2005
12:3 “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.”

- Now we see that old serpent the Devil and the symbolization of his power that will be temporary.
- The Devil’s task of Old was to prevent the seed of Abraham bringing forth Christ. Many times he came close to success (Egypt, the Wilderness, Assyria, Babylon, etc.). God was ready to put away Judah, but remembered His promise (II Kings 19:31-37). The Lord allowed His people to be carried into Babylon, but He would there too allow a remnant to come out of Babylon (Micah 4:10-13).
- The imagery of this dragon shows his color to be red. A likely image showing the blood of martyrs.

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

- The tail of the red dragon draws a third of the stars (1:20) with him to the earth.
- The task, destroy the child at birth (Matthew 2:16).

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

- Jesus is Lord of lords and King of kings (I Timothy 6:13-16) whom the Devil did not want to succeed.
- Satan failed because God protected Jesus (Matthew 2:15) and allowed Him to fulfill His work.
- When His work was finished Christ was put to death. This may have seemed as a point of victory for Satan. However, the victory was in the Resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:22-27).

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

- Now the transformation of physical Israel (Zion) to the spiritual kingdom of God which He hath prepared (Hebrews 12:22-23; 28).
- Again, we find the time period of 1260 days (see notes on 11:2). This shows the church hiding in persecution for a limited period of time (cf. Acts 8:1; 3-4, Acts 11:19, James 1:1-4, and I Peter 1:1-7).
- When the cause of Christ and the church seems destroyed the tables would be turned (11:11).

12:7-9 “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

- Satan has been seeking his opportunity to win the war against God he has been waging since Eden to claim Heaven as his own throne.
- John 12:27-33 helps us to see that this battle is symbolic of the struggle between the Devil and His angels who had already been cast out of Heaven (Luke 10:17-18 and Revelation 9:1-2). The victory came through Christ fulfilling His mission, which if prevented would have had all men to be lost.
- Verse twelve proves this conclusion.
12:10 “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

- Victory has been gained because salvation has been made possible through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:28 and I Corinthians 15:13-22).
- The kingdom came through the death and resurrection of Christ (Matthew 16:18-19).
- The term “accuser” literally means complainant as in a court of law.

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

- Now a prophecy comes promising victory for those who have been washed, remained faithful, and loved the Lord more than their own lives (Revelation 1:5; 2:10; 3:21).

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

- Satan is limited in time (1:1), thus he would be very active in working his evil.

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

- When the devil sees that he has lost the war he then wages desperate battle.

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

- There will be a time when God will carry away His people into safety to be preserved from this wicked slaughter the devil will bring forth (Daniel 12:7-10).

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

- The Devil will flood the earth with wickedness hoping to catch the saints in the symbolic waters of sin (Psalms 144:7-8).
- The Devil is ignorant to the fact that Christians are aware, watching, and fleeing his wicked plot (I Peter 5:8 and James 4:7).

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

- Satan’s plan is foiled again. The sinful world has taken the flood waters because they love sin so much. Christians are immune to these polluted waters not wanting to turn from where they have been delivered (I John 2:15-17).
- Sadly, those who loved the flood waters of evil will pay a heavy price (Revelation 14:9-10).
12:17 “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

- Israel brought forth Christ and He has brethren (Romans 8:29 and Hebrews 2:10-11).
- Satan is angry with the woman and now seeks to destroy those who are of her seed that are remaining faithful (Galatians 3:29).
- Satan’s previous plans have not worked. He is outraged and powerful. However, let us not forget that the battle is the Lord’s (I Samuel 17:47 and Romans 8:31).

Studies in the Book of Revelation
Chapter Thirteen

The last chapter spoke of Satan’s work and the protection God has in place for the faithful. We have seen the many things the Lord will do to punish the Roman Empire. Now we will see that the work of the Devil will not be stopped by these things, but may be even fueled to a further degree. The Roman’s rejected God’s warnings (9:20-21) and desire to slaughter those who represent the Lord (11:8-10). Satan has a brief period of time (12:12). He has tried to catch Christians in a symbolic flood of sin (12:16). Satan’s anger is fueled by the fact that the mission of Christ was fulfilled and his wrath is being spilled out onto those who “…keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (12:17). Now we will see the beast of the sea and notice that the beast is given power by the dragon (Satan - 12:9). Then we will discuss a second beast which shall arise from the earth and what that beast represents.

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

- John’s vision of the beast coming out of the sea is first revealed to us by Daniel (Daniel 7:1-7; cf. Daniel 2:31-45).
- This beast, according to the verses cited from Daniel chapters 2 and 7, is the Roman Empire.
- The symbolic seven heads and ten horns are different from the dragon (12:3). There is a difference because the crowns were upon the head of the dragon and not the horns (there is also a difference in the number of the crowns – 7/10).
- The horns represent power and the crowns are upon the horns instead of the head simply because Satan has empowered the Romans Empire.

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

- The leopard, bear, and lion are symbolic of the Empires that preceded Rome (Daniel 7:3-6), which were the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian Empires.
- Thus, Rome had all of the terrible qualities of the preceding Empires on top of it’s own horrible qualities.
The Lord reveals unto us with all certainty that Rome was given might and authority by Satan. Clearly Satan still had power among men at this point in time (Luke 4:5-6, John 12:31, and Ephesians 6:10-13).

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

- The Roman Empire had seven emperors, the seventh being Nero. When Nero died many wondered if the strength of the Roman Empire would die with him. However, Domition arose as the eighth ruler and is the personification of this beast out of the sea (Revelation 17:8; 11).
- He speaks blasphemies as he demands to be worshipped (II Thessalonians 2:1-9).

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

- The world that marvels, worships, and serves Rome is essentially worshipping Satan (II John 9-11).

13:5-6 “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.”

- Rome is given a voice and that voice is going to be used against God [the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit], the dwelling place of God [the church] (Ephesians 2:19-22 and I Timothy 3:15), and the heavenly angels.
- Again, we see the forty-two months which is the 3 ½ years or 1260 days we have been reading about in the book of Revelation that we also see in the book of Daniel (Daniel 7:25). Remember that numbers are usually not literal in the book of Revelation, but at times they signify something. The 3 ½ years prophesied here symbolizes half of imperfection or completion (see notes from our introduction studies, 11:2-3, and 12:14).

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

- We concluded chapter twelve with the realization that Satan would engage in war against Christians (12:17). Now we know that his war would be waged and his weapon would be the Roman Empire.
- While persecution is sure, so is the promise of God of victory (I Corinthians 15:57; cf. Matthew 5:10-12, James 1:2-3, and I Peter 1:6-9).
- If God’s people of Old could strive against that old serpent the Devil and remain faithful not having the full assurance of the promises saints have (Hebrews 11:32-40), certainly these Christians can overcome the best Satan wants to throw our way.

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

- Those who worship the Roman power are those who are not named in Heaven as God’s children.
- Here the children of Satan are foreordained to be slain in punishment. Some would argue predestination from this verse, but the truth of the matter is that God knows all things and can
speak of those things that will occur as if they had already occurred (Romans 4:17; cf. Acts 2:23). God has known all things from the very beginning of the world.

13:9 “If any man have an ear, let him hear.”

➤ Now, we see a similar admonition as we had when the Lord addressed the seven churches of Asia Minor (Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, and 3:22).

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

➤ Verse ten is a very beautiful consolation for Christians. These individuals who are allowing their lives to be guided by the sword will be taken in that same way (Matthew 26:52). They are going to reap what they have sown (Galatians 6:7-8).
➤ This also serves as prophesy of how Rome would fall.

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

➤ This other beast can easily be mistaken as many different things.
➤ However, if you will look at the imagery here and the clues in our context, you will find that this beast represents the false prophet who will aid the Roman Empire.
➤ This beast has authority like a lamb. Therefore, they appear likened unto those in Christ or for Christ (II Corinthians 11:12-15). Notice the next two verses.

13:12-13 “And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.”

➤ When Christ was foretelling of the fall of Jerusalem he warned of false prophets with great powers (Matthew 24:24). Satan’s usage of false prophets here should therefore come as no surprise.
➤ The goal of these false prophets is to get the earth to worship the first beast (Roman Empire - Domition).
➤ For further evidence that this beast represents the false prophet see: Revelation 19:20; 20:10.

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

➤ The false prophets were good at their work. Thus, we find warnings in the New Testament to try those false prophets and beware of them (Matthew 7:15-20 and I John 4:1).
➤ Again, we see the urging of the false prophet for the people to serve Rome.

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

➤ These false prophets had established life back into the Roman Empire.
➤ If anyone would not worship falsely those things representing Rome they would be killed (Revelation 2:13).
13:16-17 “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

- Another way in which the false religious leaders where able to persecute anyone standing for truth was to bring about economic persecution against them.
- We read earlier in our studies of John’s Revelation about the black horse that represented economic hardship on the Christian (Revelation 6:5-6; cf. Revelation 2:9).

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

- Two groups of people are written about in the book of Revelation when you break it down. Those sealed of God (7:4) and those with the mark of the beast. The number of the mark of the beast symbolizes three times imperfection (666) while the 144,000 is $12 \times 10^3 \times 10 \times 10$. Twelve is multiplied by itself and then three times the complete number of man (10). The two times multiplied number of twelve represents the foundation of Israel (12 tribes) and the foundation of the church (12 apostles). We have talked about the twenty-four elders and how they represent both dispensations (5:8).
- Consider this passage in light of the sealing upon the forehead of the saved: Revelation 22:3-4.

Studies in the Book of Revelation
Chapter Fourteen

Satan is using the Roman Empire (beast # 1) and false prophets (beast # 2) to wage a war against those who “…keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (12:17). The false prophet is aiding the Roman Empire by punishing those who refuse to bow to the Emperor. Rome has the power to overcome the saints (13:7). When things begin to look grim, one must realize that God will not lose and His people have Him on their side (Romans 8:31). While we have seen doom for the saints in the past two chapters, we will now see God’s protection of His people and Judgment against Rome.

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

- When we see the Lord (Lamb – 7:14; cf. 1:5) on Mount Zion we are seeing Him standing in His kingdom, the church (Hebrews 12:22-23). As Joel says: “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call” (Joel 2:32).
- Again, as we have seen earlier in our studies (7:1-8), we see the figurative number of 144,000. Unlike our earlier study when they were on earth, we now see them with the Lord. They now have the seal that the angel was wanting upon their foreheads (7:2). This seal symbolizes
protection against the wrath of God that will fall upon those marked as servants of Rome (cf. Revelation 3:10).

- The name of God is upon the minds of those who are saved (Romans 12:2 and Revelation 22:4), opposed to that of the beast (13:15-16).

14:2-3 “And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”

- We read of singing a new song when Christ was able to remove the seven seals from the sealed book (5:8-9).
- Now, another time has arisen to rejoice and the singing John hears from Heaven is truly majestic. They sung a new song that was only for the redeemed to sing. Clearly, the damned would not want to sing a song of victory.

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

- Now, using imagery, John is describing the redeemed. Those who want to make the 144,000 literal have true problems with the wording here.
- They are those who have not defiled themselves with women. To understand this principle we must use some deductive reasoning. First off, we know that you do not have to be a virgin to be saved (I Corinthians 7:1-3 and Hebrews 13:4). Thus, we can be assured that this image is not literal.
- So, what does it (the imagery of male virgins) mean? Well, both male and females are married to Christ (II Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:27). Thus, these Christians who have been redeemed from Roman persecution are those whom have not defiled themselves by being joined to any pagan body of religion. They have kept the temple [church] holy (I Corinthians 3:17). When God’s people join to false gods they are committing spiritual adultery (Jeremiah 3:8).
- Next, we see that these redeemed individuals follow the Lord wherever He goes. We know that this is not literal. So, what does it mean? Well, it means they follow in the footsteps of Christ, in other words, they follow His lead (I Peter 2:21).
- They are redeemed from among men. Simply put, they were purchased by the blood of Christ from the world (Titus 2:13-14 and Revelation 1:5).
- Finally, they are the first fruits unto the Father and the Son. Using an Old Testament phrase, these Christians served God and sacrificed their lives to Him (Matthew 16:24-26 and Romans 12:1).

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

- There was no sin in these individuals as they walked in the light and enjoyed the cleansing blood of the Lord (I John 1:7; cf. Matthew 5:48 and I John 1:9).

14:6-7 “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”
The full Gospel (entire message of the Gospel) is not under discussion here. The Gospel had been preached some 60 years prior to this Revelation from John.

What is being held by the angel to be preached unto all men is a message of good news. The message: Worship and fear God that created all things. The necessity of this message appears to defeat the Roman doctrine of emperor worship. Why? Because, the hour of judgment is come.

This message, while different in some respects, is very similar to what Paul preached to the people of Athens on Mars Hill because of their practices of idolatry (Acts 17:16; 22-32).

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

Another angel appears and uses the words that Isaiah used at the fall of ancient Babylon (Isaiah 21:9). John will reveal these same words later in our studies (18:2). So, how is it that we are talking of Babylon when Rome is what we have been discussing? According to Daniel’s prophesies (2:31-45 and 7:1-7) and our studies in chapter thirteen (13:1-2), Babylon had fallen long ago and Rome was fulfilling its spot in biblical prophesy. Well, we will find that Babylon is simply being used as a figurative name for Rome (17:5ff.).

In Revelation 17:1-2 we read that Rome caused the kings of the nations of the earth to commit fornication with her and the people of these nations have become drunk from the fruits of those sins. This is what brings the wrath of God upon them.

14:9-11 “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

All that worship the beast (13:4) and wear the mark of the beast (13:15-17) shall face eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46). The mark in the forehead or hand signifies that the followers of Rome had given their minds and works to the evil works of Rome and ultimately the Dragon (Satan).

14:12-13 “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

The endurance of the saints will be rewarded (1 Peter 1:6-9 and Revelation 3:5). Those who continue to obey the Lord will have blessings within the kingdom (Revelation 22:12-14).

14:14-16 “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”

A time of harvest begins. This, like other times in the Scriptures (Isaiah 13:1ff. and Matthew 24:1-34), is a day of judgment, not the Day of Judgment. Here we find that Jesus is essentially separating the sealed as he promises protection for them (7:1-3; cf. 14:1).
Jesus sits upon a cloud with a crown upon His head and a sickle in his hand. The image is of Christ preparing to reap the harvest. We know this is Jesus from the writings of Daniel (Daniel 7:13-14). Jesus thrusts the sickle into the earth and the gathering of the fruit is done. This first gathering, based upon the context, would seem to be the gathering of the righteous (Matthew 13:30).

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

This will begin a prophesy of judgment against Rome as was discussed earlier in this chapter (14:8).

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

Fruit is now going to be gathered from the earth, which is the kingdom of Satan (Luke 4:5-6, II Corinthians 4:3-4, and Revelation 13:2). The good have already been gathered. The grapes were fully ripe, indicating that wickedness had grown to a full state (Joel 3:13).

The angel from the altar has power over fire and the angel out of the temple has the sickle.

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

Now the angel of the temple does as instructed, thrusting his sickle into the earth.

The vine of the earth [Satan being the vine and his followers the branches that bring forth evil fruit] is cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God (19:15). In contrast to Christ being the vine and His disciples being the branches bringing forth good fruit (John 15:1-8), the fruit of the world is evil.

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

This imagery displays the winepress of the wrath of God being beat down outside of the city and blood streaming as high as the horses mouths and for a length of 1600 furlongs [200 miles].

No necessity is upon us to take this literal. The figures [grapes referring to wicked Roman followers] are not literal. The point is clear, the wrath of God has an enormous magnitude.
Studies in the Book of Revelation
Chapter Fifteen

In Chapter fourteen we learned that the Lord was going to execute a judgment on Rome and her worshippers. The violence of this judgment was made clear when the Lord, comparing the evil doers as grapes, said: “And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” With Satan raging war against Christians using Rome and the false prophets that empowered Rome, the proclamation of judgment was certainly a boost for Christians. However, the greatest point to Christians in chapter fourteen was the view of God protecting the saints.

Now we are to begin seeing the seven bowls of the wrath of God that will be poured out onto the earth in this chapter that introduces the seven vials of wrath. The seals and trumpets brought judgment to essentially a third of mankind. In conclusion of those judgments we found that: “And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts” (Revelation 9:20-21). What is now to come will be more devastating than what we have read before. God’s wrath is going to be spilled out like a liquid content from a bowl. These are the seven last plaques (15:1). We will read of them in the next chapter and see the affect thereafter in our studies. We must remember that we are not talking about the end of the world, but a judgment day.

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

- John sees, through divine revelation, seven angels in a great scene holding what contains the seven final plagues.

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

- In chapter twenty-one John says in the first verse “…and there was no more sea.” In chapter four (4:6) we discussed how this crystal sea is what separated God from man. Now in that sea there is also a mixture of fire. We should recall that the saints would be tried with fire much like metal is tested by fire (I Peter 1:7; cf. James 1:3). So, this symbol would signify the saints standing victoriously through the trials they have been through.
- These saints have won the battle and the harps are symbols of their rejoicing in song (5:8 and 14:2). They have lasted through the persecution of Rome, over the marking of Rome, and the Devil who was behind Rome. They are awaiting what the Almighty will do next.

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

- When Moses led Israel out of Egyptian bondage they sang praises unto God (Exodus 15:1-21). The same is happening here. A song of victory is sung as the saints have been delivered from bondage. The theme of the song is praise to Christ who acted as their sacrificial lamb taking away their sins (John 1:29).
- Glorification is offered to God for his works are great and marvelous (Job 5:8-9, Job 37:5, and Psalms 92:5).
In contrast to evil ruling the world, God is King of the saints and his ways are true (Hebrews 6:18 and Titus 1:2) versus the false ways of the wicked (II Corinthians 4:3-4 and Revelation 9:1-2).

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

Jeremiah penned the following: “Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee” (Jeremiah 10:7).

Like to what Jeremiah says, the song of the saints praises God acknowledging His might. Everyone will witness the judgment of God that will be coming, as is prophesied in the book of Revelation against Rome. Who would not fear and realize the power of the almighty in light of what He is going to do?

15:5-6 “And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.”

The seven angels come from the presence of God having the seven plagues. They are clothed in purity with belts of gold.

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

One of the four angels that surrounds the throne of God (Revelation 4:6-8; Isaiah 6:1-7 and Ezekiel 1:5-18; 10:20) hands seven bowls full of the wrath of God unto the seven angels leaving the temple of the tabernacle.

Hosea may give us some insight of why God’s wrath is said to be in a bowl (Hosea 5:10).

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

Priests were not allowed into the tabernacle when the glory of God was present (I Kings 8:10-11). Therefore, we know that no intercessions would be at this point made for Rome. When the smoke is cleared (when the seven plagues are finished), we will be able to see that which is now blocked by the smoke.

Studies in the Book of Revelation

Chapter Sixteen

We have had seven seals, seven trumpets, and now we will read of the seven vials (bowls) of wrath we had introduced to us in chapter fifteen (15:6-7). Chapter sixteen is a continuation of what we studied in chapter fifteen. We should note that history tells the fall of Rome was not instant, but came through many avenues. There were natural disasters, internal conflict, social decay, and finally enemy invasion.
16:1 “And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.”

- As we conclude chapter fifteen with God in the temple and no more offering for the sins of Rome, we hear the instruction from God to pour out His wrath upon the earth. We know the vials contain the wrath of God from what we read in the last chapter (15:7).

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

- The first angel poured out his vial and sores fell upon those who had followed the false prophets resulting in emperor worship.
- False doctrine spreads as a disease (II Timothy 2:16-18), so it is fitting the punishment for following it should too.

16:3-6 “And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.”

- The second angel poured his vial upon the sea and the sea was turned into blood. The sea here, based upon the fact that the beast arose from the sea (13:1) and the waters of the earth would be affected through the rivers, would be society. So, the second angel poured his vial upon the sea of humanity and society was turned into blood. The blood of a dead man would be coagulated [thickened] and this describes what the wrath of God upon society is like.
- Likewise the third angel poured out his vial and the rivers and springs became as blood. The rivers, streams, springs, etc. are vital to the survival of mankind. This plague is like unto what God did in Egypt (Exodus 7:14-19).
- The angel praised God and explained the reason for the fitness of this act. The reason was that Rome had shed the blood of the saints, and now they are being given their fill of blood. The prayers of the martyred are answered (Revelation 6:9-10). Consider the following: “For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:30-31).

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

- In chapter nineteen we read a great summary to what is said here in this verse: “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand” (19:1-2).

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

- With the waters infected, God puts on the heat! It is too bad these folks did not have spiritual thirst of which the Lord would have quenched (Revelation 21:6).
16:9 “And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.”

- Those being punished failed to see that their doom was at their own hands. It was in their power to prevent this and to end this, but they did not repent. This is what we found when the trumpets were sounding earlier in our studies (Revelation 9:20-21).

16:10-11 “And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.”

- Now the city of Rome faces the wrath spilled out from the fifth vial.
- Rome [the beast] was empowered by the Devil (13:2). Rome was full of darkness because Satan clouds the light from shining through (Revelation 9:1-2; cf. II Corinthians 4:3-4). Thus, we know that sin has corrupted Rome and society has decayed there.
- The Empire of Rome bites her tongue because of the pain they face through the wrath of God, but they do not repent.

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

- The sixth angel poured out his vial and the Euphrates River was dried up so the dreaded Parthian army could come and conquer Rome.
- So far God has, through his vials of wrath, brought natural disasters, there was already social decay, and he paved the way for enemy invasion. We will see in chapter seventeen that God has cleared the path for eternal conflict to contribute, with these other factors, to the fall of Rome.

16:13-14 “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

- Now three angels of darkness spring forth like frogs from the mouth of Satan, Rome, and the false prophet. Satan of course is behind the empowerment of Rome and the work of the false prophet. Satan is the Father of lies (John 8:44), so no doubt has to arise that Satan’s battle cry against the cause of Christ to all nations and leaders is full of lies. He would be blaming the wrath of God on the church for one final attempt to destroy the body of Christ.
- These false spirits are working miracles, and through such they are tricking people into thinking they are the true and genuine while those not bowing to Rome are not (II Corinthians 11:12-15).
- These nations, led by Rome, will persecute the church, but we know the outcome (Revelation 19:19-21).

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

- Knowing there is a great persecution to come, how can the saints be comforted? They would be comforted in knowing the Lord is going to rescue them and they need to be prepared for that time, which could be any time, but most certainly it would be a short time (Revelation 1:1). This is similar in how we are preparing for THE Judgment Day.
Their conduct must be befitting of a faithful Christian. It would be hard to keep the faith knowing that denouncing it could save your life. As the Lord said to the church in Smyrna, they can: “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

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

- The valley of Megiddo is a place of triumph. Judges chapter 4, 5, and 7 for instance show Israel winning battles. This is a place in which victory was taken. If we notice the references to places that are in the book of Revelation we can see why and how this was used.
- John used Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (14:2) and Jerusalem itself (21:2) as symbols of God’s spiritual city. Babylon symbolized apostasy (14:8), Sodom and Egypt symbolized corruption and sin (11:8). Armageddon is not a place of a future battle. It is the place of past battles. From this reference saints could know victory was just over the hill!
- As one preacher put it “if this battle is literal, it is a battle where frogs are the weapons” (in reference to verses 13-14).

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

- The seventh angel pours his vial into the air. God then speaks declaring “It is done” signifying the end of his outpouring of wrath.

16:18-21 “And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

- We now conclude this brief version, which will be explained in the chapters to follow, of God’s judgment on Rome which will be compared to a harlot in contrast to the pure bride of Christ (the church).
- God’s wrath is summarized by the imagery of a great and horrible storm. The worst the wrath of God has ever come upon men.
- The division in the city of Rome points to her complete devastation.
- There was no island or mountain to flee to from the wrath of God, unlike the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:16).
- The weight of this judgment was great. A talent that was a weight measurement would have been about 100 lbs. Thus, this hail was likened unto 100 lb. hail stones.
Satan has used the Roman Empire (beast # 1) and the false prophet (beast # 2) to wage a war against those who “…keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (12:17). In Chapter fourteen we learned that the Lord was going to execute a judgment on Rome and her worshippers. We just concluded studying two chapters about the vials of the wrath of God. Rome is now portrayed as an awful harlot. This is set in sharp contrast with the pure and beautiful bride of Christ in chapters twelve and twenty-one. We will begin to learn more detail of what we have discussed since chapter fourteen including what we learned of the seven vials of wrath.

17:1-2 “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

- We first must identify who this harlot is as that fact is paramount in our continued studies. We will see that the Roman Empire itself (the beast) is not the harlot (17:7; 17:16). The harlot is a city (17:18), not an empire.
- If we look back to chapter fourteen (14:8-10) and compare how the Imperial City of Rome was called Babylon with our current context (17:1-2; 5), we will have solid evidence that we are talking here of the city of Rome. There is too much evidence to conclude anything other than the city of Rome is the harlot.
- Consider the following facts comparing chapter thirteen (which identifies Rome as the beast) and our current chapter. These facts tie Rome to the harlot and helps us to conclude that the harlot is the Imperial City of Rome:
  - Arose from the sea / sitting on many waters (13:1; 17:1).
  - Seven heads and ten horns (13:1; 17:3).
  - Full of blasphemy (13:7; 17:3).
  - Warred with the saints / warred with the Lamb and the chosen ones (13:17; 17:14).
  - Power over all nations (13:7; 17:18).
- Now that we have considered who the harlot is, let us consider some other things about these first two verses. One of the angels that spilled out one of the seven vials of the wrath of God is revealing the things to follow to John.
- The harlot sits upon many waters (societies), has great control over the world, and this harlot has polluted the world like alcohol.

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

- Here we see that the beast supports the imperial city and again, as we noted above, the like characteristics of the imperial city and the empire are in many ways identical.

17:4-5 “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:
The city of Rome is attractive to the worldly eye. Rome is full of abominations and spiritual fornication (seen within the cup in her hand). Upon the mind of Rome is sin and Rome is the source of it in this past age.

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

John sees that the city of Rome has blood on her hands - to say the least. The bloodshed of the saints is one cause for the Lord’s wrath (Revelation 16:4-6). This makes John to wonder in great admiration [amazement –NKJV].

Consider how we too should be amazed that Rome went to war against the Almighty God without considering sure defeat (Hebrews 12:29). They failed to realize the character of God (Exodus 15:3) and His war record.

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

The angel asked John why he was amazed and will now explain the harlot. Some insight of the harlot may even help us to understand that power clouds judgment.

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

The beast that John saw, that was carrying the harlot (17:3), was and is not. That is to say, Rome was powerful and then the world wondered if Rome could stay in power from Nero to Domition (see notes on 13:3).

Rome ascended from the bottomless pit. In other words, Satan has empowered the beast. Satan is from the bottomless pit (Revelation 9:1-2). We know that Satan empowered Rome from what John has previously written (Revelation 13:2).

The beast is empowered from Satan and is headed for perdition (eternal death – Revelation 19:20).

Those of the world wonder what the beast was, seemed to fall, and yet strengthened again (Revelation 13:8). The world has faith in the power of Rome and not in the power of God. One wonders why many failed to see that God is the true one who brings forth the true Resurrection.

17:9-11 “And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.”

The seven high places are the seven heads on which the harlot sits.

The city of Rome is personified in the various emperors, particularly in Domition. Seven different emperors in all, but Domition is viewed as the reincarnation of Nero, and he is therefore viewed as only the seventh. That is why the beast was seen with seven heads. Five of the previous seven kings had fallen [failed].
Domition “comes into his own” being the eighth king and shows he is worse than all preceding rulers in Rome that have influenced his reign. God will humble him shortly.

17:12 “And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.”

- There are ten kings that serve under the harlot, having no kingdom of their own, but they will have power for a short time as they are part of the beast (the Roman Empire).

17:13 “These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”

- These kings are unified and they contribute to the power of Rome.

17:14 “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

- The rebellion of Rome against God (Revelation 16:13-14) is supported by all those in power within the empire. They fight against the Lord and they lose.
- Christ is far above the greatest in Rome (Ephesians 1:20-21). Christ is the Lord of lords and King of kings (I Timothy 6:14-15).
- Those with the Lord are Christians who are the called (II Thessalonians 2:13-14), chosen (I Peter 2:9), and identified as faithful (Revelation 2:10).

17:15 “And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”

- The waters that the harlot sits upon, as we indicated earlier (17:1), represent the societies of men.

17:16 “And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.”

- The ten kings serving under the Roman emperor (17:12) shall turn from the unity they once had with the Roman emperor. This is decay from within the empire. The breakdown of the empire and the desire to dethrone the emperor certainly affected Rome. Who could be trusted?
- “…Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matthew 12:25).

17:17 “For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.”

- Ah, proof that God does rule in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:17; 25; 32).

17:18 “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

- As we noted when we opened this chapter, the woman is a city – not a man, nation, or empire.
Studies in the Book of Revelation
Chapter Eighteen

The Imperial City of Rome is the harlot (17:1-2; 17:18). The harlot is personified in the Emperor (17:9-12). The harlot is waging a losing battle with the Lord and the Saints (17:14). During this war the Lord will cause internal division which will be just one of the weapons used to bring about the fall of Rome (17:16-17). After seeing this, John sees another angel come down from Heaven and from there we begin our study of chapter eighteen.

18:1 “And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.”

- Now an angel appears unto John who shines forth as a bright light through his glory.

18:2 “And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”

- This angel declares with a strong voice that Babylon has fallen. We saw a similar revelation in chapter fourteen (14:8).
- We know from previous chapters that Babylon here is a reference to Rome (16:19 and 17:5).
- Why would the Lord refer to Rome as Babylon? How about if we consider that Babylon was the capital city of the Babylonian Empire. The Babylonian Empire was the first of four Empires that would fall in Daniel’s prophesy of the Lord’s kingdom, with Rome being the last (Daniel 2:31-45)? How about if we consider that Babylonia was a world Empire that too lost sight of her limitations. Babylon, like the Imperial city of Rome, arose against the Lord and had to be humbled (Isaiah 13:1; 9-11 and Jeremiah 51:1)? Those things should add clarity to this comparison by the Lord.
- Rome had become the dwelling place of devils, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage to the unclean and hateful bird. Rome is full of evil. This best describes the conclusion of verse two.

18:3 “For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.”

- The nations of the world have joined Rome and have committed spiritual fornication with her (Revelation 14:8; 17:1-2). We should even recall that many throughout the world rejoiced when it appeared as though the work of God on earth had ended (Revelation 11:8-11).
- It is also fascinating to note that the merchants of the earth prospered through the wickedness of Rome. Since the world was overcome with physical wealth and willing to do what it took to have that wealth, those individuals could not serve the Lord (Matthew 6:24).
- We will later note that the love the world had for Rome was based only upon what Rome could offer in way of physical pleasures.

18:4 “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

- The call of another voice comes now from Heaven. This voice is calling the saints out from among Rome so they will not face the judgment that is coming to Rome.
- A Christian has no place where sin so greatly abounds (II Corinthians 6:14-18).
18:5 “For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”

- The sins of Rome have mounted up and God has taken notice (Jeremiah 51:9).

18:6 “Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.”

- The cup of Rome is full of wickedness (Revelation 17:4). It is now time to repay Rome her portion due. God is to balance the scale. Rome will reap what they have sown (Romans 2:5-11 and Galatians 6:7-8).

18:7-8 “How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.”

- Rome has exalted herself and has lived like a queen without any worries. We know that Rome did not fall in one day, so the wording must be understood in a like manner of the context – figuratively. Simply put, the fall of Rome is sure. The day is at God’s choosing. Her arrogance is unwise, for she stands against the Lord.
- In keeping with the comparison of Rome with Babylon, consider the fall of Nebuchadnezzar was because of his pride (Daniel 5:18-20).

18:9-10 “And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.”

- The rulers of the earth, who enjoyed the benefits they received from Rome, shall cry at her downfall. It is interesting to note that they did not cry for her sins which brought about her downfall.
- Their sorrow is more for their loss, than the loss of Rome.

18:11-13 “And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.”

- The weeping of the merchants is over the loss of commerce with Rome. Rome had control over commerce and directed trade only to those who bowed the knee to the emperor (Revelation 13:16-17).
- Everything from gold to slave trade is affected by the fall of Rome.

18:14 “And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.”
We noted earlier that the kings of the earth and the merchants benefited greatly from Rome (18:3). Now the things they have come to love are gone.

18:15-19 “The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing. And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.”

The merchants of the world cry from afar off. They dare not get close. Rome was there for them, so to speak, but they shall not be there for Rome.

The world economy suffered, jobs were lost, and they are crying about it. The heart of this people is most certainly upon things of the world.

18:20 “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.”

The prayer of the martyred has been answered (Revelation 6:10-11).

This should be a time of rejoicing because God has kept His word and has shown fair judgment.

18:21-23 “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.”

A strong angel takes a large stone likened unto a millstone [a cylindrical stone used to crush grain to make flour] and casts it into the sea symbolizing the fall of ancient Rome and the Empire as it stood in her previous days.

When Jeremiah wrote of the fall of literal Babylon, he penned the following that applies here in comparison: “And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah” (Jeremiah 51:64).

The destruction that took place included the removal of all that pertained to Rome from the economy of the empire, production, the social structure, even to the establishment of families.

18:24 “And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.”

What’s in the belly of the beast? Answer: the blood of the prophets, the saints, and others killed at the hand of Rome (Revelation 17:6).
Rome is full of evil. The nations of the world have joined Rome and have committed spiritual fornication with her. The sins of Rome had gotten so bad that John said they reached unto Heaven (18:5). The fall of Rome has been prophesied, the detail has been great, and now we see the rejoicing that will occur because of the fall of Rome. We also see the finality of the battle drawn out for us here in chapter nineteen continuing in chapter twenty as the Lord mounts His battle horse and let’s the sword from His mouth judge the beast and the false prophet.

This battle is what many call the battle of Armageddon, which began in chapter sixteen. This was not a physical war, but a spiritual battle between good and evil. Saints have been fighting the overall war against Satan since the first century (Ephesians 6:10-12 and I Timothy 6:12). We must always keep the context of the book of Revelation in mind as we study these fairly simple chapters that are perverted by the doctrines of men. Chapter nineteen in the eyes of many begins the battle of Armageddon while chapter twenty begins the fictional idea of a thousand year reign of Christ on earth. Both are false conclusions.

This chapter serves as further proof that we are talking of the fall of Rome instead of Jerusalem. We learned in chapter seventeen that the harlot (imperial city of Rome) had power and the support of all nations (17:15). The nations mourned over the loss of Rome in chapter eighteen (18:15-19). Here we read again of the power that Rome had over the nations of the earth (vs. 1-2; 19). Jerusalem never had the world supporting her, while even history shows that Rome did have the support of kings within and without.

19:1-2 “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia: Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.”

- While tears on earth are shed for the downfall of Rome (18:15-19), there is a rejoicing in heaven over the victory of God. The saying Alleluia means “praise Jehovah” or “praise ye the Lord” according to Strong and Thayer.
- The prayer of the martyred has been answered (Revelation 6:10-11; 18:20). This is a reason to rejoice and praise the Lord.
- The harlot is the imperial city of Rome. This we discovered in our studies of chapter seventeen (17:1-2; 5; cf. 14:8-10).
- The fairness of the Lord is shown as well. He has been longsuffering with Rome (II Peter 3:9), but His people deserve a deliverance and justice as well. Time has come and the Lord has judged.

19:3 “And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.”

- Again, they rejoice as the smoke of her (the harlot) rises up for ever and ever. This would signify that eternal punishment that Rome is delivered to (Revelation 19:20; 20:10).

19:4 “And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.”
The twenty four elders that surround the throne of God (Revelation 4:4), representing both dispensations (the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve Apostles), also worship the Lord and give praise to Him.

19:5 “And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.”

An unidentified voice comes from the throne telling all that serve the Lord to praise Him.

19:6 “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

A voice with power and might comes forth praising the Lord and speaking of Him as the all-powerful being that God is. The Lord is all-powerful and reigns over all (Revelation 11:15). This has been shown in the Lord’s triumph over Satan, Rome, and the false prophet.

This is the only verse in the KJV that uses the word “omnipotent”. Yet, the fact that God is all-powerful is proclaimed from the beginning of the Scriptures through the end (Genesis 1:1, Job 42:2, Jeremiah 32:17; 27, and Matthew 19:26).

19:7-9 “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

The church is the bride of Christ (Romans 7:4, II Corinthians 11:2, and Ephesians 5:22-33).

These verses show the church has dressed herself to be ready for the Lord. Thus, the saints have clothed themselves with righteousness and have trimmed their lamps to be ready to meet their Lord.

Certainly, saints do not want to find themselves in unworthy apparel (Matthew 22:1-14; cf. Revelation 16:15). In contrast, Rome is dressed in the garments of a harlot with blood upon her hands.

A judgment day is being established. Rome will suffer. Yet, while the punishment is against Rome it is sure that saints will die and these saints are ready to meet the Lord. Death, it is the time of victory for the faithful in Christ (II Timothy 4:6-8).

19:10 “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

John falls down to worship the messenger. He is rebuked as only God is to be worshipped (Matthew 4:10, Acts 10:25-26, Acts 12:21-23, and Revelation 22:8-9).

19:11 “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”

He on the white horse is called Faithful and True. This alone identifies that Christ is heading up the battle against the wickedness that was (Revelation 1:5; 3:7).
19:12 “His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.”

- More is given to describe Jesus on the horse. His eyes were as a flame of fire (Revelation 1:14; 2:18). His eyes penetrate (Hebrews 4:13).
- He had many crowns upon His head signifying His power and reign above all things and people (Matthew 28:18 and Ephesians 1:20-21).
- The name that no man knew, but He Himself could mean several things. It could mean that His judgment over Rome was not acknowledged as from above. It could mean that since He has been given a name above all names that man could not grasp the meaning of His name (Philippians 2:9-11). It could mean that His name is unknown to those He is judging because their minds have been corrupted and His name has been ignored. Whatever the true meaning is, we know the identity of Him on this white horse is Christ. The context has declared that and will continue to clarify that.

19:13 “And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.”

- His garments are stained with the blood of His enemies (Isaiah 63:2-6 and Revelation 14:20).
- His name is the Word of God (John 1:1; 1:14, and I John 1:1).

19:14 “And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”

- The armies in Heaven cannot be the saints on this earth. The fact is this passage supports the Lord’s action against Rome. Their garments are white and pure as is the vehicle upon which the Lord has ridden to bring judgment against Rome. The cause is right as is the course the Lord has taken.
- The battle was not one fought with carnal weapons (II Corinthians 10:3-5). This of course separates the idea of the physical battle from the true spiritual battle.

19:15 “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

- Again, we know that Christ is He who is sitting on the white horse leading the charge against Rome because of the continuing description we are getting. It is Christ who has the sword coming out of His mouth (Revelation 1:16). That sword is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12).
- The reign of Christ is compared to the strength of a rod of iron. He is a strong ruler (Psalms 2:7-9).
- He treads upon the winepress with fierceness and the wrath of God. This image shows how the Lord judged with severity based upon what we read earlier in our studies (Revelation 14:19-20).

19:16 “And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

- Christ is the King of kings (I Timothy 6:14-15 and Revelation 17:14).

19:17-18 “And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;
That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.”

- This picture of devastation is clear. The idea of the carnage left to the birds for the picking depicts a horrid image. The imagery is to show that God destroys Rome and the beast is left essentially to the vultures.

19:19 “And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.”

- Rome brought all of her allies against the Lord and none prevailed as we have seen and will see in the context that follows.
- This verse stands to show the power of deception that is brought through the workers of that old serpent the Devil.

19:20 “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

- The beast (Rome) and the false prophet that helped Rome to be in power are cast into a lake of fire.
- The lake of fire is clearly Hell (Revelation 20:14-15). Those that follow Satan can look forward to an eternity with him.

19:21 “And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”

- The Lord did not stop with the beast and the prophet. The followers of the beast are destroyed by the sword that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
- This sword, being the word of God, allows us to know that their destruction comes through judgment from the word of God (John 12:48). The reminder needs to be made that this was not a carnal war!
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Chapter Twenty

The time has come, “the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh” (Revelation 19:20-21). The Lord has judged Rome which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and He hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. It is fascinating to compare some of the things we have read with prophesies that Daniel set forth about Rome (Daniel 7:1-10). In chapter nineteen we saw that Rome was cast into the lake of fire just as Daniel foretold: “I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame” (Daniel 7:11). It is Satan’s time to be dealt with now.

Satan will be restricted in his power. His war against the church is not over, but he is forever wounded as he is kept sealed until the Judgment Day. The devil is now a leashed predator, but a predator he still is (I Peter 5:8-9). Our studies in chapter twenty must be kept within the scope of the book of Revelation and interpreted in light of other clear passages. Many get the idea of Christ setting up an earthly kingdom for 1,000 years by misunderstanding this chapter of the Bible. As we study this chapter let’s remember that the kingdom has come (Psalms 2:6-7, Isaiah 2:2-3, Daniel 2:31-45, Joel 2:23-32, Mark 9:1, Acts 1:8, Luke 24:47, Acts 2:1-38, Colossians 1:13, and Revelation 1:9). Let’s remember that Christ will not lead a battle on earth or set His kingdom upon the earth, for He himself will never step foot on this earth again (I Thessalonians 4:13-18, Hebrews 4:14, 7:14; 17, and 8:4 cf. John 18:36). It is also clear that Christ is not aware of the time of His return (Matthew 24:35-36). When Christ does come He will not begin a period of reign on earth, He will however judge mankind (I Timothy 4:1).

20:1 “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.”

- An angel comes down from heaven with authority over the bottomless pit and the ability to restrict in the symbol of a chain (II Peter 2:4).
- We know from our studies in chapter nine that the bottomless pit is the dwelling place of one whose name in Hebrew means destruction and in Greek it means Destroyer (9:11). We studied and found that this is the home of Satan though the earth is his kingdom and working place (Job 1:6-7 and II Corinthians 4:3-4).

20:2-3 “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

- In chapter nineteen we saw Rome and the False Prophet judged. Now it is Satan’s time. This angel is not Satan, for Satan cannot bind himself (Matthew 12:24-26).
- In chapter nine it is Satan who has power to open the pit (9:1-2), but we now see that authority has been taken from Him in essence. Satan has become a prisoner in his own house.
- The deep abyss is the home of Satan and his angels (Luke 8:30-31). Satan can no longer deceive the nations and raise up kingdoms to carry out his will as he has done with Rome (Revelation 13:1-2; 14).
The period of one thousand years is not literal, just as the 144,000 in chapters seven and fourteen were not literal. It is not literal just as God does not just claim the cattle of the earth on only one thousand hills (Psalms 50:10). We talked in our introduction of this great book of how the numbers five and ten mean human completion. Thus, one thousand would be man’s complete number of ten multiplied by itself three times (10x10x10x = 1,000). Thus, this a time of completion that is not determined and specific (II Peter 3:7-12).

When this period of time ends Satan will be freed to have another go at it (cf. vs.7-8). Consider how hungry for souls he will be when he is fully set free. The analogy of a pit bull that has been fed mere strips of meat in a small cage being set free after years of that in a crowd.

20:4 “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their forehead, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

In chapter six (vs. 9-11) we saw the martyred saints cry for their blood to be avenged from under the altar. God has carried this out on their behalf (Revelation 18:20).

They are with Christ in the spiritual realm, not on earth. They, not us, refused to bow to Rome and have their minds and hands corrupted with the thoughts and works of Rome. Their cause, which is the Lord’s work, is being carried forth and that serves as a resurrection. We will discuss further how this refers to the furtherance of the kingdom in verse five.

Those who teach this is a one thousand year reign on earth of the saints with Christ have grossly abused the context of this chapter and the book of Revelation. If this is to be taken literally it will only be those who have been beheaded for the sake of the Lord that will reign anyway.

20:5 “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”

The first resurrection is those martyred saints being sat upon thrones and being avenged in a spiritual resurrection. This is not literally a first resurrection, for the first had already occurred (Acts 2:22-24, Romans 8:29, and Colossians 1:18). Thus, this must be interpreted in a figurative way or else it is a contradiction of the simple passages we know that reject the theory of three, four, or five resurrections as there will only be one (John 5:28-29). This is vengeance and the resurrection of the cause of Christ triumphant over the work of Satan.

To speak of the cause of the kingdom like this is consistent with examples like the resurrection of Judah from Babylonian captivity and her work in bringing about the church (Ezekiel 37:10-14; 21-28). Similarly, we talked of the two witnesses in chapter eleven that were resurrected which symbolized the continuation of the Lord’s work (11:7-12). We discussed in chapter eleven the following from our studies: “When Rome would fall, they would see they had not destroyed the church, only forced it underground, and when it emerges, it will be like a resurrection from the dead.” This is consistent with what we read here.

The rest of the dead (remnant or those remaining) refers to those who were slain with the sword (Revelation 19:21), whose cause is now dead. We know that they will open their eyes, thus this death is not literal (Luke 16:19-31). So, the fact that they will not live again for one thousand years simply indicates that the only resurrection for them will be their bodies in judgment and not their cause on earth.

20:6 “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”
Those vindicated saints are blessed. Physical death is an appointment from God for all, with the exception of Enoch and Elijah (Hebrews 9:27; cf. Hebrews 11:5 and I Kings 2:11).

Those who have been vindicated are the faithful who have made it through the works of Rome who was empowered by Satan. They will have no fear of Hell, which is the second death (Revelation 20:14-15).

Their cause will continue for the period of time that Satan is bound (Hebrews 12:28).

As Christians, we all are priests who offer sacrifices unto God (I Peter 2:5; 9, Romans 12:1-2, and I Corinthians 6:19-20). This verse serves to show that this will continue through the victory that has been gained.

20:7-8 “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.”

When the completion of Satan’s limitation comes to be, he will be loosed. He will then seek to deceive the nations of the world. This will be for a brief time (20:3). Consider the first judgment of the earth as a thinking point on this verse wherein God determined to punish the wickedness of man, gave a time for Noah to prepare the ark, wickedness increased, and God flooded the earth (Genesis 6:5-8, Matthew 24:36-39, Hebrews 11:7, I Peter 3:20, and II Peter 2:5).

Gog was the king of the land of Magog who stood against Israel (Ezekiel 38-39). Thus, symbolically, we see that Satan will call together a vast people who are opposed to God and the people of God for his battle. This is not a physical battle. Our warfare is not carnal (II Corinthians 10:3-5 and Ephesians 6:10-18).

This sure does hurt the idea that chapter sixteen is the battle of Armageddon. For if it was, there will be another.

20:9 “And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”

The vehicle Satan will use is certainly large enough to affect Christians all over the world. The city of God is the church (Hebrews 12:22-23), thus Satan and his deceived followers shall wage war once again upon the church.

This does not mean that Satan stopped at anytime from fighting against the Saints. Nor can we conclude that time has come or will be with any certainty. Some would argue that world religions are Satan’s Gog and Magoog. Others would argue that the Catholic Church is Magoog with the Pope being Gog. Some would conclude that humanism, atheism, secularism, etc. is Satan’s tool. All we know as Christians is that we are in a battle that can get worse or better at times. Either way, we are to be ready to face persecution and rejoice in our sufferings for Christ (Matthew 5:10-12 and II Timothy 3:12).

20:10 “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Satan then faces the doom that the beast and false prophet have faced. Interestingly, it was at the end of the battle that Rome and the false prophet waged against the Lord that they faced this punishment (Revelation 19:19-20).

20:11-15 “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the
dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

- Now we see the universal judgment scene being set forth. The destruction of the earth marks the end of time and the beginning of the Judgment Day (II Peter 3:9-10).
- The sea (humanity), the dead, and those in the lake of fire will be resurrected and judged (Matthew 25:31-46, I Corinthians 15:24; 45-58 and I Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- Our works will be judged by the books, or the word of God (John 12:48, Matthew 16:27 and Revelation 22:12).
- The second death comprises of eternal damnation to not only the beast, false prophet, the devil, and his angels; but also to those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life. The righteous are those named in the Lamb’s book of life (Revelation 21:27).

**Studies in the Book of Revelation**

*Chapter Twenty-One*

Rome and the false prophet are now cast into the lake of fire (19:20). Satan too will face that fate (20:10), but for now he is bound for a period of time wherein he is limited in the evil that he will be able to do (20:1-3). The Lord has also foretold of the final Judgment Day that will come wherein Rome, the false prophet, Satan, and all whose names are not in the book of life shall be cast into eternal damnation (20:14-15). The church has overcome the battle Satan has waged on her through Rome. Now the bride of Christ, the church, is going to be presented in a glorious state. The persecution that brought death, sorrow, and pain by the beast is now over and will not affect Christians any longer. The church is shown here to John as beautiful, majestic, and complete.

21:1 “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”

- John sees a new heaven and a new earth with the former having passed away. Isaiah said something similar twice in his writings that may help us in our study of this verse: “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into
mind” (Isaiah 65:17). “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain” (Isaiah 66:22).

- When Isaiah spoke of the new heaven and a new earth he was speaking of a new place for Judah, a rebuilt Jerusalem, when they came out of Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel says this was a new heart and spirit for God’s people (Ezekiel 36:26-36).
- Peter later speaks of a new heaven and earth (II Peter 3:13). This being when the earth is destroyed (II Peter 3:9-12).
- So, this verse could take on one of two meanings. We could be talking about eternal life as our new heaven and new earth. Or, we could be talking about the church in a new period without the persecution of Rome. A time when the church is glorified and protected, much like Judah was post Babylonian captivity.
- Since there are two possible meanings we must allow the context to bare out the meaning of this part of verse one.

- What does it mean that there was no more sea? It could mean the sea being a body of water was destroyed, or it could mean society. If we are talking in this context about the destruction of the earth it could very well mean a body or bodies of water. Let us remember that the sea in earlier chapters was a place where people died, not a body of water (16:3). In fact, the sea was what Rome was raised up from (13:1). The sea, if we continue in what has been set forth throughout previous chapters, would be society. In fact, it was the people that helped Rome bring persecution upon the church. If it is indeed society we know that particular society has now ended (Revelation 19:21).

21:2 “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

- Ah, clarity now comes from this second verse. There are undeniable truths presented here that show that we are not talking about heaven in this context, the end of the earth, or anything akin to it. We are talking about the glorified church. How can we know?
  - Heaven does not come down from Heaven. At the end of this life we will go up to Heaven, not wait for Heaven to descend to us (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). When the end comes Christ will deliver UP his kingdom to the Father, not bring it down (I Corinthians 15:24).
  - Secondly, what is the bride of Christ? The church is the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:32; cf. vs. 22-31).
- God has placed the church upon a spiritual mountain (Isaiah 2:2-3 and Micah 4:1-2). The church is now glorified instead of petrified. The church is prepared for her husband, which is Christ. We will see the beauty of the church through this chapter and how God describes her adornment.
- In fact, we know that we are not talking about Heaven here because verse seven promises an inheritance yet to come. Heaven is eternal. There is no reward or punishment beyond the eternal reward or punishment.

21:3 “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

- The church is the tabernacle, the dwelling place of God (I Corinthians 3:16-17 and I Timothy 3:15).
- The promise that God will dwell with us [the church], be our God, and that we will be His people is fulfilled (Jeremiah 31:33; cf. Hebrews 8:10-13).
21:4 “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

- When Judah was defended by God the Lord said he had taken the tears from their eyes and swallowed up victory in death (Isaiah 25:8). This was long before Christ came and died on the cross at Calvary, thus the meaning was that Judah should not suffer at the hands of her oppressors any longer. The same is true in this context. Christians would not have any more tears, sorrow, pain, or death at the hand of Rome.
- That time has ended.
- We should not dismiss that Heaven will be a place of eternal joy. We know that eternity will be a place of comfort where there will be no tears or physical needs to suffer from (Revelation 7:13-17).

21:5 “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

- John is told to write these things. The saints need encouragement. What the Lord says is true and He is faithful to His word (Hebrews 6:18 and Titus 1:2).

21:6 “And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”

- It is done, or it is finish, supplies the finality of what the church has faced. This is consistent with the book of Revelation.
- Jesus is the beginning and the end (Revelation 1:8; 22:13).

21:7 “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

- Those who overcome, because time has not ended yet, have a reward awaiting them. Eternity is yet to come.

21:8 “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

- Those who follow in the path of the beast and all other sinners, shall have their fate sealed in eternal punishment along with the beast, false prophet, and Satan himself (Revelation 20:10; 13-15).

21:9-10 “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”

- One of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the last seven plaques (chapter 16), brings this vision to John. This may be the same angel that showed John God’s judgment against the city of Rome (17:1). What a contrast of messages this is for John to see from this angel of the Lord.
The great city, holy Jerusalem, is the church (Hebrews 12:22-23). Let us remember from verses one and two that we are talking about the bride of Christ, the church in this context. What John will see is a figurative depiction of the church. The church adorned [decorated as if with ornaments] as the bride of Christ (vs. 2).

Again, we see the church coming down, not going up. This is not Heaven (see notes on verse 2).

21:11 “Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.”

We begin talking of the church having the glory of God.
We see the term “like”, signifying a simile. This is how the context is portrayed. This is not literal, it is figurative. The beauty of the church is described through the image the Lord has in His eyes of His beautiful bride.
For example, when I see Katrina coming down the stairs from above, she shines like a bright and beautiful star, with eyes of sapphire, and the walk of a princess. She stands as a high wall, adorned in gold and valuable jewels. On and on I could go using similar terms to describe the beauty of my wife (I can imagine the embarrassment I am causing her by writing this). The Lord is describing His bride which appears beautiful to Him and He will use carnal terms to explain His image of His bride to us.
The Lord would not reveal carnal pleasures to us from above as a description of Heaven, for He desires our thinking to be spiritual (Romans 8:6; 12:1-2, and I Corinthians 3:1). He does not want our desire of Heaven to be a carnal lust.
The shining of the bride of Christ is like a stone of jasper [precious stone of various colors (for some are purple, others blue, others green, and others the color of brass)]. The clear crystal appearance could very well speak towards the purity of the bride of Christ having no blemishes.

21:12 “And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.”

The bride of Christ is a protected city with the angels as her guard against spiritual invasion. They would assure that the only entrants would be those who are properly clothed (Matthew 22:2-14 and Galatians 3:27).
The twelve gates would signify that those who make their calling an election sure will have an entrance supplied abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:10-11).

21:13 “On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.”

Four directions of openings would suggest to us that the kingdom of God is open for citizens to come from all directions (Matthew 24:14).

21:14 “And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

Again, we know we are talking about the church because the Apostles are part of the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:19-20).

21:15 “And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.”
The angel that spoke with Paul could measure the entrance and protection of the bride of Christ. The results of his measurements will follow in our context.

21:16 “And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.”

- Eight furlongs equal one mile. Thus, we are talking of a measurement of 1500 miles. This is a 1500 mile four cornered city that is equal in length, height, and breadth. The kingdom of the Lord is not small. The saved from generations past and those to come make up the bride of Christ.
- Some who would stack these numbers to be a measurement of Heaven have missed that Heaven is not a carnal location (I Corinthians 15:45-50). For those who claim Palestine will be the city of Heaven literally, the measurement here would dispose of that idea if all were literal.

21:17 “And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.”

- The angel is using calculations of man, or measurements that man would use.
- We see the number one hundred and forty four. If literal, the walls would be about eight foot walls.
- One hundred and forty four is twelve multiplied by itself, therefore signifying the complete protection of the bride of Christ.

21:18 “And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.”

- The wall was as jasper and the city was of gold likened unto clear glass. Gold is opaque. How is the city gold and clear at the same time? Hint - we are not talking about literal things.
- The wall protecting the body of Christ is like a precious stone of jasper. Jasper is a precious stone of various colors (for some are purple, others blue, others green, and others the color of brass).
- The city being like gold would show the beauty and value of the bride of Christ. We understand the value of Gold. The bride of Christ is arrayed as such. While gold however, the bride of Christ is like clear glass. There are no spots as the blood of Christ has cleansed those who make up His body (Revelation 1:5).

21:19-20 “And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald. The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.”

- For the third time we see a comparison to jasper (vs. 11, 18, and now). The foundation of the church is Christ and the Apostles (Ephesians 2:19-20).
- The precious stones that show the beauty of the foundation of the church are:
  - Jasper is a precious stone of various colors (for some are purple, others blue, others green, and others the color of brass).
  - Sapphire which is a gem variety of corundum in transparent or translucent crystals of a color other than red; especially: one of a transparent rich blue.
  - Chalcedony is a precious stone of misty grey color, clouded with blue, yellow, or purple.
  - Emerald is a transparent precious stone noted especially for its light green color.
  - Sardonyx is a precious stone marked by the red colors of the carnelian (sard) and the white of the onyx.
Sardius is a precious stone of which there are two types, the former is called a carnelian (because flesh colored) and the latter a sard.

Chrysolite is a precious stone of golden color.

Beryl is a precious stone of a pale green color.

Topaz is a greenish yellow precious stone.

Chrysoprasus is a stone of green colour, inclined to that of gold.

Jacinth or hyacinth, the name of a flower, also of a precious stone of the same colour, a dark blue verging on black.

Amethyst is a precious stone of a violet and purple color.

21:21 “And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.”

- The twelve gates are described as pearls (see notes on verse 12).
- The streets of gold are so pure that they appear as transparent (see notes on verse 18).

21:22 “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.”

- While heaven has a temple (Revelation 7:14-15); the bride of Christ, the church, is God’s temple (I Timothy 3:15 and Revelation 3:12).

21:23-25 “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.”

- We sing how there is “no night there” based upon this verse in regards to Heaven. Surely, where God is there will be no darkness. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (I John 1:5). Thus, saying we are talking about the church does not change the beautiful thoughts of Heaven we have through the Scriptures. After all, the church will be raised up and handed over to the Father in the final day (I Corinthians 15:24).
- The church is not a place of spiritual darkness because we walk in the light (I John 1:7). This does not occur in Heaven alone.
- The gates will not be shut by day and there is no night. Thus, the gates are always pen in God’s holy city, the church. This permits freedom in coming (Acts 2:41) and going (I Corinthians 10:12). Entrance and departure are a choice and the open gates are not a weakness in defense.

21:26 “And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.”

- The glory and honor of all nations will make up the body of Christ. The Gospel is taught throughout the whole world (Matthew 28:19), and those who obey it are of many nations.

21:27 “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

- We conclude this chapter with a verse that some could find confusing in light of our context. One might wonder if we are now talking about Heaven since no one that defileth, worketh abominations, or makes a lie can enter. One might wonder how one’s name can be in the Lamb’s book of life prior to being added to the body of Christ, the church. The point is this, the saved
make up the church. One is converted and THEN added to the body of Christ (Acts 2:47). The lost are not saved, their names are not in the book of life, and they cannot be added to the church.

- The Lamb’s book of life contains the names of those who are saved. Once in the Lamb’s book of life you can be removed (Revelation 22:19). What does that prove? It proves that the Lamb’s book of life is made up of the saved who can fall away and not those who are already in Heaven. Further evidence that we are talking of the church and not Heaven.

- This verse is similar to what our Lord said while on earth: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait [restricted] is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Studies in the Book of Revelation

Chapter Twenty-Two

John is seeing a new heaven and new earth with the former being in the past (21:1). It is the church that John has a vision of presented by the Lord in such a glorious way (21:2; 9-10). We saw a description of the bride of Christ showing in carnal terms the beauty of the church. We begin this chapter with more description of the bride of Christ in a continued thought from the end of chapter twenty-one. We conclude this great book with this chapter.

We will see that Christ is true to His word. His word has been presented by the prophets and He will soon bring to reality those things which have been foretold. For the churches this book is written to, they can know that Christ is coming to reward them and punish those who have persecuted them. The beautiful bride of Christ has been preserved. No one can change what the Lord has written and for those who try… they will pay a significant price. We should learn from the things contained in the book of Revelation that when the church seems to be failing, the Lord will not sit back quietly and do nothing!

22:1 “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

- Jesus said this to the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob: “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13-14).

- The church no longer has the flood waters of sin to contend with (Revelation 12:15). The glorified church has the water of life now. All things are great and the glory of the bride of Christ has been restored. Like the Garden of Eden had its waters (Genesis 2:10), we have Christ giving us life.

- To contend this is Heaven one has to maintain the idea that we will have physical needs and the possibility of thirst in Heaven.
22:2 “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

- The tree of life is reminiscent of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9). We know that Jesus gives the water of life. Consider that this tree appears on both sides of the river. This would represent God’s people on both sides of the cross that are brought together in Christ and are part of His kingdom (Ephesians 2:11-22). In Christ both we and those on the other side of the cross have life eternal (Romans 5:21, Galatians 3:13, and I John 5:11).
- The twelve manner of fruit may well indicate the fruit that comes from the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42), which is seen every month of the year.
- The leaves of that tree are for the healing of the nations. Consider what most benefits the nations (Matthew 28:19).

22:3-4 “And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.”

- As the mark of the beast was on the forehead (mind) of those who served Rome (Revelation 13:15-17), the Lord has His mark on our minds (Romans 7:25; 8:6; 12:2).
- There is no more Rome, thus the curse has ended. God is dwelling with His people (I Timothy 3:15).
- It can easily get confusing when we start reading that we will see the face of God. John had previously said: “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us” (I John 4:12). However, John also said: “Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God” (III John v. 11). Thus, seeing the face of God is being of God and following that which is good. These saints have God on their minds and in their hearts. The Spirit has revealed the deep things of God unto them (I Corinthians 2:9-13). God is a spirit and they have seen spiritual things in a clear light.

22:5 “And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

- As we discussed in chapter twenty-one, God is light (Psalms 31:16 and I John 1:5). When walking with the Lord we are not surrounded in darkness. In the kingdom we are translated from darkness (Colossians 1:13). The life of the faithful is everlasting.

22:6 “And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.”

- The prophets have spoken to the servants of the Lord and those things are faithful and true. These things will shortly be done. Can the Lord Jesus promise His Second Coming to be shortly done (Matthew 24:36)? This is further evidence we are not talking of the Judgment Day and Heaven to come thereafter.
- What we do know for sure is that the word of the Lord is true and He will not lie (Psalms 119:160, Hebrews 6:18, Titus 1:2, and Revelation 21:5).

22:7 “Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”

- The obedient will be blessed (Matthew 7:21-28, Romans 2:13; 6:16-18, and James 1:22).
22:8-9 “And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.”

- John sees these things and falls to the feet of the angel to worship him. The angel rightly stops John as the angel too is a servant and only God is to be worshipped (Luke 4:8, Acts 10:25-26, and Revelation 19:10).

22:10 “And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.”

- Earlier John had been instructed to place a seal on what the angels revealed (Revelation 10:4). No seal is now to be placed on the Revelation John has had, for the time is at hand.

22:11-12 “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

- One might conclude wrongly that the Lord does not want man to change from what is written in these two verses. Nothing could be further from the truth (II Peter 3:9).
- What the Lord is saying is that the sinner that is, will be judged for his works and the righteous that remained faithful will be too (Romans 2:6 and Galatians 6:7-8).

22:13 “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”

- Jesus began this book by stating His omnipresence (1:8; 11), and He concludes in a like manner (21:6).

22:14 “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

- The obedient are added to the kingdom and they enjoy the reward of eternal life (Acts 2:47 and John 6:54; 10:27-28).

22:15 “For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”

- Those outside of the kingdom are scum! This is what the Lord has made clear throughout the New Testament (John 3:19-20, II Corinthians 6:14-18, James 4:4, and I John 2:15-17).

22:16 “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

- Christ accepts authorship of this Revelation and signs it with markings of His identity (Isaiah 11:1 and Matthew 1:1).
- As the morning star Jesus shines in the hearts and minds of those who have awaken beyond the gloomy day of Rome (Revelation 2:28).

22:17 “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”
An invitation is given by the Lord to come to Him. This cannot occur if in Heaven as the fate of all would be sealed (Matthew 25:46).

22:18-19 “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Throughout the pages of the Bible we see the warnings not to change God’s word (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6, Galatians 1:6-12, etc.).

The reward is taken from those who remove instruction from the word of God. Those who add to the Lord’s words will find that they have added unto themselves a great punishment.

22:20 “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Again, we find the promise of the Lord to come quickly. He will judge Rome and reward His faithful servants by glorifying the now persecuted church.

22:21 “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”


References

1. All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.