

A COMMENTARY ON THE REVELATION

BY GERALD S. SMITH

A series of Sunday School Lessons taught at the Northside Baptist Church in Lexington, Kentucky in 1976.

I don't know of any two men that agree on the Book of Revelation entirely. This commentary of Revelation by Brother Gerald S. Smith is a good study of this book. He deals with the scripture in a plain way and does not go beyond what the scriptures say. Although I disagree with a very few verses of interpretation, it is a very good exposition of the book.

Brother Al Gormley

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gerald Scott Smith was born December 16, 1925 in Vine Creek, Kansas. He served in the US Navy in World War II. A descendant of homesteaders, he was the son of a farmer and was following in the family vocation when God intervened. Many times I have heard him tell his testimony, how that his cousin had been saved and called to preach and was holding a series of meetings in a little one-room school house. Gerald went one night out of curiosity, and the first time he heard the gospel he was saved. This was in 1950. He was twenty five years old.

It was not very long until he felt the Lord was calling him to preach the gospel. He heard about a school starting in Lexington, Kentucky by the Late Clearance Walker, under the authority of the Ashland Avenue Baptist Church. He sold his farm and equipment and, with his wife Shirlee and two young children, five year-old Sherman, and Linda four, moved to Lexington. The year was 1951.

Gerald went to Lexington Baptist College while working in construction and eventually he had his own business. He was called to Ephesus Baptist Church in

Lincoln County, Kentucky and was the pastor there for eleven years. In 1964 was called to the Northside Baptist Church on Price Avenue in Lexington, Kentucky. He pastored the Northside Baptist Church for thirty years. Under his leadership the church went from a basement on Price Avenue to a new building in that location.

It was in this location in 1974 that I found Christ under the preaching of Brother Smith. In 1978 Gerald led the church to buy seven acres of land on Swigert Avenue in the Northern edge of Lexington where a beautiful building was constructed. This was the location of the church when Brother Smith's health started to decline. He had a major heart attack in 1978 and open-heart surgery. In succeeding years he had to have another By-pass surgery and several other surgeries. In 1994 he had to retire as pastor due to his deteriorating health.

During the twenty years that he was my pastor and until his death he made a tremendous impression upon me. Outside of his family I knew him as well and probably better, than most people. I would have to say that he was my closest friend. We traveled together, worked together, played golf together, laughed together and cried together. We trusted each other with our most intimate personal problems. We had very few disagreements and I trusted him completely.

It was from this man of God that I learned the great doctrine of the word of God. It was by his example and by his teaching that I learned one of the most fundamental and most important things that a large number of Christians never learn, and that is this: he taught me to trust in God. Everything he taught, he taught by example. God used him in the lives of many people.

This commentary on the Revelation is from a series of Sunday School lessons taught at the Northside Baptist Church. Brother Smith always wrote the Sunday School lessons for the teachers and this commentary is a compilation of those lessons. Since he is in heaven now, and can't speak to us, I believe that he would want his work to go on through this volume. If the reader gleans anything from reading this commentary, I think I know what Brother Gerald Smith would say: "Praise the Lord".

Okey Smith

Introduction:

The book of Revelation was written by the Apostle John while he was in exile on the isle of Patmos, about the year A.D. 96.

CONTENTS

Chapter I	1
Chapter II	17
Chapter III	32
Chapter IV	46
Chapter V	53
Chapter VI	59
Chapter VII	67
Chapter VIII	73
Chapter IX	79
Chapter X	86
Chapter XI	89
Chapter XII	98
Chapter XIII	105
Chapter XIV	118
Chapter XV	128
Chapter XVI	131
Chapter XVII	137
Chapter XVIII	146
Chapter XIX	154
Chapter XX	164
Chapter XXI	172
Chapter XXII	187

CHAPTER I

Verse 1 - "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" - This book is the revelation or unveiling of Jesus Christ. It is a manifestation of Him to John the Apostle. This book tells of the person, character and being of the Lord Jesus. It tells of his second coming and the events to take place. **"which God gave unto Him,"** - This revelation came from God Himself. All of it is true, it is not the dream or the imagination of a man. **"to shew unto His servants"** - God intended for His people to know about this book. It is not to be shunned or pushed aside; God wants us to know what it says. **"things which must shortly come to pass;"** - This does not mean the things in this book would happen soon after they were shown to John, but rather when they did begin to happen they would come to pass in short order. In other words the purpose of this book is to show beforehand the things that will one day suddenly come to pass. **"and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John:"** - God showed John the things written in this book. The term 'Signified' is important to note. The things that shall come to pass are made known by signs and symbols. While we believe we should take as literal, everything we can, yet there are many things we must understand as being 'signified' or symbolized.

Verse 2 - "Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." - John actually saw and heard the things he wrote in this book. God, by a miracle, let all those things happen before his eyes. As we read on in the book we see things that seem impossible and completely out of reason according to men's knowledge, but they are none the less true. Perhaps God showed them to John because there was no other way John could comprehend and believe them. One thing is certain, folks had better believe it because they are going to be faced with it. Perhaps a lot sooner than they think.

Verse 3 - "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy," - In John's day everyone didn't have a bible like they do now. Relatively few copies existed and scarcely would you find all the scriptures together. Thus the people would meet together and one would read from the copy in the meeting place. This is the primary significance of **"he that readeth"**. The promised blessing then is to the one who reads and those who listen. **"and keep those things which are written therein:"** - The words of this book, as with all of God's word, are a blessing and a benefit only to those who so read and listen that it affects their lives. It does no one any good just to know what the Bible says if it does not change their lives. The book of Revelation will change anyone's life who studies and believes it. **"for the time is at hand."** - This expression does not mean those things had to happen in John's day but they could. The Bible clearly denotes the coming of Christ to be imminent. Paul, Peter, John and others expected Him to come at anytime. He didn't come during

their lifetime and He hasn't come yet but He could come TODAY. The time is at hand.

Verse 4 - "John to the seven churches which are in Asia:" The book is addressed to seven churches in Asia. Why seven churches? The number seven in the scriptures is the number of perfection or completion; it signifies a whole. Here the whole, being all churches in all ages. (By churches we mean only true churches after the order of the one the Lord Jesus founded). Those seven churches are representative of all churches in all ages. In principle there were within those churches all the good and evil things that could be in any church. Likewise outward circumstances were comparable to that which could be found in any age. Thus the message of Revelation is as much to churches today as to Ephesus or Laodicea. **"Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come;"** - This is none other than "Jehovah", the great "I am" as He appeared to Moses, Exodus 3:14. Jehovah is a compound word formed from three words meaning He is, He was and He will be. Our God Jehovah is a triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The three are equal and one in essence but distinct in person. Here the Father is denoted. **"and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne;"** - This is the Holy Spirit, the second person of the God-head. The number seven used again to show perfection and completeness. This completeness and perfection of the office work of the Holy Spirit is shown in Isaiah 11:2. The Spirit of the Lord; The Spirit of wisdom; The Spirit of Understanding; The Spirit of Counsel; The Spirit of Might; The Spirit of Knowledge; The Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

Verse 5 - "And from Jesus Christ," - The third person of the trinity, the one who dominates this book, the one whose person can thrill the heart of the child of God. The one whose vision can stir the hopes of the most distressed Christian. This is the Lamb of God, the one for whom all the saints anxiously, yet patiently await. **"who is the faithful witness,"** - Jesus is the Word of God. He is the express image of His person, the brightness of His glory. He is the only witness of God who can be trusted. He is the only one who reveals the exact being of God. He is the only true one. Upon Him and Him only can we rely, He alone bears faithful witness to the message of God. Yes, He is indeed the message and the messenger. **"and the first begotten of the dead,"** - There is much difference of opinion as to the meaning of this expression, but we know this. Jesus is the first begotten from the dead in the sense that He has preeminence in all things. He is over and above all things. All majesty and glory belong to Him. He was the first to arise from the dead with a glorified body. He arose from the dead to die no more, having conquered death, gaining complete victory; He is the "first" or preeminent over death, Hell and the grave. **"and the prince of the kings of the earth."** - He is indeed King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Many before Him sought to rule the world and to dominate all other potentates but only Jesus will ever have complete control of governments and men upon earth.

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

Verse 6 - "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" - John seems to be carried away in a 'blaze of glory' as he contemplates the wonders of the Lord Jesus. We can imagine, but we will never know the magnificence of that magic moment when we meet the majestic Master! What a sight that will be! To see for the first time in the fullness of His majesty, the one who washed us from our sins. To see Him in all His glory, yet as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. What a day when we sing "worthy is the Lamb." ***"And hath made us kings and priests"*** - According to the greatest of scholars would be better translated "kingdom of priests". This expresses a great truth that will bless the heart of any student of the word. By virtue of the fact Jesus washed us from our sins in His own blood, being Himself our Great High Priest, we have access to the throne of God ourselves. We are believer priests. We need no Levitical priest, neither do we need a Catholic priest or pope between us and God. Jesus is our intercessor, our mediator and He is God. We have the right to come directly to Him. He said in John 14:6 *"...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* While there is no approach to God aside from the Lord Jesus, yet there IS a way BY Him. The one who trusts in Him as Savior has the only entrance into God. Thus we need no earthly priests. Thank God He has revealed unto us the "more excellent way".

Verse 7 - "Behold, He cometh with clouds;" - When Jesus left this earth a cloud received Him out of sight. He, Himself associated His second coming with the clouds. Paul was inspired to write *"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (I Thessalonians 4:17.) Every time we see a cloud it should remind us of Christ coming again. This is an inevitable happening, how the very thought of it should thrill our hearts!! ***"and every eye shall see Him,"*** - There will not be a single soul who ever lived upon the earth but what will see the Lord Jesus. They will not all see Him at the same time, but all will see Him. All will recognize and admit that He is Lord. Every knee shall bow before Him. Millions of pagans who had never heard of Him, multitudes of Jews who rejected Him, worlds that turned their backs to Him, self trained atheists who ridiculed Him all will fall before Him and declare Him Lord. ***"and they also which pierced Him;"*** - These are the Jews that murdered Him. ***"and all kindreds of the earth"*** - All who refused Him, whosoever and wherever they are. ***"shall wail because of Him."*** - What a terrible day it will be for those who hardened their hearts and mocked with glee as Jesus was beaten, bruised and nailed to the cross. What an awful day for those who, for sinful pleasure and lust, chose darkness rather than light. Well might they cry for the rocks and

mountains to fall on them to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne!! What a day of weeping and wailing that will be!! **"Even so, Amen."**

Verse 8 - "I am Alpha and Omega," - These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet and is as we would say "the A and Z". The letters of the alphabet are the elements used to make all words, which are vehicles of expression. Jesus is everything from A to Z. He is the only thing worthwhile. Without Him all else is worthless and meaningless. Without Him one would be better to have been born an imbecile or idiot knowing nothing or not to have been born at all. Though one may know all the words in all the languages of the world and yet know not THE Word, he really knows nothing at all. **"the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord,"** - In Him all things had their beginning and by Him all things shall be consummated. Nothing ever was or ever shall be without Him. How foolish those who attempt to live their lives as though there were no god! **"which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."** - This is the highest name on mortal tongue or pen. There is none greater. There is no greater expression to denote supremacy, excellence, majesty and glory. This name signifies the rightful subjection of all other things and beings. This is the name Jesus ascribes to Himself. He is Jehovah God. It was He who appeared to Abraham, who appeared to Jacob, who appeared to Moses. It was He who created all things and who holds all things together. He is the Almighty! How sad the fate of those who deny the position God's word applies. How amazed and crushed will be the Mormon, the Jehovah's Witness, the Adventist and other cults when they find out too late that Jesus is God!!

Verse 9 - "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," - John did not hold himself above those of the churches to whom he wrote. He was an apostle but he was also a brother in Christ. He had to suffer trial and tribulation as they did. He was born unto the same kingdom they were and shared in its glory to come but with patience endured the hardships while awaiting the Great day. **"was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."** - Patmos was a little island in the Aegean Sea just north of the Mediterranean Sea. It is about seven miles long and a mile wide. It has no rivers or trees and no land for cultivation except small areas on narrow rock ledges. John was exiled here for teaching the word of God and giving testimony concerning Jesus Christ. What seemed to be a great tragedy for him turned out to be the greatest of blessing, not only to him, but to all the world who believes his story. It was here he received the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Verse 10 - "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," - There are two very plausible explanations of this portion of scripture. There are excellent scholars on either side. One is that John was transported by Spirit into a condition similar to

Ezekiel at Chebar or as Paul caught up into Paradise. This view makes the "Lord's Day" the "day of the Lord". In brief the apostle was transformed and transported by the Spirit into the happenings and scenes of the future great day when Jesus comes. The other view is that John was in a condition of special closeness to the Lord, feeling the presence of power of the Holy Spirit much as most of us experience from time to time when we are troubled by something and then were brought to our knees before God. We commune with Him and pour out our hearts, telling Him all our troubles and then suddenly He is right there to comfort us and tell us everything is all right. The Lord's Day then would be Sunday, the first day of the week. The day God's people meet to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus and to worship Him. This is the view held by Ironside, Strauss, Barnes, A. T. Robertson and many others and which I personally lean toward. We can imagine the feeling of the Apostle. Here he was on this lonely, bleak and barren island, by himself, away from the people of God, persecuted for the sake of the Lord Jesus and His gospel. It was Sunday the Lord's Day, the day he always met to worship with God's people. He was away from them but he wasn't away from God; he believed in keeping the Lord's Day holy. In deep meditation and heart felt worship he communed with God and God had a blessing for him he never imagined. So God can do for us if we do His will and spend time in talking with Him and truly worshipping Him. Those who steal the Lord's Day for their own worldly pleasure are robbing themselves of treasure the world knows nothing of. Who can imagine what eternity will reveal of the tragic loss of careless Christians!! May God help us to understand and put the right value on the Lord's Day that we might keep it for Him and receive of the treasures of Heaven as God opens to them who love to be with him. ***"and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,"*** - Imagine the feeling of John as he was deep in thought and meditation that Lord's Day, feeling the very presence of the Holy Spirit as he worshipped God, when suddenly he heard a voice so loud and clear, so penetrating and strong that it sounded like a trumpet. How startled he must have been since he was alone!! There was no mistaking this voice to be any but the Lord Jesus, the living Word of God. Those who know God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ know the Bible is true; they know it is the word of God and not of man. Those who deny the Bible or doubt it make it clear that they do not know the one who wrote it. They have not the Spirit of God to enlighten them. They are in darkness and spiritual death and hell with open jaws waits hungrily to devour them.

Verse 11 - "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:" Jesus announces Himself to John as the all-inclusive one. He is everything. There is no true wisdom outside of Him; there is no sane approach to any subject that disregards Him. He is the one who made all things and He is the one who will bring all things to a close. Here is something to cause us to see the greatness of our Lord as compared to man. It took man six thousand years to gain enough knowledge to put an unmanned craft on the planet Mars, but God made the

planet. He just spoke the word and it was there! Mars is a very small planet and very close to earth by comparison to some of the other planets. Our solar system is, by comparison to other systems, minute and insignificant. The one who spoke to John that day was the one who made ALL things. When we try to imagine the greatness and magnificence of God our thoughts are mired down, we can not attain to such heights and bounds. This was Jesus the Lord who spoke to John and He is the one whom all must meet face to face one day. He will be the righteous judge who must mete out judgment without mercy to those who do not know Him. But praise His wonderful name, today He is the loving compassionate Savior to all who will come to Him. ***"and, What thou seest, write in a book,"*** - The Lord was about to reveal Himself and the things that shall take place. He wanted John to record these things in a book or scroll. What John was about to see and hear would be of such moment that the people of all ages would be affected by it. ***"and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyratira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."*** - As we explained earlier, seven is the number of perfection or completeness. The sending of the book to the seven churches is significant. The book is for all churches in all ages. In these churches were conditions that would be comparable to any church in any place in any age. These churches were of the same order as true Baptist churches today, whether or not they were called Baptist churches. These churches came into existence directly or indirectly from the first church at Jerusalem which was founded and organized by the Lord Jesus out of material baptized by John the Baptist who was called "the Baptist" by God Himself. Now some folks may not like to think these were Baptist Churches but if they weren't we would like to know what they were!! They weren't Catholic because they were three hundred years too early. They weren't Lutherans or Presbyterians because Luther or Calvin had hundreds of years before they came on the scene. They weren't Methodists or Episcopaleans because the Church of England hadn't been formed yet. King Henry the Eighth wouldn't have his run in with the Pope for centuries after this. John Wesley wasn't around then. These churches weren't Campbellites because John Campbell wasn't born until 1788. All the Holiness and Pentecostal folks wouldn't be heard of for 1800 years. Yes these were Baptists all right because there wasn't any other kind of church then. Why send this great book to the churches? Because the church is the body of Christ and is his chosen messenger. When Jesus was on the earth He founded His church and promised to it perpetuity. ***"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"*** (Matthew 16:18.) When Jesus left He commissioned the church to make disciples, baptize and teach them. He never gave this authority to anyone else before or since. It is the church Christ loved and gave Himself for. It is the church that is to bring Him glory in all ages, world without end. ***"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"*** (Ephesians 5:25.), ***"Unto him be***

glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:21.) All denominations that have sprung up since the time of Christ are false and usurpers of authority. Not all that call themselves Baptist are true churches either. Those who have flirted with and committed adultery with the governments of the world are not true churches. Those who deny scriptural baptism and count the baptism of false churches equal to that of the Lord's churches are not true churches. Anyone who has any knowledge of the word of God and any spirituality about them can certainly see from this and the following scriptures the importance of the church. Reason this out. If Jesus started His church when He was here and promised that it would never cease to be, could it possibly happen that the world would ever be without it? Certainly not. What kind of church in existence today can find churches of like faith and order in every age back to the time of Christ? Only Baptist! Name any group or so called church you want and the founder and time of founding can be named. Baptist churches have a line back to John the Baptist. Let us note another thing. Many folks try to prove that the true church is a universal invisible body composed of all saved people. If this were true it is strange the Lord didn't say something about it. Any true Greek scholar knows the word Jesus chose to call his organization or organism denotes an assembly, a special called out assembly, a group that really assembled. How absurd to imagine a universal invisible assembly!! To whom did Jesus tell John to send this book? To the invisible assembly at Ephesus, Smyrna, etc.? No indeed! These churches were made up of real live people who had trusted in Christ as Savior and had been baptized by the proper authority in the proper method (immersion in water) for the proper purpose. People who had consented together to carry on the work Christ commissioned them to do. Each of these churches were local, visible and complete in themselves. Each was a body of Christ. Christ was the head of each. This is the only kind of body Christ has in this world. These churches weren't perfect by any means but they were the ones Jesus wanted to have the message. These were churches just like our church sent to be a witness for Jesus in the several cities. The seven churches signify Christ wasn't going to have any other kind. Seven is the number of completeness. Christ didn't need and doesn't need any other kind of church to do His work. He has never told anyone else to do it. He wants us to do it. Let's recognize the Lordship of Christ by doing what He said.

Verse 12 - "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me," - As the Apostle John was in deep meditation the Lord spoke to him and he turned, no doubt in great surprise, to see the one who spoke. Imagine what an experience this must have been to hear the voice of the Lord and then to see Him!! ***"And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;"*** - The first thing John saw was the golden candlesticks. What these represent is explained in verse 20. Each candlestick or lamp-stand represents a church. A candlestick is a light-bearer. Jesus said that His disciples were the lights of the world and that when a candle

is lit it is put on a candlestick. *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house"* (Matthew 5:14,15.) This teaches us that every Christian is to be a member of the Lord's church. John saw the churches as light bearers and this is exactly what they are supposed to be. The world lies in spiritual darkness, the gospel of Christ is the only true light. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"* (John 1:1-9.) Christians like John the Baptist are lights only as they bear witness to Him who is the true light. God chose for His people, who are members of His church, to bear the light of His word. Of course God loves all His children but there is a special love for those who compose His church. Ephesians 5:25. *"...Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it."* Ephesians 3:21. *"Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end..."* - The candlesticks were of pure gold, the precious metal, the metal used in scriptures to point out divinity. The churches of the Lord Jesus Christ are indeed precious to Him being purchased with a great price. Those who are so purchased become through a royal birth partakers of His divinity. Let it be known to those who do not obey the Lord in becoming members of His church that they are not letting their lights shine and they are not bringing glory to Christ as they should.

Verse 13 - "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man," - This is the position of the Lord Jesus in the midst of His churches. As being the omnipresent one He is everywhere indeed but in a very special sense His presence is with His church, a presence and relationship not experienced by any other than His church. He promised to be with His church, Matthew 28:20, and would see to it that the forces of evil should never overcome it. Matthew 16:18. This is what John saw, Christ in the midst of His churches to protect in all ages from all evil. ***"clothed with a garment down to the foot,"*** - A long garment is suggestive of royalty, such was worn by those of great dignity. In his vision Isaiah saw the Lord whose *"train filled the temple."* - So Christ in His glory is always seen or represented with royal apparel. Let us note also that there is no nakedness in heaven. Christ is clothed, the redeemed are clothed in robes of righteousness. Clothing is symbolic of righteousness. Nakedness is the symbol of sin and evil. God's people here should be fully clothed to show the world what they stand for. ***"and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."*** - It was and still is the custom in the East to wear a girdle to

hold the robe in place. This girdle was worn around the waist and sometimes around the breast as is shown here. This girdle was either pure gold or highly decorated with gold signifying the royalty and dignity of the one wearing it.

Verse 14 - "His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow," - The Lord so appeared with white hair to further enhance His image of majesty and dignity. Proverbs 16:31. *"The hoary (white) head is a crown of glory"* - Also it shows His antiquity as Daniel saw Him. Daniel 7:9 the *"Ancient of days"* - **"And His eyes were as a flame of fire,"** - The eyes of the Lord are penetrating; there is nothing He can't see through. Men, so to speak, wear a mask but He sees through it all. There is no way to hide from Him. His eyes see into the very depths of the heart so there is not even the slightest thought that goes unnoticed. *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do"* (Hebrews 4:13.) All of those who refuse Him will for ever try to hide from His face. They would rather have the rocks and mountains fall upon them. But to those who know Him, His gaze will be one of warmth and understanding, a sight so lovely none will want to turn away but with humble adoration will want to look upon His face for ever and for ever.

Verse 15 - "And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace;" - Even the feet of the Lord Jesus are beautiful as He appears in glory. The allusion here is to the finest grade of brass heated in a furnace until it glows a splendid white, which is beyond description. Brass is a symbol of judgment, the same feet that bore the Savior in His mission of mercy upon earth and in His appearance among His churches before John are the same feet that will trample down the enemy and to which the whole earth becomes a footstool. **"and His voice as the sound of many waters."** - This is a very fitting description of the authority and dominance of the Lord's voice. Those who have stood by the rocky reefs of the ocean and listened to the thundering roar of the waves as they beat against the shore have a fair idea of how John was impressed with the words of the Lord as he spoke to Him.

Verse 16 - "And He had in His right hand seven stars." - John tells us in verse 20 what these stars represent, the pastors of the churches. The word "angels" means "messengers". - God calls pastors to be the messengers to His churches. Christ holds the pastors He has appointed in a very special way. Woe to him who speaks or works against those Christ has so appointed. It is the Lord who chooses the pastor and then lays upon the heart of His people to call that man. No man should be pastor unless He knows God has appointed him and no congregation should call a man to pastor without this assurance. When these conditions exist the church should be behind the pastor all the way and when they cease to exist the pastor should be removed. It is a great blessing to a pastor to know he is held in the hand of the Lord. **"and out of His mouth**

went a sharp twoedged sword:" - This does not mean that a literal sword protruded from His mouth making Him a grotesque figure but the sword is His words as Hebrews 4:12 - *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* John heard the words and they cut and penetrated his mind and soul as a sharp two edged sword would cut the flesh. **"and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength."** - So splendid was the appearance of Christ amid His churches that John could scarcely find the fitting superlative, thus he uses the greatest thing he knows anything about. The countenance of Christ reminded him of the sun itself for His brightness, shining and strength. Christ is such to all who really know Him and have seen Him through the eye of faith. There is no way we can adequately describe Him. He is to the spiritual realm what the sun is to the physical. Without Him there is no light, without Him there is no life. He is the one who brightens the day, He expels all gloom and despondency. As the sun holds the planets in place so by Jesus all things are held together. Without Him all would be failure and chaos. Malachi 4:2 states He is *"...Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings,..."*

Verse 17 - "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead". When John saw the Lord Jesus in all His splendor and magnificence he was so overwhelmed at the sight of His greatness that he fell at His feet, much as Paul did on the road to Damascus. The beauty and wonder of the Lord Jesus in His glory is above human expression and beyond our ability to drink it in. When we stop to think that this Jesus John saw is the one who loved us and died for us, how it should humble our hearts!! Understanding that we were as dead men without hope, deserving hell's torment when God reached down for us, surely we should fall at His feet in humble adoration. **"And He laid His right hand upon me,"** - How loving, tender and compassionate is the Lord to them that fear Him!!! Jesus seeing the anxiety of John placed His hand upon and spoke the matchless words **"saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last;"** These are words of assurance setting forth the eternity of Christ and He will bring all things to a close. He is the center of all things and yet has no circumference. He is the infinite immeasurable God, the Lord of glory.

Verse 18 - "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen;" - If there was any trace of doubt in the mind of John that this was the same Jesus he knew upon the earth it was now taken away. John knew that Jesus was going to come again; he knew that He was alive. He had seen Him in the glorified resurrected body and he had seen Him ascend into heaven leaving the promise that He would come again even as He was taken into heaven. Now John is getting a preview of what things would be like when He comes again. Jesus shows that He is the one that "liveth" or "ever liveth", the

one that yet had died and now was alive for ever. He had through His one offering of Himself perfected for ever those for whom He died. Death had no dominion over Him; He had come from the tomb victorious, never to be subjected again. ***"and have the keys of hell and of death."*** - In these words lie the explanation and exemplification of His complete victory, both for Himself and for all who by faith are in Him. "Hell" or "hades" is the abode of the soul or spirit. Death is the condition of the body without the spirit. The soul of man is locked in "hades" either in paradise or torment. The body is locked in death, helpless to do anything. The soul of man cannot of itself unite with the body held in death, neither can the body unite with the soul. But there is one who has the keys of death and hades; He can unlock and this is exactly what He will do when He comes again. As Abraham in heaven told the rich man that he could not come to Lazarus and Lazarus could not come to him because of the "great gulf fixed", so the spirit of man in heaven cannot come to earth to animate the body in the grave, but when Jesus comes He will bring the souls of "just men made perfect" to reunite them with the bodies long left in the dust of the earth, *"...for the dead in Christ shall rise first:"* (I Thessalonians 4:16.), *"the corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality"* (I Corinthians 15:53.) With words like these from the Savior surely there is no cause for fear.

Verse 19 - "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;" - Again John is commanded to record these things in a book. God wanted the people of that time to know them and He wanted everyone from that time to the end of time to know them. The "things which shall be hereafter" pertains to the events that shall take place AFTER the second coming of Christ. These things are recorded from chapter four on to the end of the book. The "things which are" pertains to the seven churches then existent in Asia.

Verse 20 - "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks." - A mystery as here used is something hidden or unknown until it is revealed. The stars and the candlesticks were symbols and when explained what they were symbols of, their meaning is perfectly clear and there is no mystery to it as we commonly use the term mystery. ***"The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches:"*** - Being held in His hand signifies a favored and protected position as well as one of great responsibility. The members of the Lord's churches are a people especially loved of the Lord and it is a great honor to be placed as leader over them. It is a position that calls for the strength, wisdom, protection, and comfort from the Lord Himself. ***"and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."*** - God had a special purpose in representing the churches by candlesticks. His churches are to be the light bearers in this world. He is the true light, the churches reflect His light to the world. These were real live churches with real live pastors, which are the only kind of churches the Lord

has. The Bible certainly never gives any hint of there being such a monstrosity as a "universal invisible church." Let us note the necessity for church perpetuity. If the world is to have the gospel preached in all ages by those commissioned then the churches must remain through all ages. These churches to whom John wrote do not exist today but churches of like faith and order do remain and have since the time of Christ. Let us remember only Baptist Churches can be found in all ages back to John the Baptist.

CHAPTER II

Verse 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;" - The message to the church is directed to the pastor, and messenger of the church. The authority of the letter is established by its being dictated by the one who holds the pastor in His hand and whose presence is in the midst of His churches.

Verse 2 - "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience," - The Lord knows everything about all His churches. This church was doing good work, they were patient enduring the hardships. To look at the outside you wouldn't know anything was wrong. ***"and how thou canst not bear them which are evil:"*** - They wouldn't put up with evil doers. They expected everyone to live like Christians should live, this is, of course, how it should be. ***"and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:"*** - This church was diligent in learning and following the true doctrine. If a man came to teach them they put him through the mill and found out what he believed. If he didn't agree with what was right they got rid of him.

Verse 3 - "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." - The Lord commends them for their patient endurance of trials and tribulations. They were not "quitters". They believed the cause of Christ was worth standing for. We should have the same attitude. What would we do if we had the trials they had? Would the Lord be able to commend us? We wonder where folks would stand in such times when they won't put themselves out today to ride in luxury to an air-conditioned building where they know they will not be harmed! What would folks do who don't have patience with the children or with each other? How about the folks who practice all kinds of sin and don't seem to care? Would the Lord compliment our church and say "well done"?

Verse 4 - "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." - The Lord has commended them for their good traits and now announces the fault they have. The church did have some very good characteristics; they were hard workers and didn't give up easily. They were

sound morally and doctrinally but they were lacking in one very important, yes vital point. They had left their first love. No doubt this means their love to Christ. Of all things the Lord desires of us the first is love. This church had become like Martha who was so busy doing "things" she neglected the "one thing" most important. She had neglected the love and adoration that her sister Mary expressed. Most of us today are like this church, we have grown cold in our love for Christ. This we can tell if we allow ourselves to reminisce. Remember the excitement and joy that filled your heart the day you accepted Christ as Savior? You felt like you never wanted to think or talk about anyone else, but how is it now? When a man marries there is that first love, that "honeymoon" love, that puts everything else in the background. He is taken up with his bride and nothing else really matters as long as he is with her. Of course there is the sense of emotional fervency that first love must burn deeper and deeper and though it may be expressed in a different way it must be there. So our love for Christ, we must attend to Him, we must let Him fill our lives. He must be the object of the affection of our hearts. He must be loved fervently: He is not satisfied with a few minutes a day while the world gets the rest. As a wife or husband will not be happy no matter how many things are done, if the one loved does not respond with genuine love, so with Christ, no matter how busy we are attempting to do His work, He wants us to take time to talk with Him, meditate with Him, let the thoughts of our hearts reach unto and commune with Him. Happiness with Christ must above all things be based on a first love.

Verse 5 - "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;" - God has given man a memory to be used for His glory. However this faculty of man is depraved like the rest of him and the devil can control it. This happens to Christians as well as lost people. If we are not careful the devil will have us call to mind only the things he wants us to remember. Multiplied thousands of Christians lose the joy of their salvation and will readily admit they were the happiest when they were earnestly serving God. Why don't they recall the happy condition, dwell upon it and get back to it? Because the devil doesn't want them to and they let him have his way!! So the Lord commands the church at Ephesus to remember her first state, remember those days when she was really in love with the Lord. *"and repent"* - True repentance is the internal evidence that once one realizes his sin he will desire to be rid of it *"and do thy first works"* - Genuine repentance will express itself outwardly in works. One who says he has repented and yet continues as he did before is only fooling himself. Here the Lord is commanding them to return to their first love. When one loves the Lord he will love the Lord's word and the Lord's work. No doubt one of the first works that result from the first love is winning souls to Christ. Many churches today are sound as far as doctrine is concerned; that is all except the doctrine of soul winning; they know much about election, church doctrine, mission work overseas, etc. but they know little about personal witnessing for Christ. A church that is actively engaged in winning souls

will be a church that is in love with the Lord. You can't love the Lord without loving souls and you can't love souls without loving the Lord. **"or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."** - Here the Lord announces the consequence of this sin if they refuse to repent. What is the meaning and significance of having the candlestick removed? In the vision John saw the Lord Jesus walking in the midst of the candlesticks. Jesus said the candlesticks are the churches, each candlestick representing a church. Christ's presence with the candlestick signified His acceptance, approval and ownership of the churches. Now if one of the candlesticks were removed from His presence this would mean that church was no longer in His favor and thus would not be recognized as one of His churches. The threat to the Ephesus Church is that unless they come back to loving Christ as they first did and express that love in doing their first works, which would certainly involve soul winning; He would cast them out from being one of His churches. As a point of interest, there is no evidence that this church heeded the Lord, for soon after the whole city was destroyed and yet today there remains nothing but ruins. Many churches today have the name Baptist over the door when they should have "Icabod" for the glory has long ago departed.

Verse 6 - "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." - Who the Nicolaitanes were or what they believed and did is left to pure conjecture. The Bible gives no evidence and neither does secular history. Some believe these were followers of Nicanor, one of the first deacons, Acts 6:5; but this has no ground. Others break down this compound word into its true parts which means "to conquer the people". From this they conclude the doctrine concerned, a graded ministry which finally grew into the Roman hierarchy or Catholic Church. This can by no means be proven though it does sound good. One thing is certain, the Lord does hate all the false religious systems of the world including the Roman Catholic set up as is clearly taught in Revelation 17. The people of God should hate and stand against the thing the Lord hates.

Verse 7 - "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;"- This expression simply means that the message to the churches are for anyone who wants to hear. Some do not want to hear because their hearing is made dull by the chant of the world. **"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."** - There was a tree of life in the Garden of Eden which man was not permitted to eat of after he had sinned. Genesis 2:17 **"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."** If he had eaten of it he would live for ever in his sin cursed body. Genesis 3:22. This was not God's plan for man; He did not want him to live for ever in this body so He appointed it unto death. Redeemed man will be able to eat of the tree of life in heaven. This is symbolic

of the great truth that the redeemed of the Lord will have new glorified bodies untouched by sin, that will live for ever in the glories of heaven. God doesn't tell us a lot of details about our new bodies, but we know they will be immortal, incorruptible, tangible, yet not limited by time, distance or any physical force, capable of eating, yet not of necessity, completely controlled by the spirit which is in total obedience to God's Holy Spirit, a body fit to inherit and enjoy heaven for ever. This is the promise to all who overcome in Christ.

Verse 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 is a city of Asia Minor located about forty miles north of Ephesus. While Ephesus is nothing but ruins now, Smyrna is a large city of about 200,000. Jesus introduces Himself to this church as the first and last and He which was dead and is alive. These are vital truths about Christ. He is the eternal one, the creator of all things, the one who began all things and who will bring all things to a close. He is the Almighty God. No one will be saved who does not believe in His deity. Salvation comes only to those who believe in the Christ of the Bible. A faith that accepts Him only as a good man or as a god will not save. He is the one who died and yet is alive. The gospel story is how Christ died for our sins, was buried and arose from the dead "according to the scriptures" any story that deviates from the scripture is not a true story and is not the gospel (good news) because it cannot save. No matter what else is believed about Christ if He is not believed upon as having died on the cross for my sins, and after three days arising again, that belief is vain and powerless to save.

Verse 9 - "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty," - This was a church sorely oppressed by the enemies of Christ but they were not unnoticed by the Lord. God has a purpose in allowing His People to be persecuted. He wants to try us and develop us into strong Christians to be an example before the world. These trials seem difficult now but He will richly reward us for everything we suffer for His sake. ***"(but thou art rich)"*** - Though these people had little of this world's goods yet they were rich toward God. Jesus taught His disciples to lay up treasures in heaven because there it would last. It is a terrible shame and loss for God's people to be so engrossed in the things of the world that they fail to consider the things of real value and thus fail to lay up treasures in heaven. How sad when people count their money and boast of their accomplishments; they are found to be poverty stricken in the things of the Lord. ***"and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."*** - The folks mentioned here were of such character they showed themselves to be followers of Satan rather than of the Lord. They claimed to be Jews, that is, in religion, but were not. They did not abide by the teaching of the Jewish religion but were blasphemers. Whether this means they blasphemed against God or against the church makes little difference. They were enemies of both and in league with the Devil.

Verse 10 - "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer:" - Such words seem strange to the carnal mind. Why didn't the Lord deliver them from these sufferings if He knew of them beforehand? The answer is of course that He had something of much greater value for them for enduring. The Christian need have no fear of losing in the end if he abides in Christ, neither does he need to fear the awfulness of suffering and death because the Lord is able to comfort even in those times. **"behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried;"** - This doesn't seem like much to look forward to but the Lord is able to turn adversity into blessing. It was a common thing for Christians to be thrown into prison. How would Christians react today if the announcement came they were going to be thrown into prison!!! Would there be many like Paul and Silas who sing and praise the Lord or count it all joy because they were called upon to suffer for His names sake!! Though Satan would be allowed to cast them into prison yet God had His purpose to try them. We need to view our trials from a spiritual standpoint like Peter, seeing that they are more precious than gold if they are to the praise and honor of Jesus Christ, I Peter 1:7 - **"and ye shall have tribulation ten days:"** - This probably doesn't mean literally ten - 24 hour days, but rather designates a short period of time. **"be thou faithful unto death."** - The implication is that at least some of them would be persecuted unto death even though the time for persecution would be short. All Christians in all ages are called upon and expected of God to be faithful until the time they die whether they die violent deaths or natural deaths. **"and I will give thee a crown of life."** - There is much question about the different crowns that will be given the special servants of God as to whether they will be literal crowns to be worn or if the crowns will all be given to Christ as in Revelation 4:10. Some think the crowns are only symbolic representing the special standings or positions and privilege of the honored saints. Regardless of what they are we know for certain they are well worth striving for. There are some folks who think it is wrong to serve God with the view of rewards in mind but this is unscriptural. Many times in the Bible we are urged to consider the rewards to be given as an incentive to greater service. The rewards are of tremendous value and the Lord offers them in love. He wants us to have them so certainly that we should consider them and try our very best to achieve them.

Verse 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." - The "second death" refers to the torments of hell. Death is separation. Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body. Spiritual death or the second death is separation of the soul from God. The Christian is not exempt from the death of the body unless he is living when Christ comes again. God could have made it so if He had wanted to that all could be translated without experiencing physical death but He chose to have them die. It is not pleasing to the old nature to think of laying aside the flesh in death because this ends all its influence and rule. Physical death is not dreaded by the spiritually minded person

because he knows he will immediately be in the presence of God and he lays his body to rest in hope of the resurrection. To the soul in heaven where time means nothing the sleeping body in the dust of earth is of no consequence because of the knowledge of the sure hope of the resurrection. The promise of not being hurt of the second death is to those who overcome and to none else. The only way one can overcome is by faith as John states in I John 5:4. Those who have faith in Christ are born of the Spirit of God and overcome by the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 12:11. To overcome the devil and the world means they do not have dominion over us. There is no promise of eternal life to those who continue in sin and ungodliness. The person who experiences no change in his life manifests the fact he has experienced no change in his heart. There are millions who have their names on church rolls and have been baptized in one fashion or another who think they are on their way to heaven even though their lives are lived according to the course of this world. The promise is to those who overcome the world so folks who do not overcome have no reason or right to claim a promise made to someone else. God spoke through James and said: James 2:14,27,18 *"What doth it profit, my brethern, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith (that kind of faith) save him?"... "Even so faith, if it hath not works, (does not produce works) is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works and I will shew thee my faith by my works"* Every man would do well to constantly judge himself to see if his life is in line with his profession. Talk is cheap, any man can render lip service, it is getting the job done that counts. Too many people are like those Jesus mentioned in Matthew 15:8 - *"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."* Remember the promise is to him that overcometh, not to him that "talketh".

Verse 12 - "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;" - Pergamos was a city of Mysia. In its day it was the most splendid city of Asia. Great and marvelous temples were built here to the Greek pagan gods Zeus, Athene, Apollo, etc. It is referred to as the seat of Satan. In the midst of all this dwelt one of the Lord's churches to which John is instructed to write. Jesus presents Himself as the one with the sharp two edged sword proceeding from His mouth as He is described in Revelation 1:16. His words are so penetrating they suggest a sharp sword. This is one way we know the Bible is the word of God because no word of man could cut to the heart, divide, convict and bring one to repentance. The written word however, is powerless unless wielded by the Holy Spirit. This is why one person may hear or read the word of God and not be affected, while another hearing the same thing is shaken to the core of his heart.

Verse 13 - "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is:" - The Lord knows all the temptations and allurements that

surround His people. Pergamos was an exceedingly wicked city and the Christians were subjected to much temptation. Christians are to remain separate and pure no matter where they live or what the outward circumstances, but it is much easier to live a separated life in some places than others. For example it is much easier for a child to do right if he is brought up in a Christian home and has the advantages of going to a Christian school. There are some communities where sin abounds much more than in others. Folks who have the privilege of living in a decent society should appreciate it. It is not impossible, however, to live a dedicated life before the Lord in any place. Some are harder than others; we should not purposely live in sinful surroundings but in places where it can not be helped those who remain faithful are to be commended. - **"and thou holdest fast my name,"** - This church was not ashamed of Christ, they let it be known they were His followers. They had many critics and scoffers who made fun of them and tried to discourage them but they held fast to the name of Christ. - **"and hast not denied my faith,"** - Faith is the key word in the Christian religion. God demands that we believe Him regardless of outward conditions. One thing that tends to shake one's faith is trouble and persecution. The question immediately comes to mind "why does God allow this if He is really God?" There would be no problem to believe if every thing went our way. God wants us to believe when things are going wrong as well as when they are going right. - **"even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you,"** These people were faithful even in the face of death, such trials show the true metal of God's people. We need to constantly ask ourselves "how would I do under such circumstances?" One would be only fooling themselves if they think they would be faithful in times like those if they will not put themselves out in times like these. If People who piously pretend to love God now yet forsake the assembly for almost any reason would show a yellow stripe a foot wide if persecution ever came. - **"where Satan dwelleth."** - The mention again of Satan's dwelling there is to emphasize the fact and to impress the idea that the Lord was aware of it.

Verse 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 Isreal, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." - The Lord does not overlook our faults just because we have some good points. This church had a faction in it that held to the principles of Balaam's doctrine. Balac was king of Moab; he felt he could not successfully fight against the children of Israel so he sent for Balaam who was a respected prophet of God that he might put a curse on them. God would not allow Balaam to do this so he devised another plan. He instructed Balac to have the women of Moab tempt the men of Israel and marry them and thus corrupt them with their false gods. Thus a people who could not be cursed were brought into sin so that God's hand of chastening had to fall heavily upon them. This was happening to the church at Pergamos. Some of them were

flirting with the world, this is one of the devil's ways to corrupt God's people. He gets some of the worldly-minded ones to associated with the spiritual minded ones and soon they too become worldly. The leaven spreads rapidly. Christians should ever be on the watch, and shun those who would impose worldly and ungodly practices upon them.

Verse 15 - "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans which thing I hate." - There was a difference in this church and the one at Ephesus in that those of Ephesus hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans while the church of Pergamos put up with them. What their doctrine was is not mentioned. At any rate they held doctrine that God hated and they should have been put out of the church. God is not pleased with any church that does not practice discipline as it is needed. If a church allows immorality or false teaching and beliefs among its members, the whole church will soon be affected or infected and overcome.

Verse 16 - "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." - When God's people find themselves in a wrong situation, all they can do is acknowledge their sin, repent of it and start over aright. God is loving and understanding; He will always help us when we want to do the right thing but He cannot tolerate sin. The threat here is against those who hold the false doctrine. What He will do with the sword of His mouth is not explained but we can be sure that it will be severe. He, by a word, created the heavens and earth, by a word He can cast into hell so let no one think He is without means.

Verse 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," - Those who show they are really saved by overcoming have eternal life and will be sustained for ever in heaven satisfied with the true spiritual food that only God can give. **"and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."** - What this stone is no one really knows because the Bible doesn't explain it. We know this, that it is symbolic of a special reward. The reward will have a special significance to the one who has it and will not mean anything to others. The name written on it may be the name of the Lord or something setting forth the new relationship of a believer with Christ. At least it shows the Lord's approval and is a token of His acceptance of the service rendered. God cannot fully describe the rewards to us now because we have not the capacity to receive it. Then, however, we will know and will be satisfied.

Verse 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;" - The Lord Jesus addresses Himself to this

church as the one having eyes like a flame of fire and feet like fine brass. This signifies the eyes of the Lord are penetrating. There is nothing beyond or hidden from his vision Proverbs 15:3 *"The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good."* We should always be conscious of this fact. We refrain from doing many evil things because of the presence of man while the all-seeing eye of God upon us seems to have little effect. Our lives would be different if we really believed in God and understood He was watching us at all times. His feet like fine brass; brass is the symbol of judgment in the Bible. Fine brass as if burned in a furnace (Revelation 1:15) speaks of pure or perfect judgment. The Lord is the righteous judge and will give to every man as he deserves. Those whose judgment is met in Him will be exalted but those who refused Him will be trampled under His feet. Nothing good will go unrewarded and nothing evil will go unpunished.

Verse 19 - "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience" - As with each of the churches the Lord declares His knowledge of their works; He knows all about what goes on in His churches in all ages. This church is commended for its love. A church without love cannot honor the Lord or be used to do His work. They also had faith and patience; these qualities likewise are necessary to do service for God. Our faith is liable to waver and give out if we become impatient. We need to follow the paths the Lord opens for us and wait for Him to perform His works. He does not get in a hurry like we do, neither does He lag behind. We need to stay close to Him. - ***"and thy works; and the last to be more than the first."*** - Their works are mentioned again. The first mention concerns all their works in general, the second concerns the things just mentioned, love and service, and faith and patience. These people grew in grace and increased in works. This is very good, we should become more efficient the longer we serve. Many of us, however, want to start something and then quit when we get a little tired or inconvenienced or if the going gets a little rough. We should determine to finish every job with as much or more zeal and enthusiasm than we had to start.

Verse 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," - It is amazing how churches can be so strong in some points and yet so weak in others. This church had an ungodly woman who passed herself off as being a prophetess yet she was teaching it as all right to commit fornication. The pagans of that time thought nothing of adultery but freely practiced it even in their religious ceremonies. This of course was strictly against the teachings of Christianity but we can imagine how some who were newly converted from this could be brought back under it, especially by a teacher who claimed to be a prophetess and was allowed by the church to teach. We have the same thing practiced today in many churches where the sanctity of the marriage vows are

pushed aside and people divorce and remarry without scriptural grounds. Much worse than this is the practice of pre-marital sex and of living common law yet this goes on in some of the churches today. God only allows such experience under the marriage vows. - ***"and to eat things sacrificed to idols."*** - This no doubt refers to eating these things as a religious observance. There is nothing wrong in eating meat offered to idols as we would eat any other meat unless it offends someone else. (See this explained in I Corinthians 8:1-13). So this woman must have been not only teaching that it was all right to commit adultery but it was all right to worship idols as well.

Verse 21 - "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not." - This sin was probably of long standing and the Lord had sent more than one warning to turn from it. No sinner will be able to say at the judgment day that he didn't have time to repent. All without exception will have had plenty of time but failed to take advantage of it.

Verse 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 bed referred to is a condition of great pain and sorrow. God cannot allow sin to go on and on, sooner or later He will bring down His chastening hand. God is very gracious in that He will forgive those who acknowledge their sin and repent of it. Those who refuse to repent certainly have no right to complain when God brings great sorrow into their lives.

Verse 23 - "And I will kill her children with death," - This is a strong expression setting forth certainty. If people think God won't kill their children because of their sin they have another "think" coming. Many times in the scriptures God warns that He will visit the sins of the fathers upon the sons. A quick way to lose a family is to keep sinning against God. - ***"and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts:"*** - God acts in ways that others may learn a lesson. We have little excuse if we know God's threats and see them executed and then persist in doing the same things. There is no way to hide anything from God. He searches from inside out. He knows every thought and motive. - ***"and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."*** - No one will escape the proper chastening or punishment. God knows exactly what is right and He will do just that.

Verse 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." - It is not known how many of the church were led into this ungodliness but all the church was responsible. Any church that allows sin to be practiced can expect to be chastised for it. God expects us to keep a close watch on each other and when

sin is practiced with the refusal to repent that person must be put out of the church. By not putting any other burden upon them He probably means that this is all the correction they will receive and they will have to suffer the consequences of what is already done.

Verse 25 - "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come." - Keep on practicing the things that are good until Jesus comes again.

Verse 26-27 - "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 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." - The faithful of the Lord will rule with Him during the millennial period. There will be no opposition to His rule. He will be so powerful and overwhelming that none will dare to raise a hand. That 1000 years will be marked with righteousness and peace in every respect. This is the promise of the Father to the Son.

Verse 28 - "And I will give him the morning star." - The rewards of God's children are beyond description. Here one of the rewards is likened unto the morning star. The allusion is to the planet Venus, which appears in the heavens just before the rising of the Sun. This is a beautiful sight to those who have appreciation for such things. What the reward really is we do not know, but with such a description we know it will be exceedingly wonderful.

Verse 29 - "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches".

CHAPTER III

Verse 1 - "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write;"- Sardis was the capitol of ancient Lydia, and one of the provinces of Asia Minor. It was one of the wealthiest cities of its time. In the time of John it had been reduced from its splendor by the ravages of war and by a great earthquake. Today there is nothing but ruins. - **"These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars:"** - Here the Lord Jesus presents Himself as the one who has the fullness of the Spirit of God and the one who holds the pastors of His churches in His hand. - **"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."** - This was a church that seemed to be alive. There were many activities going on. No doubt anyone around them could tell you where it was. They probably had their hands in all the civic functions; they no doubt had a lot to do with politics and other government powers. They had all kinds of benevolent organizations and all the city big wheels went to church there. Yes, most everyone would say they were really a live-wire church. But the Lord said they were dead. Churches don't need to have a name from the world

that they are alive. They need to be alive in God's estimation. It is the duty of the Lord's church to be busy about his business. Many churches today are filled with all kinds of secular activity but in God's sight they are dead.

Verse 2 - "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die:" - There were some remnants of their service which were yet alive but were failing fast. These they are encouraged to look after and revive them. In our personal lives as well as in our churches we need to look after the good things lest we let them slip and eventually cease to do them. This can happen to Bible study, prayer, visiting, mission work, phone calls, letter writing and other good things if we let the world crowd them out. - **"for I have not found thy works perfect before God."** - They had not done or were not doing what God required. Perhaps every church is guilty of this. Some excel in one point while others are proficient in other things. Each church needs to know what God requires and then try its best to do everything He wants done.

Verse 3 - "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." - The apostle Paul had the right idea when he wrote (I Corinthians 2:2) "...I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified". When a church or a person gets away from this they are on the wrong track. We need to go back to the day we heard the gospel and remember how it affected us, and hold fast to that. We should not let other things come into our lives to push aside the wonderful experience. When we feel ourselves getting away we should immediately turn back and repent. Christianity is indeed empty and dead when the first experience with Christ is forgotten. - **"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."** - When God's people refuse to follow Him they can expect His chastening hand to be upon them. God does not give warning as to what time He will visit, but He does promise that he will. Often we think we are getting away with doing wrong or failing to do right because God doesn't do anything immediately. This of course is not true. We always lose by not obeying God whether He comes suddenly or bides His time.

Verse 4 - "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments;" - Even in a place like Sardis with its sin, defilement and depravity there were still a few who had not entered into the general course of sin but remained faithful to the Lord. It is this faithful few that stays the hand of the Lord, they are the salt of the earth. - **"and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."** - The Lord has fitting rewards for all who follow Him. Those who keep their lives pure here on earth and do not become contaminated or defiled by sin will be recognized in heaven as having done such. No one is worthy in themselves to go to heaven but those who walk with the Lord and keep themselves unspotted from the world evidence the fact they have been made worthy by the blood of the Lamb.

Verse 5 - "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment;" - We could better understand the glory of this gift if we understood how filthy we are in God's sight without Christ. Without Him we are clothed in filthy rotten rags which are an abomination before God. Imagine a drunk who had laid all night in his own vomit and filth, stinking and dirty. Would such a vagrant be fit to stand before a king?!! Without Christ we were many times worse than this. But those who overcome through Christ will stand before the King of Kings in shining white raiment, attired in garments fully fit for such an occasion. If we can see the vast contrast here we can better understand the greatness of God's grace and be encouraged to follow after Him and seek the rewards He promises to give. - **"and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life."** - God wants us to know that He is a God of order. He keeps books so nothing escapes Him. He has the names of all His elect written in a book. These names were written there before the foundation of the world, Revelation 17:8. *"...whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,...."* All that God has chosen will come to Him through Jesus Christ. John 6:37 *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* Luke 10:20 *"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."* There are hundreds of references to the fact that God saves for ever those He purposes to save and not one of them will be lost. There was never a name blotted out of the book of life and there never will be. Some people take this passage of scripture to prove a person can lose his salvation. The exact opposite is proven. God does not say He will blot out their names, He says He will not blot out their names. Who is he that overcometh? The word of God gives that answer, I John 5:4,5 *"...this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"* God does not contradict Himself. To believe that a child of God could be lost and go to hell requires a denial of every promise God has made concerning salvation. The ones who believe such as that may as well throw away his Bible because he doesn't have anything worthwhile left. - **"but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels."** - Does this sound as if Jesus would deny His own? Let's look again in Matthew 10:32 *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."* Romans 10:9 - *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* I John 4:15 - *"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."* I John 5:1 - *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God..."* - God is not in the business of writing and erasing. He doesn't make mistakes. He is not like us, He doesn't need an eraser on His pencil. He is in the business of saving souls not losing them. As for me -Acts 27:25 *"...I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."* Romans 3:4 *"...let God be true, but every man a liar."*

Verse 6 - "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." - Wonderful advice isn't it?!!

Verse 7 - "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write;" -

Philadelphia was about 30 miles southeast of Sardis and was the second city of importance in Lydia. It now exists as a Turkish town. It is in a thriving agricultural district and its site is still beautiful. **"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true,"** - Jesus is the holy one. Luke 1:35 *"holy thing"*.

Throughout His life upon the earth the Lord Jesus proved His holiness. Never before had any man lived a life in perfect holiness. He is also the true one. He said of Himself - John 14:6 *"...I am the way, the truth, and the life..."* He is the only one who can be depended on to keep His word. Everything that He says or promises will be exactly as He said. **"he that hath the key of David,"** - Jesus is of the house and lineage of David. He will one day sit upon David's throne to rule and reign over the earth. When He came the first time He was rejected by the Jews because they expected their Messiah to come to David's throne. When Jesus did not do this they supposed He was not the true Christ. They didn't understand His mission of suffering and death as being the means by which one day He would take control. Though He hasn't taken control in this manner as yet is not proof that He will not. He now as then possesses all the authority of the household of David. Having the key of David means in the material sense that the one possessing it has access to all the treasures of the house of God and all authority to govern His people. In the spiritual sense it signifies the same thing.

"he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;" - All power is given unto the Lord Jesus over both the physical and spiritual creation. He sets up thrones and tears them down. No kingdom or power exists without His permission. In the spiritual realm He likewise has all control. No man can enter into His service without first being born of the Spirit of God and then he must follow the leadership of God in order to accomplish anything.

Verse 8 - "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it;" -

Exactly what the open door represents is hard to determine. Christ Himself is the door of salvation as He said *"I am the door"*. So perhaps a special opportunity of soul winning was set before them. Paul mentioned several times of a door being opened to him and he was referring to opportunities to preach the gospel. It is certain that when Christ opens the door to salvation no man can close it. No amount of man's threats or promises can keep one from coming to Him. Neither can any man close the door of service. Prison doors could not hold Peter, nor Paul and Silas; they continued to preach until God was finished with them. While it is true that God sets open doors before us, it is also true that we fail to go through many of them. This is true of salvation and of service. The gospel is preached, the invitation given but many folks refuse to come to Christ. To us who are saved many doors of service

are opened but we are too lazy or too blind to take advantage. May God help us to wise up while the door is still open. **"for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name"**. - While this church did not have the spiritual strength and energy it should have yet it was not wholly dead. They still believed the word of God and would not deny the name of Christ.

Verse 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".

- Evidently this group was giving much trouble and persecution to the church. They were claiming they were the people of God and that He didn't love those of the church. The Lord said He would cause them (that say they are Jews) to worship them (true believers) in their presence and to acknowledge that He did love them. When this is to take place is not stated. If something did not take place in their time to bring this about it is certain it will happen in the future. When Jesus comes, all truth will be brought to light. All those who were fakers or pretenders will be exposed for what they are. All those who persecuted and made fun of the churches of the Lord will themselves be brought to shame and made to acknowledge that Jesus is indeed Lord. They will find out for sure whom God loves and whom He does not.

Verse 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." - Those who are faithful in adhering to the word of God have His promise that He will sustain them in the hour of trouble. He does not promise to take us around all sorrow and temptation but He does promise to go with us through them. While others are burdened down and overcome the child of God is upheld and brought through.

Verse 11 - "Behold I come quickly:" - For the third time in this book the Lord Jesus promises to come again. He does not say what will be the length of time before He comes but He does say it will be with quickness or suddenness. It is clear that He wanted the people of that time to believe that it was possible for Him to come at any moment. The same is true for us today, God wants us to watch and be ready for He may come at any moment. **"hold that fast which thou hast"** - What did they have? A little strength, the word of God, the name of Jesus and the promise of His coming. They may not seem to have much but they had the necessary things, the things really worth holding onto. **"that no man take thy crown."** - The crown is not salvation but a reward. Salvation is a free gift and no one can take it away. Rewards are earned and they can be taken away. Not after they are won but in prospect. Here is an example - A fine athlete is running the 440-yard dash, he is way ahead and sure to win but at the 400 yards he sprains his ankle. It would be said he lost the reward because of his

sprained ankle. God never takes away our rewards that are already won but we let many things get in the way to rob us of rewards we could have had. Rewards are certain to everyone who meets God's conditions, the only way they are lost is through our failure to comply with His will. No man can hinder us unless we let him. The rewards God gives are of great value and we are urged to attain them.

Verse 12 - "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out:" - This language of course is figurative and it symbolizes a place of great importance and honor. A pillar of a temple is necessary to its support and also to its beauty. Christians who are church members are a part of the body of Christ, they are the holy temple of God here on earth. All of those who will be a part of the temple in heaven should also fill that place here. **"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."** These are terms of acceptance and acknowledgment. The position of glory and honor of the Christian is beyond description. They will be wholly identified with Him. He is not ashamed of His own because He has made them acceptable. All the honor and glory that comes is due to the matchless Son of God. What an expression of His grace that the redeemed shall wear His name and be identified with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Verse 13 - "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Verse 14 - "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;" - Laodicea was a rich and prosperous city but now lies in ruins. It was in Phrygia about 40 miles from Ephesus and near Colosse. The Lord Jesus addresses Himself as the "Amen". The word "amen" means true, or certain. It is used here to emphasize the fact that He is truthful and what He says is certain. He is the faithful and true witness. He is God's witness and stands for the truth, what He says will certainly come to pass. He cannot condone sin; His threats against those who continue in sin are not idle but exact accounts of what will happen. The expression "the beginning of the creation of God" is not, as some would have us believe, proof that Jesus was a creature but rather an affirmation that He, Himself, is the one who began or brought into existence all creation.

Verse 15 - "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot." - The term "cold" is used to picture lifelessness or dead that is without any semblance of religion. "Hot" refers to zealotry and true sincerity. The Lord is saying then He would rather see them completely

dead and lifeless, without any pretense of being Christians, or else be on fire and really show where they stood.

Verse 16 - "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." - Why would the Lord rather see them cold than lukewarm? Being lukewarm refers to a state of pretense, hypocrisy, unfaithfulness, insincerity, and laziness. If a church or a person makes no pretense of being religious not claiming to be anything few people will be influenced by them. It is better not to be influenced at all than to be led in the wrong direction. A church that is busy and flourishing in the things of the world will call a lot of attention to itself and many people are led astray. This church had a lot as far as the world was concerned and they pretended they were on the Lord's side but they were being hypocritical. God wants us to be on fire for Him. What applies to the church applies to each of us as individuals. It is better to be like Saul of Tarsus than like Judas Iscariot. Everyone knew where Saul stood on the issues. He was openly an enemy of Christianity but he didn't know any better. When he saw the truth he accepted it and as the Apostle Paul he was as zealous for the Lord as he had been against Him. Nobody knew where Judas stood. He was supposed to be a Christian, a disciple and apostle of Christ. He could influence people against Christianity because he was a part of it. No one in all annals of history is more sickening and disgusting than Judas Iscariot. Though he companied with the Lord for three years and sat at His feet being taught, he was not saved, he died and went to hell. There is no more dangerous position than to be a member of the Lord's church and not be saved. This church was sickening to the Lord. It was like a drink of warm water that turns your stomach. He said He would spue them out of His mouth just like you would spit a mouthful of lukewarm water you expected to be cold. Some false teachers will take this expression to prove God will cast off His children and they will be lost after they are saved. This, of course, is not true. God does not contradict Himself. This is the same as to say He will remove the candlestick as He said to the church at Ephesus. He would not allow them to go on like they were. If they didn't change He could no longer claim them as His own. If a church expects to remain a church in the sight of the Lord, they must follow His word and do His works.

Verse 17 - "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;" - This church had plenty of money, no doubt the members tithed and even gave an offering besides. They had money saved up and had all the things to work with. They didn't have to worry about how to make payments on the building or to pay the gas and electric bill. They didn't even have to send out bus mail every month to encourage the folks to give. They had everything they needed, they thought! **"and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:"** - Though endowed with riches of the world yet in things that really count these people were miserable or pitiable. The saddest thing about their condition was that they

didn't know how bad off they were. It is much better to know our condition regardless of what it is; that way we are in a position to try to do something about it. They were blind to spiritual truth and conditions. They had let the devil blind them with the gild of the world. They were naked spiritually speaking. They had no cover for their sins. Their souls were comparable to the body with no protection from the snow, rain and wind. Like the rich man in hell they had nothing to really comfort them. How sad it is to see those who claim to be God's people turn away from serving Him and heap to themselves earthly goods fooling themselves into thinking they are doing all right and are self sufficient. When really they are to be pitied for their miserable wretched condition before God.

Verse 18 - "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich;" - The pure gold here is symbolic of true religion. Nothing is more precious than the truth of salvation. They needed to obtain from Him the truth that before God is priceless and which would make them truly rich. **"and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed."** - All they had was the filthy garments of self righteousness which were not adequate in any sense of the word. They needed the white robe of righteousness of the Lord Jesus, which is the only protection against the wrath of God. **"and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear;"** - Those who try to cover their own sins will find God sees right through them. Fig leaves arranged by man can not hide nakedness from Him. How different the one whose sins are covered by the blood of the Lamb and who wears His robe of righteousness!! **"and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."** - They were blind and only the Lord has the eye-salve that can give spiritual sight. For a church that thought they were all right they surely were in a pitiful condition.

Verse 19 - "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten:" - To be loved of God is indeed a blessed position. This verse should certainly be a lesson to the Unitarian and the Universalist. It is clear that God does not love everyone. God rebukes and chastens the ones He loves. Hebrews 12:6,7 *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"* We may not enjoy the chastening hand of God but we should rejoice that we have it. We are not perfect and we need to be corrected. Thank God that He loves us and wants us to do right. Sometimes we may envy the wicked as we see them prosper. They have all the things we wanted. They do all kinds of evil things and nothing ever seems to happen to them. Everything they touch seems to turn to gold. They have no financial reverses, they have no serious sickness, they go their way to fulfill their dream; everything seems to go their way but let's see them as David sees them in Psalms 37:35-38. *"I have seen a wicked and ruthless man flourishing like a green tree in its native soil, but he soon passed away and was no more; though I looked for him, he could not be found. Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the*

man of peace. But all sinners will be destroyed; the future of the wicked will be cut off. " ***be zealous therefore, and repent.*** " - The Lord says repent and get on fire. The lost sinner cannot complain. The Lord invites him to repent and come to Him. The backslider cannot complain, God chastens him and invites him to turn around and come back. God is gracious, we must listen to Him.

Verse 20 - "Behold I stand at the door, and knock:" - Many and varied are the interpretations of this verse; some of them plausible, others completely out of reason. What ever is meant has to be in accord with the rest of God's word. We know that the idea of the Lord trying to do something He can't is not right because He can do all things. He does not knock at the door of every man's heart for the great majority of men never hear of Him. This is not a picture of the Lord's seeking on a trial and error basis hoping to be able to save some. The interpretation we will give will be with the view that the Lord already knows those who are His. He knows where everyone of them are. He knows none but His chosen ones, His elect, His sheep will accept Him and He knows all of them. First of all this letter is addressed to a church so the obvious meaning of "the door" is the door of the church. (Not of the material building but of the spiritual building.) The church had sinned and was about to be spewed out of His mouth. They are warned of their sins and counseled to buy of the Lord *"gold tried in the fire"* and *"white raiment"* to be clothed. They are exhorted to get on fire for God and to repent of their sins. The Lord awaits at the door for this to take place. He is knocking, waiting for, and encouraging them to again come into fellowship with Him. ***"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."*** - Though this letter is addressed to the church collectively it applies individually. The Lord deals with the church through its individual membership. A church is what its members are. It is not necessary for every member to be in fellowship with the Lord in order for any one to be in fellowship. Any member of the church can open to the Lord and have fellowship with Him if he will repent. It must be considered, however, that a man can not have fellowship with God in church capacity after that church has been spewed out, even though he repents, until he is joined to a church the Lord accepts. There are other aspects and inferences from this verse that need to be considered. It is true the Lord knocks at the lost sinner's heart's door with the preaching of the gospel. He encourages the sinner through the gospel to repent and believe. There are examples in the Bible where the gospel was preached to crowds and some believed and some did not. Why this difference? Were some better than others? Were some more wise? Did some have greater potential for future service? The only reason some believed was because God's Holy Spirit dealt with them and enlightened and enabled them to open the door. It is God who causes the hearts door to be opened in so much it is said that the Lord opens the heart. Acts 16:14. The Lord opened Lydia's heart. In the pictures of artists portraying this verse we see Jesus depicted standing outside a door with no outside latch. The reason being to set forth the teaching that Jesus will

not come in where He is not wanted. He will not break down the door or force His way in. This of course is true. Jesus does not come in where He is not wanted, but it must be remembered that He is the one who makes the person willing. Philippians 2:13 *"...It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."* In accomplishing this He must do more than break down a door. He has to overcome principalities and powers; He must tear down the strong-holds of Satan. It takes the mighty power of God to gain entrance to the stony heart of man. Man could no more of himself open his hearts door than he could cast Satan into the bottomless pit. After God has removed all the obstacles and has worked a work of regeneration, then and only then, does man willingly open the door to Jesus to come into fellowship and to rule and reign in his life. In this respect Christ knocks at the door of only those who are His sheep, chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. Jesus said *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;"* - John 10:27. Those who don't hear the voice of the Lord are those who are not of His sheep. Jesus said in John 10:26 *"...ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep..."* There is a sense in which the believer can close the door to the Lord even as did the Laodicians. When Christians allow sin and worldliness to come into their lives they close the door to fellowship and service. God's Holy Spirit never leaves the believer but He is grieved and quenched when sin enters and the believer begins to say "no" to God. The only way the door can be opened is through repentance and true confession. This is brought about by the pleading and wooing of the Holy Spirit who sets our love and affection upon the Lord Jesus. Salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end. John 15:5 *"Without me ye can do nothing."*

Verse 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." - To each of the churches there is a special promise to those who overcome. Not everyone who professes to be saved is an overcomer. Only those who have a genuine faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour will overcome. Those who overcome do so by the blood of the Lamb. In each case where the promise is made to overcomers there is a direct connection to deeds done in the body. This is not implying that one overcomes by doing good things or refraining from evil things. For example those of Ephesus would not be given the right to eat of the tree of life merely because they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. They would have this privilege because they overcame by faith in Christ. Likewise the Laodiceans would be granted to sit on the throne not because they became zealous but because they overcame by faith. Doing good things and believing good things is not overcoming, they are the results of overcoming. The promises to the overcomers then is not to a select few of the believers who do better than others, but to all believers, for all believers are overcomers. The Lord Jesus is the one who overcame the world for us. John 16:33 *"...I have overcome the world."* . All believers are born of God and *"...whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:..."* - I John 5:4. An examination of the promises will show that all

believers are overcomers. Revelation 2:7, "...to eat of the tree of life,..." all in heaven will have this privilege. Revelation 2:11 "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Revelation 2:17 "...To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna," etc. "this is for all God's people just as the manna given to the Israelites in the wilderness. Revelation 2:26-27 "...power over the nations:" - all the saints shall rule the world. Revelation 3:5 "He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels." These promises are to all the redeemed and so the promise to Philadelphia and Laodicea. All God's elect will be in heaven and will have His name and will rule and reign with Him for a thousand years.

Verse 22 - "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." - God's message is plain enough to all who will receive it. Let no one be so presumptuous to think they will get to heaven merely because they profess or because they do good things. Those in heaven are those who have a living faith in Christ alone for salvation, the kind of faith that will produce works.

CHAPTER IV

Verse 1 - "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven:" - In chapter 1:19 John is instructed to write "*the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter*". The "*things which are*" refers to the events of the church age. These are recorded in chapters 2 & 3. This era extends from the time of the apostles to the return of Christ. The "*things which shall be hereafter*" are the events after the Second Coming of Christ. These things are recorded in chapters 4 thru 22. The scene is changed from that of the first three chapters. Christ is no longer seen on earth but rather in heaven. The voice of Christ as the sound of a trumpet commands John to come through the door that is 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."** - Many and varied are the interpretations of this verse as well as the remainder of the chapter. We are now faced with decisions concerning the rapture, the imminent return of Christ, the tribulation and its relation to the rapture and many other things. It is my opinion that the Bible is clear enough in its teaching that Christ will come at a time no one knows of, or will know of, ahead of time and that when He comes He will raise all those who have died believing in Him and translate or change all the living believers and take them all to heaven at the same time. After this, it appears to me, the tribulation period will begin and continue for seven years. When John is allowed to look into heaven he sees the events as they are to happen. In the following verses we will be able to see why the rapture of the saints must be before the tribulation period. Before we go on let us be reminded of the blessed hope that Jesus is coming again and He will appear with a shout

and the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. The shout will be *"come up hither"* and all the bodies of the dead like Lazarus will respond being quickened by the Spirit of God and all the redeemed who are living will be changed and swept into Glory by the mighty power of God.

Verse 2 - "And immediately I was in the spirit:" - This expression is the same as the one spoken in 1:10. It does not necessarily mean John was transported into heaven in the spirit but he was overwhelmed with the scene and its events and in a condition to receive the message from the manifestations and visions. ***"and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne."*** - The first thing John sees is a throne and the one sitting on the throne. There are many wonderful thoughts about heaven, of whom we want to see of our loved ones, Adam and Eve, Abraham, the prophets and apostles, but the one we will want to see the most will be the one we see first, who is our all in all, none other than He who sets upon the throne that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 3 - "And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone:" - The form and features of the one upon the throne are not described, for who could put that in words or who could receive it if it were?! His beauty and splendor are likened to precious stones. Those stones are the first and last stones on the breastplates of the high priest. It is noted by some expositors that the jasper is not the jasper as we know it but rather crystal clear, as is mentioned in 21:11, which would correspond to the diamond, our most precious jewel. The sardine is the ruby or blood red jewel. As such they would speak of glory and sacrifice. This we know of Jesus, He is the Lord of Glory, He came to earth to present Himself as a sacrifice and is now exalted in the glories of heaven. ***"and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."*** - This rainbow unlike the one we see on earth is a complete circle and instead of having its color spectrum broken down into various colors it is blended into one beautiful green. Here the rainbow is a reminder of God's faithfulness upon the earth. God made a promise to Noah and He has kept it and will keep it for ever. He also made a promise to the Son that the earth would become His footstool. God is a covenant making and a covenant keeping God. To say the least this rainbow is a symbol of God's faithfulness in keeping His promises.

Verse 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." Around the throne were twenty four other thrones. (the word seat is the same word as throne) with twenty four elders sitting upon them. Who are the elders? Or whom do they represent? There is no doubt in my mind that they represent all the redeemed of the Lord up to the time of the Second Coming. Almost all reputable Bible expositors agree to this. They point out a connection with I Chronicles 24 where

David appointed twenty four elders to represent the entire Levitical priesthood. These took turns serving in the temple which Solomon built later. All the thousands of priests could not come together to serve at one time so they were divided into orders but all were represented by the twenty four appointed elders. Thus the Lord showed John twenty-four ruling instead of a whole mass multitude around the throne, but each child of God as a believer priest (see Revelation 1:6, 5:10) is represented before the throne of God by the elders who themselves sit upon thrones, signifying their position as rulers or kings. All saints shall rule and reign with Him. The white raiment is the fit garment of the saints representing the righteousness which they have of Christ. (see Revelation 19:8) The crowns of gold signify royal dignity. All the saints of God are made kings and priests. The scene John sees here is certainly telling us that all the redeemed of the Lord are in heaven at the time represented by the scene. This is before anything is said or shown concerning the tribulation. This then should be enough to teach us that the people of God are raptured before the tribulation begins and not in the middle of it or at the end. To put the rapture anyplace except before the tribulation is to mix up the events as John had them revealed to him and so end up with confusion. We firmly believe that Jesus may come at any moment and there is absolutely nothing foretold in the Bible that must come to pass before He comes. If there are things that must be done before Christ comes then we should look for the coming of these things before we look for Him. This we cannot accept, we believe the scriptures teach us to look for Christ's coming at any moment and there will be no signs or forewarning before He comes. We stress this because there are some of our Baptist brethren around here as well as elsewhere who believe the coming of Christ is not imminent or that He will not come until the middle or end of the tribulation period. Many believe the judgment seat of Christ takes place immediately upon His coming and attempt to prove it by the fact the saints have their crowns. We do not accept this, we believe the judgment seat of Christ will be at or near the end of the tribulation. There is only one judgment seat mentioned and all the saved of all ages are to appear there to be rewarded. There will be people saved during the tribulation and since they will not be judged before they are saved, the judgment must be after the tribulation. The crowns of this verse are not rewards. These crowns are worn by all the saints just as white robes are worn. They are gifts of God purchased for us by the blood of Christ. Rewards are not gifts. Rewards are earned. Salvation is a gift of God but treasures are laid up in heaven by what we do. All Christians do not have the same rewards because all do not work alike. There are crowns to be won through our performance here on earth but this crown is not one of them.

Verse 5 - "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices:" - This throne is a throne of judgment as is immediately seen by the thunderings and lightnings. These signs accompany God's presence as He is about to execute judgment. God's judgments will be upon the earth for seven

years immediately following the rapture of the saved. This seven-year period is called "The Great Tribulation." The first part of this period will be a time of trouble for the people of God who will be saved after the rapture. The antichrist will rule during this time and cause the suffering of the people of God. The last part of the tribulation period will be a time of God's judgment upon the earth in general. God is sovereign and always in control. The antichrist nor anyone else can do anything without the consent of God Almighty. **"and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."** Here as in Chapter 1:4 & 3:1 the Holy Spirit is represented as seven Spirits of God. Seven, being the number of completeness or perfection.

Verse 6 - "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal:" In this world mankind is represented by the troubled sea. Isaiah 57:20. Kingdoms rise and fall, there is always some kind of trouble but in heaven all is under perfect control and at rest and so the crystal sea is smooth and calm. **"and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind."** - Who or what these four creatures are is very difficult to determine. Almost everyone seems to have a different idea. Here are some of the ideas. Notice first that the term "beasts" is better rendered "living ones". All Bible expositors are agreed on this. Some believe the "living ones" represent God Himself, some think they represent the governments of God, some believe they as the elders represent the saved people, others think they represent the preachers and teachers of the word and so the ideas are many and varied. I believe they are on the order of the Seraphims and the Cherubims mentioned in Isaiah 6:1-8 and Ezekial 1:1-25. The main objection to this is that in Revelation 5:9,10 they appear to be singing the redemption song with the twenty four elders and saying thou *"...hast redeemed us..."* - which wouldn't be true if they are like the seraphim or cherubim. This difficulty doesn't exist, however, since the pronoun "us" is not in the Greek and should be replaced by "men" according to context as agree nearly all Greek grammarians such as A.T. Robertson, Vincent, etc. The living creatures sing with the elders the worthiness of the Lamb who redeemed men by His blood.

Verse 7 - "And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle." - These living creatures were not exactly like lions, oxen, men and eagles but their appearance was somewhat as such. In verse six it stated they were full of eyes before and behind. This symbolizes the omniscience and omnipresence of God. A lion symbolizes strength and perhaps regality, the ox stands for service, the man for intelligence and the eagle for swiftness. These creatures are engaged in the praise and adoration of the Lord; their service is of such quality as their faces signify.

Verse 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." These living creatures issue the same expression of praise as the seraphim in Isaiah 6:3. These glorified beings are connected with the holiness of God. Here they magnify His holiness prior to Him pouring out wrath upon the earth. The wrath of God executed is not contrary to His holiness but rather because of it. A holy God cannot condone sin or leave it unpunished. All the redeemed of the Lord as well as all glorified creatures will be praising God for His holiness even in the midst of the greatest display of His wrath upon the earth and then to the final casting into hell of all the wicked.

Verse 9, 10 - "And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever; (10) The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever," - In this scene we see the living creatures and the twenty four elders who represent all the redeemed engaged in solemn and sincere worship of Christ Jesus. The terms used to describe the one sitting on the throne leaves no doubt it is Jesus. *"which was, which is and which is to come"* - *"who liveth for ever and ever"*. We will not know to the fullest the glory and splendor of Christ until we are in our glorified bodies, now we rejoice in knowing and worshiping Him but it is only a little taste of what it will be like in heaven. **"and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,"** These crowns are not the crowns given in reward but are the crowns given to everyone of the redeemed. They signify kingship, authority and exalted position. These crowns are not earned but are gifts of God to the redeemed because of the merits of the Lord Jesus.

Verse 11 - "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power:" - In heaven there will be no boasting or bragging about what we've done. All will realize that Jesus is the one who did it all. No one will be asking for thanks or praise for what they've done; all will be occupied fully in praising the Lord. **"for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."** - One thing is for sure there will be no atheists in heaven nor evolutionists. No one will be praising God for evolution, they will be praising Him for creation. We need to be praying for the salvation of people like Madeline O'hair now but we'll probably laugh with God when she has to bow that proud head and confess, with that filthy Godless tongue, that has brought damnation, deprivation and degradation to so many, that Jesus Christ is Lord the creator of all the world (see Psalms 2:1-12).

CHAPTER V

Verse 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 have seen that it is God the Son on the throne in Chapter 4. This throne however, is also the throne of God the Father. So in the scene John sees God the Father seated and God the Son represented as the Lamb slain yet living. The book that is seen is not a book like we have but a scroll. To read a scroll it must be unrolled. This scroll was written on both sides indicating it was completed; there was nothing else to be written on it. The scroll was sealed with seven seals. The manner of sealing was such that the first seal hindered the unrolling and reading of any of the scroll. When the first seal was broken a portion could be read and then a second seal stopped the unrolling again, the seal being placed on the edge of the scroll. These seals were placed at certain intervals on the scroll in such a way that when the seventh seal was broken, all the scroll was unrolled. The subject of the scroll is redemption. The scroll is the title deed to the earth and describes how the earth is to be redeemed. The price of redemption has already been paid but the purchased possession has not yet come into the hands that could be redeemed. (1) A man could sell himself and be redeemed by near kin. (2) If a woman's husband died and he had no brother who could or would marry her a near kin of the husband could marry her as Boaz purchased and married Ruth. (3) If a man lost his land, it could be redeemed by a near kin. Leviticus 25:25. Boaz also took advantage of the law in buying Elimelech's land. Ruth, chapters 3 and 4. Redemption in its overall scope reaches into eternity past and into eternity future. God planned the redemption of the souls of men before he created anything. Adam was created and placed in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve sinned and they died spiritually. In order for them to escape hell and go to heaven the redemption price had to be paid. Jesus Christ paid that price. The seven-sealed book is the title deed to the earth. When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden he not only lost his right to the Garden and began to die physically, he also died spiritually. Because of his transgression the whole earth was cursed. Satan became ruler. It was not God's plan for Satan to for ever remain in control of the earth. He planned and purposed for Christ to come into the world to redeem. He left the promise of eternal life to Adam and his descendants if they would believe in a coming redeemer. Many souls had already gone to paradise before Christ the Redeemer came but their position was none the less sure for God is able to keep His plans. Christ came and died and arose again for his people. He paid the redemption price by His own blood. When a redeemed man dies his soul is immediately taken to heaven, his body however remains behind but the redemption price has also been paid for the body. When Christ comes again He will raise the body from the dead and take it to heaven also. Man's soul and body will again be united. As the redeemed body of man will be raised and fitted for eternity so the earth likewise will be fitted. The seven-sealed book reveals how the earth will be reclaimed and Satan's power destroyed.

Verse 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?" - Adam lost the title deed to the earth through his sin. In order for man to regain control the redemption price had to be paid. This was done by Christ, the second Adam. Now the question as to one worthy to open the book is proposed. Who has the right to take control and execute judgment upon the earth in conquering and reclaiming it?

Verse 3 - "And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." - Under God's law as stated in the Old Testament the only one who could reclaim property that was forfeited was a qualified kinsman. All heaven and earth is searched for one worthy to open this book but no one is able. Angels, seraphims, cherubims could not because they are not kin to man. Adam and all of his race could not because all alike are sinful and have no right. Adam sold out to the devil long ago.

Verse 4 - "And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon." - Why did John weep? Think what would happen if no one is the right heir to the earth! What about all the unfulfilled prophecies? How would God's promise to His people Israel ever be fulfilled? How would the Lord Jesus ever rule over the earth? If God does not do what He planned then He is no longer God and the Devil takes His place. Indeed there is much to weep for if there is no one to take claim to the earth.

Verse 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" - It is revealed to John that there is one who is capable and has prevailed. It is none other than the Lord Jesus. He is the Lion of the tribe of Juda and He is the root or ancestry of David. Under God's law only a near kinsman could redeem property. Boaz used this law in buying and marrying Ruth and in buying Elimelech's property. Ruth chapters 2 and 3. Also there is an example of this in Jeremiah 32. Christ had the legal right to buy the earth because He was near kin to the human race. God became man in order to be qualified to buy back what man had lost through disobedience. The redeemer had to be perfect; He could not hold what man had lost if He Himself were a sinner. In this we can see why the necessity for God to become man upon the earth. Under His own law He could not redeem as the Spirit because He was not kin to man. He could not redeem as mere man, even though perfect, because He could only pay the price of a man. He had to be the God-man, both God and man, in order to redeem.

Verse 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. - This Lamb is the appearance of the Lord Jesus, He is *"the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world:"* as pointed out by John the Baptist. He is the Lamb slain. Jesus had to suffer and die to pay the price for man's sin; this He did. His death also made provision for the redemption of the earth. There could be no redemption for anything unless the Lamb is slain. Hebrews 9:22 *"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."* The seven horns and seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God. The number seven speaks of the completeness or perfection of the Holy Spirit. The Lamb's possession of these sets forth the unity of the Godhead. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one in unity. Each person of the Godhead possesses the same attributes. When Jesus was upon the earth it is said of Him, Colossians 2:9 *"...in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."*

Verses 7, 8 - "And he came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. (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 taking of the book signifies that the one taking it is worthy to open it. This one is the rightful heir to the earth. This is reason for great rejoicing because there is one who is able to reclaim the whole creation that was subject to bondage these thousands of years. Now the promises of God will all be made good. That great usurper, that old serpent, the devil, the destroyer will be completely subdued and righteousness will be upon the whole earth. All the prayers of God's people from beginning to end are recorded in heaven. God never forgets anything. God's people these many years have prayed to be delivered from the dominion of Satan, now this is finally realized. God's people may often seem to be the losers here on earth, but that is only as it seems to the natural man. All the saints of God are victorious, all will overcome through Christ Jesus our Lord. The saved person should never feel his prayers that are indicted by the Holy Spirit are wasted. Here we see them as odours of a sweet savour in vessels of gold before the throne of God. Pray Christian pray!!! Whenever a Christian becomes despondent or discouraged he should take time to meditate upon and contemplate heaven. Knowing Christ as Savior is the most wonderful thing. Heaven is worth vastly more than all the things of the world. Those who are brought from sin and disgrace, though the world hates them are the ones who have great gain. The beauty and pleasure of the world is only temporal, it is like tinsel and tinfoil that is pretty to look at but has no real value. It is the things of God that are precious.

Verse 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;" - We need to be reminded of a couple of things before continuing with this study. (1) The seven- sealed book is the title deed to the earth forfeited by man in the Garden of Eden. (2) The Lamb of God is the only one worthy to receive this deed. (3) The opening of the book or scroll will reveal how the earth is going to be reclaimed and come under the authority of the rightful owner. (4) Jesus the kinsman redeemer has paid the redemption price at Calvary. He is the God-man. He is the one who will conquer and have all things put under His feet. (5) Above all things God wants us to know and believe that Jesus paid the price of redemption through His death. Anyone who denies the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ for ever dooms his soul to hell. (6) The redeemed of all ages past are present at this scene, they are represented by the twenty-four elders. That the elders are representatives is further proven by the song's words *"every kindred and tongue and people and nation."* (7) The song is a song of redemption. The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures all join in the song of praise and worship. (8) The song praises God for the redemption of the earth as well as the redemption of man.

Verse 10 - "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." - By the sacrifice of Christ all the elect of God are redeemed and are taken from the bondage of sin and are made kings and priests. What a tremendous transition this is! Those who were the enemies of God and shut out from Him are made rulers with Him by the grace of God through faith in Christ. This indeed is something to sing about!!

Verse 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;" - This is indeed a remarkable sight! Imagine all the saints of God, Cherubim, Seraphim, the living creatures, and angels without number all gathered around the throne singing and praising the Lamb.

Verse 12 - "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." - The Lamb is the center of attraction. All heaven is centered around Him. There will be no question there as to who the Great One is. All praise and worship goes to the Lamb.

Verse 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." - Even though man is the only redeemed creature, yet all God's creation, every being, praises God and the Lamb for redemption. Those who think the message of salvation is a small thing and of little consequence as to whether or

not it is believed had better take a look into heaven with John and see what's going on. The great topic of every conversation and every happening there is about the sacrifice of the Lamb of God and how He paid the price of redemption. The rejection of Christ as Savior is the worst possible sin and insult against God. How foolish man is!! All heaven will rejoice for ever over the redemption of Christ and foolish man sits here now thinking he is independent while death hangs heavy over his head and hell is open wide at his feet!!

Verse 14 - "And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever." -

This indeed is quite a prelude to the opening of the seven sealed book, but we must remember this is a momentous occasion. God is getting ready to bring all prophecies and promises to pass.

CHAPTER VI

Verse 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." -

The Lamb opens the first seal and the first portion of the scroll is revealed. John hears a loud voice as a clap of thunder as one of the four living creatures, which God has created for the purpose of administration, commands "Come". The words "and see" are not in the Greek text. This command is not to John but to the rider of the white horse. Judgment upon the earth is to begin. God is in control as He always has been and always will be. All of God's creatures perform His will whether they realize it or not.

Verse 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." -

The rider of this horse is the antichrist. In Revelation 19:11 we see another rider upon a white horse but this is the Lord Jesus. The rider under the first seal is a false christ, a counterfeit. He comes with a bow and a crown intending to conquer and to rule. His reign will begin with a resemblance to the reign of Christ. He promises peace and prosperity and gives it for a time. Soon, however all his followers find they have been deceived. There can be no lasting peace or prosperity upon the earth until Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace comes in person to set up His reign. The things that follow show beyond doubt this rider is not the rider of 19:11. The antichrist intends to conquer without battle or bloodshed. He will be quite successful for a time in his attempt by deception. The wicked will prosper and rejoice under his rule while those who trust in Christ will suffer terrible persecution at his hand.

Verse 3- "And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see." - As the Lord Jesus opens the second seal the command to "Come" is given again.

Verse 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."

- This ruler and horse symbolizes war. The effort of the antichrist to bring peace on the earth has failed, now he resorts to bloody warfare, violence and strife. Just when the people thought that peace and safety had come then terror really begins. This is all to come, it isn't just a story. The antichrist will have great power. The Holy Spirit of God during this time will not hinder him. He will operate under the power of Satan. All the wars before put together will not equal the terror and slaughter of that time. Speaking of blood baths, the world has seen nothing yet to compare with what's coming. This is the time spoken of in I Thessalonians 5:3, Matthew 24:6-7, Ezekiel 38:21, etc. If anyone today wants to be guaranteed they will miss this terrible time they had better put their trust in Christ right now because these things could come to pass today!!

Verse 5,6 - "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. (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."

- The black horse symbolizes famine. As he responds to the command "Come" the rider is seen with a pair of balances in his hand. Food becomes scarce as is always the case in time of war. A man can only buy enough with a day's wage to barely feed himself and then he must divide with his family. The oil and the wine of the few rich rulers will not be divided with the poor and suffering. Conditions will be so terrible that a man would rather die than live. Thank God we need not go through this. All who trust in Christ now will be with Him then. Will you?

Verse 7-8 - "And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. (8) And I looked, and behold a pale horse:"

- Under the first three seals were seen a white horse, powerful but bloodless in his conquering. Next a red horse, blood colored and warlike. Then a black horse symbolizing famine, want and hunger. Indeed this is a terrible time but the terror and suffering upon the earth has scarcely begun. Now a pale horse appears. This is a livid color, a deathly ashen grayish green like the color of a corpse of putrefying flesh. This horse is vastly more horrible and ghastly in appearance than the other three combined. **"and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."** - The red horse was war with strife, struggle and bloodshed, the black horse is famine taking away food and bringing starvation; now this ghastly colored horse brings death and destruction in ways more terrible and far reaching yet. Death is personified as a mighty tyrant riding on a death-colored horse going forth to strike fear, anguish and terrible turmoil in the hearts of men. Hell is personified as a horrible monster

that follows after death. When and where the rider of this horse comes, the land of the living becomes the land of the dead and hell swallows them up. ***"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."*** - As though death by the sword and hunger and disease were not horrible enough now the voracious beasts of the earth are employed to execute death. What is happening? What has gone wrong? Ah! The devil is turned loose, the antichrist is in control. The Holy Spirit of God is not hindering him. Oh, that men could see the foolishness of their way! How awful to turn their backs upon Christ now to follow someone like the devil! Serving the devil may please the flesh now but the day is coming when the terrible loss is going to be realized.

Verse 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:" - During this terrible time men of all ranks are going to suffer terribly; this included those who are the children of God. How much better to trust in Christ now and escape all this! There will be millions of people saved during the tribulation period but the moment one trusts in Christ, his life is in terrible jeopardy. These souls that are seen under the altar are those who have been saved under the first four seals. They have died martyrs deaths being put to death because of their refusal to deny the word of God and their faith in Jesus Christ. How many church going folks today would stand to the death for what they say and believe? Would folks, who won't get out of bed on Sunday morning or who watch the ball games Sunday night in place of coming out to meet with God's people, risk their lives to testify of Christ? Would folks, who won't read the word of God now, die for it in those kind of times? Ah, I'm afraid many folks are going to be surprised when Jesus comes. They are banking on church membership or a phony profession and they are going to be left behind when the saved are caught up. My friend now is the time to check up, does your life agree with your profession? Better make sure now, it will be too late then.

Verse 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?" - When folks get to heaven they are going to remember how they were treated on earth by their enemies. These martyrs are crying out for vengeance; they are not pleading for God to have mercy. In heaven everyone is in agreement with God. They recognize the fact that sin deserves hell.

Verse 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." - White robes are symbolic of the righteousness of Christ. The people who are saved during the tribulation are

saved just like folks in the Old Testament and in the New Testament time and like we are now, by faith in the finished work of Christ. These souls are at rest and are told to rest a little longer because there are more of the elect to be gathered in before God really begins to pour out His wrath upon the earth. God loves His children in heaven and He loves the ones on the earth even though in His wisdom He allows them terrible suffering before He calls them home.

Verse 12 - "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake;" - Things get progressively more terrible as the tribulation continues. After the horrors of war, famine, starvation and death with even the wild beasts turned against man it may seem nothing worse could happen but they haven't seen anything yet compared to what's going to happen! This is not a local earthquake but one that covers the earth. The word translated "earthquake" means to violently shake. Not only is the earth shaken but the heavens as well. In recent years and months we have seen the terrible effects of local earthquakes in Alaska, Asia and South American countries. Thousands of people killed, wounded, left homeless, billions of dollars worth of damage done. This indeed is terrible but think what it will be like when this covers the whole earth. Jesus said in Matthew 24:29 that *"the powers of the heavens shall be shaken"*. There is no way to put in words the awfulness of this terrible time.

"and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair," - Imagine the terror of this sight! Even now when a total eclipse of the sun occurs it is an awesome thing, though everyone understands what is happening. Those who have experienced this know what an eerie feeling it brings. But the thing that happens in the tribulation period is not an eclipse. As men behold, the sun just suddenly quits shining and instead of being an intense light that one can not look into, it becomes as dark as the black goat skin tents of the Bedouin. No scientist, no occultist, no professor, no one can explain what makes this happen, it is purely the intervening of the hand of an Almighty God who rules the universe He created.

"and the moon became as blood;" - Many beautiful poems and songs have been written about the moon in all ages past. Who hasn't thrilled to behold the moon on a clear crisp night as it appears like a shining silver disk in the heavens?! Man for thousands of years has been intrigued by the mysteries of the moon and wondered what was on it. A few years ago man conquered the gulf of space and reached the moon. What man did not stand in solemn silence as the word of God was read from the regions of this body in the heavens? How different things will be in the tribulation! Now the moon which, for so many millennia, had been the delight of young and old alike, a sight to behold, a thing of beauty and grandeur, a comfort to the traveler and spectator as it expels the darkness of night, will become an object of horror, dark, sickly, bloody, ominous. Think what all this will be like! Do you want to experience it? All this will come about as a result of sin. God wants us to know just how terrible sin is. The Savior came to redeem us from the curse of the law. Any man who will acknowledge his sin, confess and forsake it taking Jesus as his personal Savior will be saved and

shall escape all the misery of the tribulation period. Be saved today, tomorrow may be too late!!

Verse 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." -

This is yet under the sixth seal. Great earthquakes take place convulsing the whole earth, the sun becomes black as night and refuses to shine, the moon becomes a ghastly blood color and the stars of heaven fall. So terrible is the scene that men's hearts fail them for fear. Some critics would say this is not scientific because any one of the stars, if they fell to the earth would completely demolish it since the stars are thousands and some even millions of times larger than the earth. This of course, is true but the scriptures are speaking of what we now call "shooting stars" or meteors and meteorites. During this time the meteors will fall so numerously it will be like figs shaken from a tree in a mighty windstorm. If anyone doubts the terror of such a phenomenon they should go to the meteor crater in Arizona to see what just one can do. The one that fell there weighed thousands of tons and created a crater that is 4,000 feet across and nearly 600 feet deep with an additional 600 feet of pulverized dirt and rock in the bottom of it. The rim of this crater is about 150 feet higher than the surrounding ground. When this meteor struck large chunks of earth and rock were scattered for miles around. It is said that nothing could have survived the impact for hundreds of miles. Now imagine such as this the world over with the heavens being ablaze with these falling stars and the roar and thunder of the explosions as they violently strike the earth. Bear in mind this is only part of the terror of the time.

Verse 14 - "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together;" - This cannot be explained in any scientific terms of today but be sure of one thing, if God says He is going to roll up the heavens He is going to roll them up. No man can explain that but neither can he explain how God put them there to begin with. Whatever it means or however it's done it has the appearance of being rolled up like a scroll. The heavens are blacked out just as if a huge blind was pulled across them. ***"and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."*** - The whole world bears evidence of this happening before. Fossils found at the bottom of the sea show that the sunken land was once high above sea level. Likewise fossils on mountain-tops indicate they were once below the surface of the oceans. This, for the most part, happened during the flood of Noah's time but even in recent years, mountains have been shaken down by earthquakes or blown asunder by volcanic action, likewise islands have disappeared never to be seen again. When we consider the havoc wrought by one earthquake or one volcano, imagine what it will be like when this is worldwide!!

Verse 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;" - There will not be an unbeliever in all the world who is not frightened near unto death. Men of every walk of life are all on equal ground, they are deathly afraid. Many of them were guilty of driving the people of God to the caves and dens of the earth to try to survive the best way they could. Now they are frantically trying to find refuge in the same places. No man is brave enough to try to stand by himself. We hear men say they are not afraid of anything but they will change their story then.

Verse 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:" - These are people who wouldn't bow the knee to God nor call upon His name. They were too proud, too self-sufficient. They were satisfied with the devil and his crowd. They thought it foolish to call upon a God who many declared was dead. Now look at them, they are calling upon the rocks and mountains to protect them. They cower down like rats and other vermin trying to hide under a rock. Why don't they turn to Christ and trust Him? Why don't they want to? Why would they rather risk death and hell than to become a subject of the Lamb? It's just like Jesus said when He was here. It is not given unto them to come. Let everyone take notice today, if you don't want to be saved now you're not likely to then. Today is the day of salvation, harden not your heart, don't risk that day coming upon you as a thief in the night. Those who are saved love the Lamb of God and rejoice in His presence. The lost would rather die than have to face Him. No matter how hard they try to hide they will still have to stand before Him. How much better it is to face Him as the wonderful Savior than to face Him as the righteous yet merciless judge.

Verse 17 - "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Woe to those who think God is only a God of love and not a God of wrath! Woe to those who think they can turn their backs upon Him and laugh at His reproofs! What a terrible surprise they will get when they hear the words. Matthew 25:41 *"...Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."* - May those who read today take heed and instead of being so foolish as to call on helpless rocks and mountains to help them, may they call upon the blessed Rock of Ages to hide them in the cleft open wide for all who will come. Let them sing "Jesus lover of my soul let me to thy bosom fly: Hide me, O my Savior hide." - Jesus is the sure refuge of the soul, there is no place else to stand, He is the Rock in a weary land, a high tower, the shelter in time of storm. Come to Him now!!

CHAPTER VII

Verse 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." - This chapter is parenthetical as is clearly seen by the break of action. Six seals have been broken in order, but the seventh seal is not opened until Chapter 8. Terrible things beyond our imagination have already happened up to this point but actually the Great Tribulation as such has not begun. The events of the tribulation so far are only preliminary to the Great Tribulation which will last three and one-half years and impossible as it may seem it will be far more horrible than the first three and one-half years. However, it will be a time of great soul harvest. Millions will be saved during this time. God brings a lull over all the earth prior to the sealing of the 144,000 Jews. This is shown as being accomplished by four angels who hold or restrain the winds. The four corners of the earth is an expression showing the whole earth is involved or considered, it is like saying "four angels stood one on the north, one on the south, one on the east and one on the west. It does not mean the earth is flat and square with four corners like some used to think. God always knew the world was round, He made it that way.

Verse 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," - The angel that appears from the east with the seal of God instructs the angels who have the power to bring destruction upon the earth to hold up until the 144,000 are sealed.

Verse 3 - "Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." - How these are sealed or what the seal is, is not described. Some think it is as Paul states in Ephesians 1:13, "...in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," a seal that all believers receive. I do not think this is correct. The seal on the 144,000 is on the forehead and certainly seems to be visible and distinct. If this were the seal of the Holy Spirit, which all believers receive, there would be no significance in pointing it out concerning these particular Jews and not others of the Gentiles. We see in our next lesson that God is a covenant-keeping God.

Verse 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 Isreal." - Why God chose to call out and seal this exact number is hard to say. It is certain these are all Jews and none of them are Gentiles as some of the present day heretics would have us believe. The Seventh Day Adventists and the Jehovah Witnesses both claim these are of their cult but they aren't. There will not be a single one from either of these groups in

heaven that get there by believing their doctrine. The 144,000 will be very evangelistic and will be used to reach thousands of others.

Verse 5-8 - "Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 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. 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." These verses name the tribes and state that 12,000 will be sealed out of each of the twelve tribes making up the 144,000.

Verse 9 - "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all the nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" - Bible expositors have a great deal of difficulty in identifying this multitude. It seems each one has a different opinion. It is certain these are Gentiles from all over the earth, to this most agree but the time of their salvation proposes the difference of opinion. We will deal with this under verse 14. The white robes are the proper garments signifying their acceptance with God; the palms are symbolic of praise and worship and also of victory.

Verse 10 - "And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Everyone in heaven will praise the Lord for saving souls. There will be no one glorying in their own accomplishments. Down here we don't always shout too loudly the praise of the Lord, it seems we may be a little afraid someone will laugh at us or make fun of us. In heaven it will be different. Everything that stood in the way of whole hearted service and worship will have been done away. The old sinful flesh that hindered will be changed, the saints of God will have glorified bodies and we can shout with all our might that Jesus saved us by His grace.

Verse 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," - It is impossible to really picture this scene in our minds. No one knows how many angels there are but we know there are millions of them. Angels are powerful beings as we learn from the feats they perform. They are perfectly obedient unto God and immediately respond to His will. They adore and worship Him. Here John sees all of them together with all the redeemed of all ages, multitudes that cannot be counted, falling on their faces

before God to worship Him. This is not a forced reverence but each responds as he desires. In heaven the supreme joy of every individual will be to praise, adore and worship God.

Verse 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." - The first commandment: Exodus 20:3 *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."* - This commandment is necessary on the earth because men are prone to make gods for themselves. Even God's people are guilty sometimes of putting other things before God. If we are not careful we begin to love the things of the world more than we love God. In heaven it will be different, every one will want God to have all their love, praise, thanksgiving, honour, power and all the glory for all things. No one will want to have any god before Him.

Verse 13 - "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" This question is directed to John to call attention to a particular group among the multitudes. Who are they? And where did they come from?

Verse 14 - "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest." - John so replies to this question knowing that the one who asked it had the answer and also knew that John didn't know. - **"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."** - First of all these had been saved by the blood of Christ. By faith they had been made pure. They had trusted Christ to cleanse them from all sin. Secondly they had been saved out of great tribulation or as the Greek reads literally "tribulation the great one" - this means these folks were saved during the Great Tribulation period. If, as some believe, the Great Tribulation covers the whole seven-year period these could have been saved before the opening of the seventh seal. If the Great Tribulation covers only the last half of the seven-year period, as seems probable, these are saved after the opening of the seventh seal. This is indeed plausible since the seal of the 144,000 is before the opening of the seventh seal and these are seen "after this" Verse 9; the whole tribulation period, as has been stated, lasts seven years. The last part of this period is much more horrible than the first and seems to be the part referred to as "The Great Tribulation". Perhaps this is not so important a point but what is important is this - One cannot possibly believe in the imminent return of Christ and yet believe in the "mid" or "post" tribulation rapture. If either of these views is correct then there is absolutely no use in our looking for or expecting Christ to come now. All the warning to watch, to be ready, to be vigilant are only mockery. If such is true we would be instructed to watch for the building of the temple, the appearance of the antichrist, the revival of Christianity and the salvation of millions of souls instead of watching for the return of Christ.

If He does not come before the tribulation, He certainly will not come as a "thief in the night". Under those conditions anyone could figure out when He is coming. Jesus is not coming after the breaking of the sixth seal on the book nor after the seventh. He is coming before the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, 5:5 takes the book from the hand of Him who sits on the throne. Jesus may come today and you better believe it!!

Verse 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." - The word "therefore" refers back to what has been said. They are there before the throne only because Christ died for them. Day and night is only an expression meaning all the time. There is no night or darkness in heaven. On earth in our fleshly bodies we need rest but with our glorified bodies this will not be necessary. Service to God will be continuous. In heaven we will be right in the very presence of God. The word "dwell" denotes a closeness as He dwelt in the tabernacle in the wilderness in the midst of His people.

Verse 16 - "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." - These folks had gone through a part of the terrible tribulation. They had experienced hunger and thirst under the burning sun but now that's all over for them.

Verse 17 - "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters:" - This is indeed a blessed thought. The word "feed" actually means "to shepherd" - that is He cares for them as a shepherd does his sheep. ***"and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*** - These are the saints of the tribulation period. This does not mean there will be people crying in heaven. It means just the opposite, there will be nothing to cause one to cry or sorrow. All the weeping of the saints will be done here on earth. Imagine!! Being in the very presence of God having Him to comfort and care for us! When we consider what we are by nature we can only say "Amazing grace how sweet the sound".

CHAPTER VIII

Verse 1 - "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." - John sees the breaking of the last seal of the book and a strange thing happens. Prior to this all heaven resounded with the singing and praising of the Lord. Suddenly there is a deathly silence in heaven for half an hour. Volumes are written trying to explain the meaning of this silence, all kinds of speculation are made, some of them plausible, some of them foolish. Perhaps the best illustration and explanation comes from nature itself. In Kansas I have seen storm clouds gather and soon

lightning began to flash and thunder peal, wind gusting and howling then suddenly an eerie calm. The chickens would all run for cover and the farm animals mill restlessly. Then suddenly the storm would break forth in all its fury with all the heavens seeming to explode in blinding flashes, deafening roars of thunder and mighty torrents of water plunging from the clouds as the storm poured out its wrath. This, I believe is the significance of the silence in heaven; God is setting the stage to hurl His wrath and indignation upon the earth, as the world has never seen before.

Verse 2 - "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets." - In the book of Revelation we see four main groups of sevens. First seven churches, then seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials. Seven is the number of perfection and completeness. The seven churches represent the complete church age with every church in every age regardless of the condition. The seven seals close the book that contains all things pertaining to the earth and its redemption and reclamation. The seven trumpets hold everything that trumpets represent in the scriptures, such as trumpets were used to announce royalty, trumpets were used to call the people together, trumpets were used to set forth the terrible power and majesty of God, trumpets were used to announce great feasts and many other things. All these things will happen under the sounding of the seven trumpets.

Verse 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." - In the tabernacle in the wilderness incense was offered daily on the altar. This was a symbol of the prayers of God's people being offered up and so it is through the Bible. In Revelation 5:8 we see this truth again.

Verse 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." - What is the content of these prayers? It is clearly to be seen they are prayers for vengeance. This we saw in Revelation 6:9,10. These are God-honoring, Holy Spirit indicted prayers as the imprecatory Psalms such as Psalm 69:22-28, Psalm 71:13, Psalm 79:6, etc. vengeance belongs to the Lord, all the suffering caused His children will meet with His wrath. God knows how to even the score. Christians should not fret because of evildoers, just talk to the Lord about it. He will do something when the time comes.

Verse 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 thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake." - The censer of incense which is a sweet savor in the nostrils of God becomes the means of damnation to

those who dwell on the earth. The word of God is a savor of life unto those who believe but a savor of death unto death in those who reject. The judgment of God is ready to be poured upon the earth in vengeance against His enemies. All the earth is in a turmoil as it waits.

Verse 6 - "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound." -The winding up of this worlds affairs is placed in the hands of angels. Each has his particular work. Here they prepare the sound, they do not sound at the same time but each in his order. At the sound of each trumpet a terrible calamity befalls the earth.

Verse 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." - When Israel was in Egypt a similar plague was sent upon them on a minor scale; here it is seen in fullness, world wide. Imagine the scene as God hurls hail and fire mingled with blood, what a horrible thing!! All the green grass withered, dried and burned and a third of all the trees burned up. I have seen prairie fires where dead grass burned and I have seen forest fires but nothing like this. Think of the vastness of pasture lands and of the forests and then imagine all the grass being burned and a third of all forest land. Then in the midst of this terror, bloody hail piled all around. This is only the first trumpet, there are six more to be sounded.

Verse 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:" - Most of us have experienced the effect of throwing a red hot object into water. We have seen the water literally explode as it turned instantaneously into boiling steam. In the Yellowstone National Park one can see the effect of water running on to burning rock, huge geysers rise to hundreds of feet, an awesome sight. Now imagine all this multiplied millions of times as this great mountain of fire is cast into the sea, millions of gallons of water and tons of earth hurled miles into the air as tremendous explosions take place. Then a third part of the sea turns to blood. The modernist today doesn't like to think about blood in the salvation of souls. They frown upon the blood atonement, they think it is barbaric. They don't want to sing songs about the blood so they leave all of them alone. In the day John sees there will be plenty of blood but it won't be to wash away their sin. The blood of the Lord Jesus can do what oceans of blood cannot. His blood can make the sinner clean. How much better to be bathed in His blood and escape the horrible blood deluges of that time!!

Verse 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." - A great percentage of the worlds food supply comes either directly or indirectly from the sea. The longer the Lord tarries His coming the larger this percent will

be. The oceans are vast, but great as they are, they abound with life everywhere. To have a third of all the living things of the sea die at once would indeed be an unimaginable catastrophe. We think water pollution is bad now; imagine the dead bodies of all kinds of sea life floating on the surface and being washed ashore!! No sensible person would want to run the risk of experiencing this. Because of the great turbulence of sea caused by the great mountain of fire, one third of all the ships will be destroyed. Pearl Harbor was a terrible loss as the Japanese sunk many of the U.S.A.'s fleet. We still read about the destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588 as 230 vessels of war were destroyed by storms and by the English. The happenings made history but they are nothing compared to the wrath of God as He destroys ships by the thousands the world around. God warns us to be guided by the lighthouse into the sure and safe harbor now.

Verse 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:" - At the sounding of the first trumpet hail and fire mingled with blood fell upon the earth, destroying much of its vegetation, then the second trumpet sounded and a great mountain of fire was cast into the sea, turning a third of it into blood, killing one third of all things living in the sea and destroying one third of all ships. There is no way to explain this except as God says it. Under the third trumpet a great star falls from heaven circling the earth burning as a lamp. As it goes it falls upon a third of the waters of the earth. This star is not a solid mass but perhaps like a comet made up of small bits of solid material and of gas thus as it travels parts of it fall upon the seas, lakes, streams, wells and springs of water.

Verse 11 - "And the name of the star is called Wormwood:" - God put all the stars in place; He knows every heavenly body, the planets, asteroids, meteors, comets, stars all are known to Him by name - Psalm 147:4 *"He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names"* - The name of the star is Wormwood or bitterness. God made this star for a particular purpose. He didn't ask anyone about it, as with all His creations. He does as He pleases. ***"and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."*** - The effect of the meteor-like body is to turn the waters into a bitter poison. Man for thousands of years has enjoyed the things God created. He has learned to make useful to himself those things that surround him but in the days to come he won't know what to expect for even a clear spring of water may suddenly be turned into poison to take his life.

Verse 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. "Astronomers have skillfully calculated the movement and actions of the heavenly bodies until they can make predictions with astounding accuracy. They can tell the day when a comet will reappear after an absence of decades. They can tell to the minute when an eclipse of the sun or moon will occur; they know exactly when a particular planet will be closest to the earth; they can tell how long sun spots will affect radio communications etc., but with all their knowledge and wisdom they will be completely baffled by what takes place here. God made the heavens and the earth and put every thing in place. He makes them perform with precision accuracy century after century but when He is ready He can change the order to suit Himself. All of his creatures respond to do His will. Imagine after thousands of years the sun comes up and goes down exactly on schedule and likewise the moon then suddenly in the middle of the day the sun blacks out, or here are some enjoying the moonlight and then it's gone! All of these things add to the misery and woe of those who dwell upon the earth.

Verse 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!" - One might wonder, what more or what worse thing can happen? As the voice of the angel indicates they have not seen the half of it yet.

CHAPTER IX

Verse 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." - The events from 9:1 to 11:12 are under the first "woe" pronounced by the angel. The star that is fallen here is not a literal star as in 8:10, this we know from the personal pronouns that are used "him" and "he". This star is a person. Who is it? To understand this it is helpful to know that the verb "fall" should be "fallen" as all grammarians agree. The star that John saw had already fallen. What person in the scripture is represented by a fallen star? Jesus said *"...I beheld Satan as lightning fell from heaven"* Luke 10:18. The account of his fall is given in Isaiah 14:12-15. No doubt Satan is the star seen here and the reference of his falling relates to his original fall. The bottomless pit is the abode of evil spirits and demons. They dread and hate the place as is seen in Luke 8:31 *"And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep."* - (abyss or bottomless pit). Satan is given the key to the bottomless pit. This prison of the cursed is opened only by divine permission. Jesus Christ has the keys as we see in Revelation 1:18 *"...and have the keys of hell and of death."* So Jesus gives the key to the devil! There is the day coming when all the demons and evil spirits of hell shall be turned loose upon the earth. They will be given

the power to indwell and rule men who have rejected Christ as the Savior. The torment they inflict will be beyond imagination.

Verse 2 - "And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit." - This indeed will be a terrible scene! As Satan unlocks the shaft leading to the bottomless pit a horrible cloud of acrid smoke arises so voluminous it darkens the sun and pollutes the air. We have seen pictures of atomic bombs exploding and sending mushroom clouds high into the sky. That indeed is an awesome sight but it is only a puffball in comparison to the ominous cloud that ascends from this terrible abyss.

Verse 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." - These are the demons of hell imprisoned for thousands of years and let loose upon the earth. They are coming to inflict terrible pain and suffering upon mankind. We must remember this. Satan has never intended to help anyone but himself. All his followers are just like him in this respect. They can only hurt and destroy. May God help us today not to be so foolish as to follow him.

Verse 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." - These of course are no ordinary locusts. They are intelligent beings that can take and follow orders. Satan is their king, they do his every bidding. They are not come to destroy things on the earth but to directly torment men bodily. They are compared to scorpions because the scorpion has the most painful sting or bite of any creature. People have been known to go out of their minds due to the terrible pain of the scorpion's sting. Even while these creatures are loose under Satan's direction, yet God is over all. He tells them how far they can go. They cannot touch those who are sealed by God. These referred to are the 144,000 Jews mentioned in chapter 7.

Verse 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." - Why the specified period of five months for the torment is given is not explained. Think of it though! Five months in such horrible torment!! Terrible as all this is, what is it compared to the Lake of Fire, which is to follow. The locusts can only torment for five months but hell is for ever. Why not trust in Christ now and escape both the locusts and hell?!!

Verse 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." - It is impossible

to imagine the horror and suffering of the tribulation days. These demons of hell in the likeness of locusts that come upon men to torment for five months with their scorpion-like stings bring such terrible suffering and agony that men seek to die; they want to die. They try to kill themselves but are unable. Today there is much discussion as to whether or not euthanasia is right; in that day men will cry for it but no one will be successful. A man in terrible agony will fix himself a drink of deadly poison only to find it has been made harmless. Another will soak himself with gasoline but alas it will not burn. One attempts at hanging, drowning, etc. will fail. All the devices of death that men may know will not avail. Man must endure the terrible torment for five months.

Verse 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." - These infernal creatures are awesome in their appearance. They are intelligent and orderly. Their size is not given but we assume they are relatively small. They are not dumb beasts that attack blindly and ignorantly. These creatures with their crowns like gold and faces like men give the impression they know what they are doing.

Verse 8 - "And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions." - We have heard of some of the prognosticators who said the hippie movement today is a sign of the times and was fulfilling this scripture about the locusts in that they have the faces of men and hair like a woman. This makes about as much sense as most of the rest of the guesses that are made about the time of Christ's coming. There isn't anyone who can tell when Christ is coming by signs or anything else because He said there wasn't going to be any signs given. As far as the hippies are concerned they do have the faces of men and hair like a woman. As far as signs are concerned the most sophisticated calculations of the learned make no more sense than the garbled guesses of a Jimmy Conyers. As far as anyone knows, Christ may come today and then again He may not come for a thousand years.

Verse 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." - The world has never seen creatures like these, they are supernatural beings equipped to do their job well. What a terrible scene this must be to see these terrible creatures swarm through the air threshing the air, raising a din like thousands of horses shod and rushing into battle with chariot wheels whirring as they violently spin.

Verse 10 - "And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months." - John is really impressed with the agony caused by the locust sting. Three times he mentions it is like the sting of a scorpion. Twice he tells the torment is for five

months. Surely that five months would seem like five thousand as men writhe in agony seeking death that won't come.

Verse 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." - Again notice is called to the fact these locusts are intelligent beings who obey the orders of their king. Their king, like themselves belong to the inferno of hell. What a tragic mistake so many millions of men make in following one who only knows destruction!! His very name Appolyon and Abaddon tell what he is - the destroyer. His name both in Hebrew and Greek is given to tell us he is no respecter of person, he will destroy anyone he can, whether Jew or Gentile. My friend as you read these comments, if you are not saved turn now to Jesus, you've lost enough already!!

Verse 12 - "One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter." - This would be terrible news after having experienced the torment of the locust for five months but nevertheless the news is true, there is worse to come.

Verse 13,14 - "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, (14) Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates." - The angels of God obey His voice and delight to do His will. There is never any argument among the angels over who is given a work to do. The four angels mentioned in verse 14, are fallen angels. They have been bound and are now to be turned loose. Good angels are free to minister unto the heirs of salvation. It is a great mercy of God that certain evil angels are bound so they can not hurt man upon the earth. These angels are to be released in the region of the Euphrates River. Perhaps God chose this place to turn them loose because here was the place Satan began his diabolical work in the human race. It was here the first murder was committed as Cain slew his brother Able; it was here Nimrod organized the first rebellion against God in building the tower of Babel.

Verse 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." - In Matthew 12:25,26 Jesus said a kingdom divided against itself could not stand and if Satan cast out Satan he is divided against himself and his kingdom could not stand. This is how God destroys the kingdom of Satan. These demonic angels when turned loose fall upon even the men who are followers of Satan and kill a third of them. If there are three billion people living then which would be true if it happened now, one billion people would die. This means that more than four times as many people as are in the United States will be killed. No man knows when this will take place but God knows exactly the year, the

month, the day and the hour. These wicked angels are prepared for exactly the right moment. It is their disposition to kill, they need no command to do so, they only need to be turned loose.

Verse 16 - "And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them." - This is the greatest army that has ever been assembled upon the earth, 200,000,000 horsemen. This is the army under the leadership of the four hellish angels that are loosed.

Verse 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." - These are no ordinary horses but rather an infernal cavalry, supernatural; something the world has never seen before. The horsemen are clothed in armor of colors that answer to the emission of the horse's mouths. The horses have heads like lions and belch forth fire and smoke and brimstone. Brimstone is a sulfur substance that gives off an acrid stifling odor, the very substance of hell. Careless thinking men today deny a literal burning hell and say "hell is on earth". This time will be more like hell on earth than has ever been witnessed but this is just a small sample and preview of what hell really is. This torment only lasts for a while, hell is for ever.

Verse 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." - The damage to mankind is not done by the riders of these horses but by the horses themselves. Two hundred million of these devastating beasts directed by their riders are turned loose to kill people. Some are burned to death by the fire, others are stifled and strangled by the poisonous smoke and brimstone. What chance will man have? There will be one of these horrible creatures to every fifteen persons upon the earth. Surely it is only by the grace of God that these infernal beasts do not kill all that are living.

Verse 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." - Not only are these horse-like creatures able to kill with the emissions of their mouth but their tails are deadly. Their tails were like snakes with heads capable of biting and killing their victims.

Verse 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:" - One would think that after all the terrible things that have happened everyone left would

immediately turn to God. If verse 15 is meant to give the length of this siege then these men which were not killed have seen one out of every three persons upon the earth killed in one year, one month, one day and one hour. The truth is these folks do not repent they go on worshipping devils even though by devils they are being destroyed. They go on worshipping idols they have made when they know full well the idols can do nothing.

Verse 21 - "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." - Man becomes more and more wicked under the influence of Satan. They have no thought of turning from their wickedness to worship the true God. Lost men today should stop to think of what's going to happen to them. Some may have the notion they will change when all this begins to happen but they will be fooled. They will continue to follow the devil just like they do now. The more they are punished the more they will rebel against God. All God's children should praise Him continually for the Holy Spirit that works within us to make us willing to do His good pleasure.

CHAPTER X

Verse 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:" - This mighty angel is none other than the Lord Jesus. Many times in the scripture clouds are associated with the appearance of the Lord. The rainbow corresponds to the sight John saw in 4:3. His feet are like the description given in 1:15. On different occasions it is said His face shone as the sun.

Verse 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," - The book that the angel has is the book mentioned in 5:1. This seven sealed book is now open, all the seals having been broken (8:1). This book is the title deed to the earth. The Lord Jesus was the only one found worthy to open its seals, as we learned from chapter 5. The angel sets one foot upon the sea and the other upon the land. This is an act showing he is the rightful owner of all the earth and has taken possession.

Verse 3 - "And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices." - The voice of the Lord is clear and plain as well as powerful and authoritative. Many of the prophets spoke of His voice being like unto the roar of a lion. He is about to finish the execution of His judgments and so commands the attention of all about Him. The thunders that speak are the judgments of God.

Verse 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." - What these seven thunders said no one knows. It has been suggested that these were judgments against the waywardness of believers and since their sins are already judged in their substitute the world is never to know of them; they are cast into the sea of forgetfulness. This however, is just conjecture and may or may not be so.

Verse 5,6 - "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven. (6) And sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:" - The announcement as here stated that time should be no longer does not mean that time would end immediately. This is evident from the rest of what happens during the tribulation, and then time runs for another thousand years after that. The correct rendering is as the margin has it "There should be no longer delay." - That is the rest of God's judgments would soon fall upon the earth. God has put up with man's sins for thousands of years but one of these days time is going to run out and God will pour out His fury upon the earth.

Verse 7 - "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to His servants the prophets." - This means that God will bring to a close all earthly affairs under the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The second-coming of Christ has been prophesied since the dawn of human existence. Enoch prophesied of this in Jude 14. The prophets have outlined the events that would take place as Christ recovers His purchased possessions.

Verse 8,9 - "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. (9) And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And He said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey." - John is commanded to take and eat the little book. Ezekiel was commanded to do the same thing in his time. Ezekiel 3:1-3. The book was as sweet as honey in his mouth. Thus the word of God is to all who feast upon it. The precious promises are a delight to the hungry soul. David said in Psalm 119:103 *"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"*

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

it, my belly was bitter. " - This is the effect of the word of God upon the believer, while the promises, benefits and blessings are sweet, yet the fact of doom, destruction, bloodshed, torments and the agony of hell to those who reject Christ bring a sickening feeling to our stomach. We have all experienced a sickening feeling when we see some terrible scene how much more so when we think about the great mass of humanity being punished in the burning fires of hell for ever and for ever.

Verse 11 - "And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." - The person who truly eats the word of God will feel he must prophesy; he must tell others the word of God. John is prepared for preaching by eating the word of God contained in the little book. He must have the good news and the bad news both within his heart to preach as he should. No one is called to preach or teach just the love and mercy of God. God calls us to preach the whole council. No matter how bitter it is in our belly.

CHAPTER XI

Verse 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." - All of chapter 10 and the first 14 verses of this chapter are parenthetical, as was chapter seven. That is, these verses are sort of an interlude between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets. This scene is in Jerusalem. The temple being measured is the temple that will be built sometime between now and the middle of the Tribulation Period. It is the temple that the "man of sin" shall sit in declaring himself to be God, II Thessalonians 2:3,4 *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."* Measuring usually signifies ownership and control. Thus the measuring would mean that God has control of the temple. The rod is a symbol of chastisement. The man of sin will sit in the temple that belongs to God along with all that worship him but God will drive them out and completely destroy them.

Verse 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 original temple at Jerusalem had four courts, one of which was for the Gentiles. They could only enter this court and could go no farther under the penalty of death. The reason for John not being permitted to measure this court was because God was going to use the Gentile to chastise the Jew for forty-two months. In symbolism the

Gentile is not to be brought under the rod of God until He is finished using them for chastisement.

Verse 3 - "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." - Exactly who those witnesses are is impossible to tell. Those who spiritualize most of the book of Revelation have ideas like the witnesses represent the law and the gospel or the Jew and Gentile or the church and Israel, or the Old and New Testament, etc. I believe they are two real men. What two men I do not know for sure. They may be two men who are living now or who are not yet born or they may be men who lived centuries ago. Some believe they will be Enoch and Elijah for the following reasons. The two witnesses are prophets of God. They shall die. Hebrews 9:27 states *"it is appointed unto men once to die."* Malachi 3:1-3 states that Elijah will come before the great and terrible day of the Lord. I Timothy 6:16 says that only Christ has put on immortality. Enoch and Elijah were mortals yet they never experienced mortality hence it seems reasonable they must return to die. There are serious objections to this theory also. Perhaps we will have to wait to see who these witnesses are.

Verse 4 - "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." - This verse is explained by Zechariah chapters 3, 4, and 5; also Haggai 1:1, 2:2-4. Here Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel are mentioned in connection with the olive trees and candlesticks. The olive trees and the candlesticks are God's prophets with the message of His word. Zechariah 4:2-6. This is further evidence that the two witnesses of God are real men with the message of God just as Joshua and Zerubbabel were.

Verse 5 - "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed." - As is stated in verse 3, power is given to the two witnesses to witness for three and one half years. They have enemies on every side but God gives them protection. Since these are men the fire that comes from their mouths is probably not in the manner of the horses of 9:17 but is fire from heaven called down by the words of their mouths as II Kings 1:7-14. Here Elijah called down fire from heaven to destroy two captains and two companies of fifty men who came against him. However, if God so chose He could make human flame-throwers of the two witnesses to destroy their oppressors.

Verse 6 - "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophesy:" - Elijah had this power when he was prophet in Israel. He caused it not to rain for three years. **"and have power over waters to turn**

them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." - Some believe the other witness to be Moses instead of Enoch since the miracles here performed were like the miracles Moses did in Egypt. This, however, leaves the difficulty of Moses having to die twice. These two have unlimited power to protect themselves until the Lord is finished with them.

Verse 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." - These men are mortals and so must die but the beast is not able to kill them until they have finished their testimony. The devil has no power except it is allowed of God. The child of God need not fear the devil, those who walk with God are protected by Him. When death does come we shall be with the Lord.

Verse 8 - "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." - These witnesses of God were so hated they were not even buried but were left lying in the street. So great is the wickedness of the city Jerusalem, the place where Jesus was crucified, that it is called Sodom and Egypt. How terrible that men should so degrade themselves! The story is ever the same; those who reject Christ go farther and farther into sin.

Verse 9 - "And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves." - It is not only the Jews but people of all nations and kindreds that hate the Lord Jesus and His servants. The inference is that everyone the world over will see these dead bodies and no one will want to give them a decent burial. They wouldn't allow anyone to bury them even if they wanted to. Critics used to question how everyone would be able to see this now we know it is just like we see catastrophes anywhere in the world in a matter of minutes or like we see a football game in California, on T. V.

Verse 10 - "And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth." - What a sad reflection this is on humanity!! Here are witnesses for Jesus Christ with the only message of hope, theirs is an errand of mercy trying to warn the wicked but just as the prophets of old they are hated, despised and put to death and the people rejoice and have a great celebration. How terribly sad that too late so many millions will realize who their friends really were. The only torment these two administered was to protect themselves or to try to get men to heed the message of God that they might not die eternally.

Verse 11, 12 - "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. (12) 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." - Men may kill the children of God but after that there is nothing they can do. The bodies of these witnesses lay in the street for three and one half days but when God sent His Spirit into them they revived and stood up and no one could do anything about it. Then when God said "*come up hither*" there was no power to hold them on the earth. Their enemies looked on in dreadful fear and amazement seeing such power. Praise the Lord of Heaven this is exactly what is going to happen to every born again son of God. What a great and wonderful God we have. Praise Him!!

Verse 13 - "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." - In the same hour that the bodies of the two witnesses are taken up God will send a great earthquake. The people of Jerusalem are already filled with fear having seen the hated witnesses come to life and then suddenly disappear into heaven. Surely they knew this had to be the hand of God. Now as the earthquake comes one out of every ten buildings crumble to the ground. Seven thousand people are killed and buried by the rubble. They wouldn't allow the two servants of God to be buried, now God buries them. All those who are left tremble with great fear recognizing that indeed God is the one who brought this to pass. They give God the glory for it. This is the first time since the tribulation began that wicked men give God glory for anything. This does not mean they repented and were saved, they merely admit God is the one who did these things. Very often it happens that people in time of trouble and distress will turn their thoughts to God and say all kinds of good things about Him and make a few fancy speeches and even declare they are going to turn to Him but as soon as the calamity is past they become as bad or worse than they were before.

Verse 14 - "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." - This verse ends the parenthetical passage which began with chapter 10:1. The first and second woes were under the fifth and sixth trumpets, the third woe is under the seventh trumpet.

Verse 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." - From the time the Lord Jesus took the seven sealed book from the hand of Him who set upon the throne it was evident that He was going to reclaim this old earth. The actual conquering and taking control of the earth is not

accomplished at this point of time during the tribulation. It does not happen under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, however when God declares a thing is going to come to pass it is just as sure as if it had already happened. Before the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of Christ, the seven vials are poured out upon the earth; Babylon must fall, the battle of Armageddon will be fought, the Beast and the false prophet meet their doom and the devil is cast into the bottomless pit. This isn't finished until chapter 20. When Christ begins His reign it will be for ever. Lest anyone should not be aware of it, the Devil is the ruler of the world now and has been since the fall of man. He has usurped this authority. He is spoken of as *"the god of this world"*, *"the prince and power of the air"*. Certainly God has allowed him to have this power. This is why everything in the whole world is against "Christianity." Satan sees to it that the world does not lend itself to the spread of the gospel. *"The whole world lies in the wicked one."* Christ will conquer the Devil at the appointed time and then He will reign upon this earth for a thousand years. This world will then be destroyed by fire and the reign of Christ continues for ever in the new world.

Verse 16 - "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God," - Remember these elders are the representatives of all the Saints from ages past. In heaven the supreme desire of all God's creatures is to see His will accomplished. When Jesus gave the model prayer He taught His disciples to say *"thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* Surely we can see God's will is not being done on earth as it is in heaven but one day it will. The Saints of God anxiously await the time this comes to pass.

Verse 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." - This praise and adoration is directed to the Lord **Jesus**. Though some do not want to believe it yet still it is true, Jesus is the Lord God Almighty; He is one with the Father, He is the one who was in eternity, who is now and who shall come again in great power to conquer all the earth. He has always had the power to rule anytime He sees fit, but according to His plan and purpose the fit time is not until the end of the tribulation period.

Verse 18 - "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come," - The world will not readily yield itself to the Lord. He must take it by force and He will. They are angry and do not want to give up what they have, but what is the wrath of men against the wrath of God?!! Man with all his power can no more stop the wrath of God than a little puppy dog could quiet the annoying roar of the ocean by barking at it. Read Psalm 2 and Proverbs 1:22-33. Here you will see the foolishness of man as he tries to rebel against God, here you will see the attitude of God toward those who reject Him. ***"and the time of the dead, that they should be judged,"*** - Every man will come into judgment whether lost or

saved. The saved will be judged according to their deeds to determine their rewards. This judgment will take place near or at the end of the Tribulation Period; it is known as the judgment seat of Christ. The lost will be judged to set the extent of their punishment in hell; this judgment is known as The Great White Throne Judgment and will take place at the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ. ***"and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great;"*** - Just what the rewards will be is not known, we can be sure however that they will be far beyond and above any of our expectations. Every Christian who has done any service for God will be rewarded. Rewards are determined by length of service, faithfulness, knowledge, opportunity, use of gifts or abilities, etc. Christians are encouraged to consider the rewards as an incentive to do greater works. ***"and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."*** - The judgment of lost sinners will bring them utter destruction. They will be judged according to how long they lived in sin, the degree of their sin, opportunity to hear the word, etc. All those who follow Satan are credited with destroying the world. Satan is wholly sinful, he can do nothing good neither can his followers do any good. The earth will be destroyed because of sin, the devil is the one who introduced sin into the world, he is called *"the destroyer"* and all his followers will be finally destroyed in hell. In this present life hardly anything seems to be fair. The wicked prosper, they seem to have everything they need while so often the saint of God is troubled and persecuted. When the prophets of old are considered or John the Baptist, the Apostles and early church members, it just doesn't seem right that these should have so suffered trials, beatings, cold, hunger, being thrown to the lions, made to hide in the caves and dens of the earth and many other terrible things, but we must remember God is taking all things into account and will mete out judgment as it should be. No child of God will be sorry for anything he did for the Lord or for anything that happened to him for the Lord's sake. God will make just recompense. Too late the Christ rejecter will find out he didn't get away with anything. Now is the time to think seriously of the judgment to come.

Verse 19 - "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament:" - Beginning with this verse and on through chapter 12, the nation Israel becomes the main topic. The temple and temple worship were primarily Jewish. This is the reason for the appearance of the temple. In the temple the ark of the testimony is seen. The ark was made as an article of furniture for the Tabernacle in the wilderness and was the only thing in the Holy of Holies. It is called the "ark of his testimony" because it contained the tables of stone bearing the law that God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai. It also contained a golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded. Each of these articles have a special meaning to the people of God. The ark itself is a type of Christ. The law within the ark speaks of Christ's being our law keeper. We are protected from the curse of God of the law because He holds

it. The golden pot of manna speaks of the providence of God in caring for His people and Aaron's rod that budded tells of the resurrection of Christ. Though the ark has not been seen for many hundreds of years, yet God knows exactly where it is and He hasn't forgotten the first thing its presence and contents signify. ***"and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."*** - These are symbols of judgment. The appearance of the ark in the midst of this is to say God will not forget or forsake His people in the time of judgment. Israel shall be preserved unto the coming of their promised King and Messiah.

CHAPTER XII

Verse 1 - "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven;" - The word "wonder" is translated from a word meaning "sign or symbol" so what follows is not literal, but rather, figurative. ***"a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:"*** - The only place in the scripture that anything similar to this appears is in Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:9, 10. There the sun, moon and stars stand for the family of Jacob or Israel. Likewise in this scene the woman represents the nation Israel.

Verse 2 - "And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." - The child that is to be born we learn from verse 5 is the Lord Jesus. This is all according to scripture and of course is looking back. God promised the redeemer through the loins of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Christ came according to the scripture, His ancestry clearly being established back to Jacob.

Verse 3 - "And there appeared another wonder (sign) in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." - This dragon is none other than Satan himself. His color, red, is symbolic of fire and of blood. Satan is the destroyer and goes about his murderous ways in heated fierceness to bring destruction to the people of God. Seven is the number of completeness. Satan is seen with seven heads crowned with seven crowns. The heads signify authority and governing power, crowns signify imperial power. The devil is the ruler of this world and he is a ruthless, heartless despot. Horns are used by the animals which have them as a means to hurt and destroy. Ten is the number of worldly completeness, the devil is fully equipped to execute his destruction upon mankind.

Verse 4 - "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth:" - The stars mentioned here are the angels, this is the account of Lucifer's rebellion in heaven. Isaiah 14:12-16. When he rebelled, a third of the angels followed him in rebellion, the result being they were put out

from the presence of God. These fallen angels along with Satan, their ruler, are awaiting their final condemnation when God sees fit to put an end to their evil works. **"and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."** - From the scriptures we find the supreme desire of Satan has always been to destroy the coming Christ. Many times it appeared he would succeed as he hurled the enemy against the nation Israel that was to bring forth the Messiah. We see him work through Herod when Jesus was a child causing him to destroy all the male children under two years old in an attempt to destroy Jesus. Then the murderous hearts of those who crucified Jesus not knowing He was performing the purpose of God.

Verse 5 - "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron:" - This verse positively identifies Christ with the man child for of no one else has it been said or can it be said *"he will rule all nations with a rod of iron."* The identity of the woman is also verified, Israel is the nation from which Christ came. **"and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne."** This is the way it was with Jesus, the devil tried every way he could to destroy Him but Jesus is the eternal God and so is indestructible. Jesus after He was crucified and buried arose from the dead and ascended bodily into heaven to the right hand of the throne of God.

Verse 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." - The entire church age is passed over between verses five and six. The scene in verse six is of the last three and one half years of the Tribulation Period. Israel will be protected during this time. Israel's existence today is nothing short of a great miracle of God. No other nation has been so hated, no other nation has been so mistreated. Many have tried to cut off her existence but to no avail because God has promised to perpetuate her until Christ sets up His earthly kingdom.

Verse 7 - "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels," - This is a war between spirit beings. Michael is the general of the warring angels. Mortal men cannot imagine the scenes of this great battle, angels against angels.

Verse 8 - "And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." - Satan and his angels prove to be no match for Michael and those under his command. They are run out of heaven.

Verse 9 - "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." - We should be

reminded again that the Devil is not in hell and never was, neither are his angels. Some of the demons and other spiritual beings, evil spirits and such are shut up now and will be until God turns them loose but the Devil and certain of his fallen angels are on the loose and have access to heaven. In Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-7 we see Satan in the very presence of God. Satan is now the "Prince and power of the air." He rules the atmospheric and stellar heavens but his access to heaven will be cut and he will be limited to the earth itself. God's people need to be aware now of the power of the Devil. He is not merely an influence as some religionists would have us believe; he is a real person and he has great power on the earth. He controls every person who is not saved and influences many who are. Every child of God will have final victory over Satan, but we can have it now! We must, however, draw upon God for strength to overcome him. Let us use that power now.

Verse 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:" - In verse four we have reference to the fall of Satan and those angels which followed him. This took place sometime before the creation of man, how long before is not known. In verse eight we have the expulsion of Satan and his followers from the heavens. This will take place in the last half of the tribulation period and sets the stage for the millennial reign of Christ. The devil and his angels now have access to the heavens, in fact they seem to have their headquarters there. Ephesians 6:12 *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* - The term "high places" is literally translated the "heavenlies" or "heavenly sphere". After Michael and his angels run them out they no longer have access to the heavens but are confined to the earth. The salvation spoken of in this verse does not refer to the salvation of the soul or of the physical body but rather of the earth and heavens in general. This is explained in Romans 8:19-23. In this passage it must be understood that the word "creature" means "creation". The Lord is going to reclaim all of His creation, snatching it from the dominion of Satan. In doing this the strength and power of God and His Christ are manifested as the kingdom of God on earth is established. ***"for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."*** - The Devil now has access to the presence of God in heaven as we see from Job 1:6-12, 2:1-7 and also Zechariah 3:1,2. Satan's purpose in appearing before God is to accuse the children of God to try to get judgment against them. In all the annals of human history he has not succeeded one time. After this battle with Michael he will never again be allowed to enter the heavens.

Verse 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." - Some expositors believe the overcomers here mentioned refer to

Michael and his angels. I think rather, the accused brethren are meant. While it may be inferred that Michael overcame by the blood of the Lamb and his testimony it cannot be said or inferred that he or any of his angels died. This seems to be the case with these overcomers. To overcome Satan doesn't mean one escapes physical death. These whom Satan accused did die because they refused to deny Christ. They are martyrs, they preferred to die rather than give up what they believed. Even though a child of God dies he is not overcome by death because he will one day arise from the dead and prove he is not only victorious over death but also over the devil and hell. The blood of the Lamb of God makes this all possible. Everywhere sin has left a stain, the blood of Christ will cleanse it. Without His blood all is lost, all is hopeless, so all we can say is "thank God for the blood"!!

Verse 12 - "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants 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." - While heaven rejoices there is cause for sorrow upon the earth. Since the devil is not allowed to contend in the heavens anymore he will direct all his fury toward the inhabitants of the earth. He knows his time of rebelling against God and persecuting His people is fast coming to a close so he is going to do all the damage he can while he can.

Verse 13 - "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." - The nation of Israel has always been a favorite target of Satan. He wanted to keep her from bringing forth the Christ but was unable to do so. He never gives up though, he is so full of hate and malice, if he can't do a thing one way he will take his spite out another way. He figures Israel is to blame for his failure, for had the Christ never been born, then the kingdoms of the world would for ever be his and so he wants to get even.

Verse 14 - "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place," - As the devil begins his great persecution against the nation of Israel, God gives her a means to escape. When Israel was in Egypt the Lord delivered her out and spoke of the deliverance as "bearing her on eagles wings". The same figure is used here denoting the deliverance as being from heaven. ***"where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."*** - So once again the Lord takes a hand in delivering His chosen nation. He has a chosen place for her where He can supply her needs and the devil can't touch her. The length of this seclusion is three and one half years. A "time" equals one year, "times" two years and "half a time" one half year or three and one half years total.

Verse 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." -

When Satan sees that Israel is going to escape him again he immediately puts another plan into action. The flood sent out is probably propaganda. In the scriptures the words of the Lord are spoken of as the water of life. The words of the devil, of course, are destructive. This flood proceeding from his mouth is no doubt lies, schemes, blackmail, and every other wicked thing imaginable trying to turn the rest of the world against Israel so she will have no hiding place.

Verse 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." -

The Lord turns the hearts of the inhabitants of the earth toward Israel. The flood of propaganda from Satan is taken in with no evil effects toward Israel. The world does not receive his lies and so his attack is made void. Some expositors believe the earth actually opens up and swallows those who try to persecute Israel as it opened and swallowed the sons of Korah and others in Old Testament times. It is not necessary nor reasonable to take this literally since God said it is a sign.

Verse 17 - "And the dragon was wrath 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." -

The devil really becomes enraged now. He has been kicked out of the heavens, he tries to take his spite out on the nation of Israel and they get away from him so he looks for someone else upon which to vent his wrath. As we have seen the main body of the nation of Israel has fled away and is hidden among the nations of the world but there is a remnant that stays behind. This is as in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, the Northern tribes had been carried away to Assyria and most of Judah had been carried to Babylon but a remnant was left in Jerusalem. So Satan turns against this remnant which is probably the 144,000 but these have the testimony of Jesus Christ as every child of God should today. We who are saved today will not be on the earth during the tribulation but our battles with Satan now are nonetheless real. We too have overcome by the blood of the lamb so let us fight like victors.

CHAPTER XIII

Verse 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." -

In chapter 12:7-9 we have the account of Satan being cast out of heaven to the earth. He knows he has but a short time left to fight against God's people on the earth. He unleashes his fury and hostility to do as much damage as he possibly can. In chapter 13 we have a detailed account of how he is going to do this.

Satan is a spirit being and can do little damage on the earth without being embodied. He works through the passions, lusts and personalities of men to get his work done. In order to do this effectively, he embodies himself in man to control him. The result being man against man as Satan performs his will. As John stood on the sandy beach he saw a beast rise up out of the sea. (Many translations read "and he stood...." meaning that the dragon stood on the sand of the sea). In verse 11 John sees another beast which comes up out of the earth. These beasts are not animals literally but are men. The seven heads symbolize wisdom and authority; ten horns represent forced ruling; crowns stand for imperial ruling. The name of blasphemy speaks of opposition and rebellion against God. The beast is one man but he is over the kingdoms of the world. His rule is over a confederated power. Each of the heads and horns stand for kingdoms and kings in this federated kingdom as we see explained in chapter 17:9-12.

Verse 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:" -

The explanation of this beast is to be found in the book of Daniel. In the second chapter of Daniel we have the account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in which he saw a great image with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron and feet of iron and clay. This image represented the kingdoms of the world which were and were to come. The head was Babylon, the breast and arms Media-Persia, the belly and thighs was Greece, the legs were Rome and the feet and toes the kingdoms or powers that would come from the broken Roman Empire. These same kingdoms are represented by the beasts seen in Daniel 7. Babylon or the empire of Nebuchadnezzar was represented by a lion. Media-Persia by a bear, Greece by a leopard and Rome or the fourth kingdom by a horrible and dreadful beast. The beast that John sees here then is an emperor of the revived Roman Empire. As this beast has the composite parts of Daniel's beast so the Roman Empire was made up of the three kingdoms that fell before it. Likewise the revived Roman Empire will be made up of the world powers before it. Remember this great truth, the image in the book of Daniel was destroyed by the stone cut out of the mountain. This stone is Jesus Christ and He shall finally destroy the kingdoms of the world and set up His own kingdom, which shall fill the world and shall have no end. ***"and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."*** - This great world leader is controlled by Satan who gives him his power.

Verse 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." - There is much controversy about this verse and it is hard to be dogmatic in interpreting. Since the heads represent kings and kingdoms, Revelation 17:9,10, we understand one of the kings or kingdoms has been put to death and raised back to life. If this refers only to a kingdom and not the king

the meaning is quite simple. It could be only the Roman Empire, which was in power in John's day but later ceased to exist as an empire. This empire which once was and then ceased to be will be brought to life again. There is no doubt the Roman Empire is meant but the question is, does it also mean the ruler of that empire? If the ruler is represented by the head then he must be someone who has died and has been brought back to life for the purpose of ruling again. It is pretty evident, but not agreed upon by all, that this beast is the antichrist. Now let us consider some of the characteristics of this beast bearing in mind that he is identified several times as the beast whose deadly wound was healed. This seems to indicate the beast himself as a person is represented and not just a kingdom. We will note some of the observations of John Seiss, one of the best expositors of the Revelation. (1) "...we have here a symbolic presentation of the political sovereignty of the world" (2) "...we are here shown the world power in its final consummation....as it will be in the last three and one half years of its existence. Daniel's beasts were successive empires....but the lion, the bear, the leopard and the nameless ten horned monster, each distinct there, are all united in one here." (3) "...this beast is an individual administration embodied in one particular man. Though upheld by ten kings or governments, they unite in making the Beast the one sole Arch Regent of their time" (4) "...this Beast is the supernatural personage. As a political power, he rises out of the convulsed sea of peoples, the same as world powers in general; but as a person his origin is peculiar. He repeatedly is described as "the Beast that cometh up out of the abyss". The abyss cannot mean less than the underworld, the world of lost spirits....otherwise called hell. Ordinary men do not come from thence. One who hails from that place must be either a dead man brought up again from the dead or some evil spirit which takes possession of a living man". "...the implication strongly is that this Beast is a man who once was living, who was fatally wounded, whose place was in the abyss of lost souls who somehow comes forth from thence in convincing evidences of his real identity....to take the lead in the activities and administrations upon the earth; to the great astonishment of the whole world." (5) "...this man of sin will be an exceedingly attractive, fascinating and bewitching personage. He draws upon himself the interest, admiration and homage of the world. He will be the idol of the world; all kings will gladly yield to him their thrones and give their dominion unto him and all the nations will think their millinium has come in splendor and wisdom and miraculous greatness of his teachings and his needs...and so they will be deluded, bewitched, and rallied to the worship of the Beast, and to the acceptance of him as the true and only God". (6) "...this beast is the consummate antagonist and supplanter of everything divine". While Mr. Seiss does not clearly state whom he believes the beast to be, his remarks have steered many into believing he will be Judas Iscariot. Seiss seems to favor the belief that the second beast is Judas Iscariot. Here are some of the reasons why some believe the Beast to be Judas Iscariot. (1) These two only are called "*the son of perdition*" John 17:12, II Thessalonians 2:3. (2) Judas is the only man Jesus ever called "*devil*". John 6:70. (3) Judas is

the only man of whom it is said Satan entered into him - Luke 22:3. (4) Only of Judas is it said *"he went to his own place"* meaning hell - Acts 1:25. Hell is *"prepared for the devil and his angels."* Matthew 25:41. This is by no means conclusive proof that Judas is the antichrist or this beast. As Seiss states this beast could very well be a man living at that time possessed by an evil spirit from the abyss. It seems unlikely that the antichrist will be an evil man who has been resurrected from Hell. The devil has many times before possessed the bodies of men to do his evil work. He can easily do the same during the tribulation. There is no need to believe in the resurrection of Judas Iscariot or anyone else.

Verse 4 - "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" - In the last few years we have seen a growth of devil worship until today there are thousands in the United States who openly worship him and who consort with demons in one way or another. In the days of the tribulation Satan worship will be world wide. The beast or antichrist will also be worshipped and held as the greatest man the world has ever seen. This man will possess all the finest qualities of leadership, the intelligence and wisdom, persuasiveness and influence of all the leaders that have gone before him. The peoples of the world will be so enthralled with this person that they think no power could possibly be as great as he and that no intelligence could begin to approach unto his. They are perfectly willing to let their temporal welfare rest in his hands as well as their immortal souls. Little do they know the great power of God and His Christ is about to crush the serpent's head.

Verse 5 - "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." - The devil gives to this world leader boldness to speak great things. He boasts of his plans and proposed accomplishments setting forth what he has done and what he will do. He ridicules the worship of the true God through Jesus Christ and speaks all manner of blasphemy against Him. God allows him to continue for forty-two months before He cuts him off.

Verse 6 - "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." - The pride and arrogance of this man has no limits. He thinks because God is letting him have his way that He is powerless to stop him. God, His worship and the saints that have gone on to heaven are all mocked and made fun of. No doubt he gloats over the disappearance of all the great churches, pastors, missionaries, etc. thinking they are obliterated and their existence as though it had never been. He doesn't realize they are sitting in the

heavens waiting the day to return with Christ to trample him and his followers into the earth.

Verse 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." - This man is given unlimited power on the earth.

Satan, the god of this world, invests all his power in him. The object of his terror and wrath is the people of God. He and his followers are permitted to overcome them in the flesh; they are persecuted, tormented and killed but praise the Lord after they kill the body there is no more they can do. He that is able to cast both body and soul into hell is also able to take His own to heaven.

Verse 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." - All the people of the world except those of God's elect turn to the beast to worship him. This indeed is a terrible thing. The God of creation, the one who gave His only begotten Son is cast out of the minds of the people of His creation and the Devil, the arch enemy of God and man is worshipped in His stead. The time of God's writing names in the book of life has for ages been a matter of controversy. The Armenian-minded do not want to acknowledge the doctrine of foreknowledge, election, predestination, etc. They would rather follow the reasoning of men. The undeniable truth is that God did foreknow; He did elect and predestinate unto salvation just like He said in Romans 8:29,30. God tells us Himself when He wrote the names in the book of life. It was not or is not when a person believes. God did not at the beginning hold a book of blank pages waiting to see whose names should be written in it; neither does He hold a book now with half the names in it. He has a complete book. He knew from the beginning whose names would be in it so why wouldn't He write them in the beginning? God didn't look down and see who would believe and then elect them on that basis. If that were true He never would have elected the first man because when He looked down He saw that all were sinners, that all had gone astray, that none seek after God. He saw a helpless hopeless mass of totally depraved humanity. He knew that unless He took the initiative none would be saved, all were condemned and followed the devil. So He took the initiative and chose some to salvation and obligated Himself to see that they got to heaven. He did all this, book work and all, before He ever created anything. He knew whom He was going to save before He ever made them. Anyone who believes in total depravity must believe in unconditional election or else admit they themselves are without power to reason. John R. Rice had in his paper the "Sword of the Lord" an article stating that Jack Hyles, Jerry Falwell and Lee Roberson agreed with him in denying the doctrine of unconditional election, limited atonement and irresistible grace. Well all that proves is that they are ignorant on this subject. God said He wrote the names in the book of life before the foundation of the world. Revelation 17:8. Since He is

the one who did the writing I think He ought to know when He did it. God has always known exactly whom He was going to save and the devil and all his angels can't keep Him from doing it; not even in the Tribulation Period.

Verse 9 - "If any man have an ear, let him hear." - God knew when He told John to write these things that many would not listen. Only those whose ears the Lord Jesus opens can receive the things of the Spirit. Every saved man should read and study this book, we all need to know these things; they are very profitable to us. Every lost man should consider and accept Christ as his Savior now lest he put it off too long. The only way any man can know if he is one of the elect is if he puts his faith in Christ.

Verse 10 - "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." - Many Bible expositors take this to mean that if the people of God try to overcome or capture the beast they will be killed by the sword. Others take it to mean the beast who captures God's people and kills them with the sword will himself be finally captured and put to death. **"Here is the patience and faith of the saints."** I think the meaning of the whole verse is this. Though God's people will be terribly tortured and tormented yet they endure with patience and faith because they know victory is ultimately theirs. The devil, the antichrist and the false prophet will soon be captured, cast into hell and all their followers will perish likewise. Millions of Saints of old have been patient and faithful unto death because they believed God would take vengeance on their adversaries and that they though they died, would be raised to immortality and everlasting life. Praise the Lord for victory in Jesus!!!

Verse 11 - "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth;" - This second beast like the first is a man possessed of the devil. The first beast came out of the sea which means he comes from the nations of Gentile people. This beast comes up out of the earth or literally "up on the land" meaning the land of Palestine. He will be a Jew and so will be able to convince the Jew that he is the true prophet. Since the Jews are expecting Elijah to come back, it may well be they will be convinced that this false prophet is Elijah. The devil tries to counterfeit the things of God in order to convince that he is god. We can see in the devil, the antichrist and the false prophet, a diabolic trinity. The true God is triune; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Satanic trinity is the devil (the dragon), the antichrist (the beast out of the sea) and the false prophet (the beast out of the land). This devilish trinity is able to turn the minds and hearts of all the people upon the earth, except the elect of God, unto themselves. They completely blind and stupefy the people causing them to believe this indeed is the divine leadership they have been waiting for. **"and he had two horns like a lamb,"** - This beast appears as a lamb. He has horns, which are symbols of power, but they are horns of a domestic animal. It is not his role to conquer by

military force or other brute strength but rather in the spiritual realm. He is a prophet and his job is to turn the worship of man directly unto the first beast. His horns represent both civil and ecclesiastical power. He uses spiritual or supernatural means to turn the hearts of men. Those who do not follow him are turned over to civil authorities to be put to death. **"and he spake as a dragon."** - Even though he has horns like a lamb and in appearance gentle and docile, yet his speech betrays him. His words, ideas and principles belong to the devil. This unholy trinity has one purpose and that is to oppose God in all things.

Verse 12 - "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him," - This man and the world emperor are both empowered by the devil. People today should stop and think of what a tyrant the devil is and realize their need of help from God for only He has the power to overcome Satan. **"and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."** - This prophet is very efficient. It is his job to turn the world to the worship of the devil and the antichrist and he is able to do this.

Verse 13 - "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men," - Being the arch counterfeiter the devil uses everything he can that God has used to convince men. Often in the Old Testament we read of God manifesting Himself by fire. Many times He sets forth the authority and authenticity of His prophets by sending down fire from heaven. One of those times was with Elijah on Mt. Carmel when He answered by fire that consumed the sodden sacrifice Elijah placed upon the altar as well as the altar itself and the wood under the altar and the water that surrounded it. By this the people were convinced that Jehovah was God and Elijah was His prophet. Thus the devil knows how convincing fire from heaven can be and so uses it with great success. Again remember this man rises from the land of Israel and the miracle of fire from heaven is all the more convincing because the Jews expect Elijah to return before the reign of their Messiah. The false prophet is no doubt trying to convince them this is who he is. If anyone should wonder why God allows this, well just remember He has turned things over to the devil. Mankind has shown for centuries they wanted the devil instead of God. Whom does the world love today, whom does the world serve? Is the world seeking after God now? When God withdraws His restraining hand and turns the devil loose the world will soon learn they made a grave mistake.

Verse 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;" - It is the nature of man to put much confidence in miracle working and supernatural phenomena. Jesus took advantage of that in His personal ministry. Jesus used miracles to call attention to truth, the great truths of God's word. The miracle is not the important thing, it is the message of the miracle that is

important. Millions have been duped by supernatural happenings that portray no truth and often sets forth lies. For example, the "tongues" movement today. What spiritual truth is set forth by that? It is a perversion of the word of God and men are beguiled rather than enlightened by it. Let any heretic and demon possessed man come up with something that even looks like a miracle and immediately he has a following. We need to test miracles by the scripture to see if they are according to His word before we accept them. The devil has power to perform miracles right now and he does it to attract those who are ignorant of the word of God. ***"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."*** - This may seem at first to be a little "far fetched" supposing it would be possible to get everyone to worship an image of a man who claims to be God. The Bible as well as secular history tells us that image worship has always been a part of man's life. Even the children of Israel worshipped idols in spite of the fact God plainly commanded them not to. In fact they were so bent on it that they did so in spite of sickness, death, starvation, oppression from the enemy, plagues and etc. Most of us now can remember Japan's "Hirohito" who was worshipped as God (who no doubt is now in hell). We remember Adolph Hitler who was practically worshipped by the Germans. Men have always worshipped idols and men who were hailed as heros and gods. Let's look at one classic example today. In Rome, Italy in the Vatican sets a man who is worshipped by millions the world over. This man is not regarded by the world as a heathen or pagan; he is supposed to be a Christian. There are great festivals and solemn processions held in honor of this man. He is borne upon the shoulders of consecrated priests. Men fall down before him and adore him. He is acclaimed to be infallible and is supposed to be the holder and sole possessor of the keys of heaven and hell. He is hailed as the "Vicar of Christ" the "Vice Regent of God". He receives the worship of men as God and the sublimest act of his subjects is to kiss his "holy toe". This is not centuries in the past or in generations of the uncertain future, this is today 1977 (yet true in 1989). This is the Pope of Rome whom Catholics and many others regard and worship as God. This is not the testimony of an enemy, this is according to their own dogmas. They, themselves, declare he is the "Vicar of Christ" and the "Vice Regent of God". He has never shown any miracles like this second beast will perform. He has never called down fire from heaven. He has never done anything to cause people to believe he stands in the place of God. He is not even in the line of apostolic succession as his church claims. Yet untold millions believe he is the "Vicar of Christ". Considering this it should be no problem for anyone to believe the second beast, the false prophet will be able to turn the world to the worship of the first beast, the antichrist.

Verse 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." - The

beast out of the land who is the "false prophet" is sent forth by Satan himself to deceive the world in religious or spiritual matters. Satan gives him great supernatural powers even to the calling down of fire from heaven which in times past was a miracle that distinguished the true God from the false ones. This man leads the people to believe the proper thing to do is make an image of the first beast who is the world emperor. Now a thing is done which has never been done before, the image comes to life. All gods and images before made by the hands of man were lifeless pieces of wood, stone or metal and so they remained. This image comes to life. The second beast has the power to give life to this cold piece of metal. This is not a trick or fakery, this actually happens according to the infallible word of God. Not only does this image come to life, it actually speaks. This is not done by rigged microphones or sound devices; this image is alive and speaks. These indeed are great and wonderous miracles. Surely the type of folks today who are taken in by the foolishness of speaking in tongues and the various forms of healing that follow the modern charismatic movement would be completely flabbergasted and overcome by such an overwhelming display as this. The false prophet, with his connection to the political system, is able to put to death or have put to death all who will not worship the image of the beast. The wonders performed by the second beast are so convincing that there are few if any besides the elect who are not deceived by them. All the scientists of every sort who rejected Christ because they could not explain His existence and works, all the critics of the Bible, all atheists and agnostics, all those who ridiculed the people of God will be taken in by this man of sin because he is able to do great miracles. They would not bow before the God of Heaven and earth and accept Jesus Christ but they willingly are led to slaughter by this great deceiver. How blind the unregenerate heart!! While the true God forbids people to worship Him through idols or images, this world ruler does not seem to mind but rather encourages it. There will be little problem in killing those who refuse to worship the image because they will be so overwhelmingly outnumbered.

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

This great world empire will be very closely knit. If we today think the government has a tight hand upon us we haven't seen anything to compare with what is coming!! Then every man regardless of who he is will have to be branded. This will signify that he worships the emperor and is in sympathy with all the political and ecclesiastical principles. There is much conjecture as to how this mark will be made. Some think it will be an invisible mark that can be seen under some type of fluoroscope such as you would receive on your hand at "King's Island" or a similar place. Others think it will be a very conspicuous mark that all can readily see. This perhaps is more nearly correct since those wearing it will not be ashamed of it. This too would leave little doubt in anyone's mind as to who was who. This mark may even be a brand burned on with a hot iron; the

wearers thinking there would be some merit in suffering to this degree for their god. Thus it has always been with the pagan religions including the doctrine of "doing penance" practiced by Roman Catholics.

Verse 17 - "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." - The purpose of this branding was to insure that all the people on the earth should be under the power and authority of the beast, body and soul. No man could buy or sell without this mark which means that soon he would die of starvation and exposure. No matter how much money one may have it will be worthless unless he has the mark of the beast. So one has the choice of either bowing down to the antichrist or dying a horrible death. To refuse the mark would mean certain physical death but to receive it would mean eternal death. What a terrible thing that men today are too proud and haughty to admit they are sinners and without hope. In these days to come they will submit to the rule of a tyrant and sell their eternal souls for a morsel of bread. Like Esau they trade their most valuable possession for a mess of pottage. Who knows when this shall begin? It could be today! Friend, put your trust in Christ now and escape the wrath to come!! There is some question as to whether the "mark", the "name" and the "number" refer to the same thing or if there are three different signs one might wear to show his allegiance to the beast. I think it refers to the same thing but if it doesn't at least everyone will have a mark that clearly sets forth the same thing.

Verse 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." - From this scripture we know the number that will be stamped or branded on the right hand and forehead of the worshipers of the beast will be 666. I must confess I do not have the wisdom or knowledge to say why this number is chosen or used. I do know what several others say about it and that those who make guesses at it are just as confused as I am. I will not take time in a lesson such as this to try to explain how some say they arrive at this number but I will give a brief idea. By taking numerical values of letters calculated by different methods, some came with solutions such as this - By taking A=100, B=101, C=102 and so on, assuming HITLER is the man, you come up with H=107, I=108, T=119, L=111 E=104, R=117, add these together and you get 666. Another way is to figure the beast is a Roman or a Latin since the Romans spoke the Latin language. The Romans conquered the Greeks who continued to speak their own language. The Greek equivalent of "the Latin" (the Latin man) is Lateinos. The numerical value of the Greek letters that corresponds to the English LATEINOS is L=30, A=1, T=300, E=5, I=10, N=50, O=70, S=200 or a total of 666. Yet another way is through history. The Greeks fell as a world power to the Romans in 190 B. C. The Roman Empire crumbled in 476 A. D. Thus the duration of the Roman Empire was 190 + 476 or 666. These all sound good in their own way but they are just a few of the many

ways to come up with 666. With me I'll just have to wait until the Lord shows me something a little more concrete before I preach it. The number is 666, that is all I know about. To all who trust in Christ now the misery of this time need hold no dread or fear. We can say "Even so come Lord Jesus". If you have not trusted Him as your savior will you do so now even before you put down this piece of paper!!

CHAPTER XIV

Verse 1 - "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." - Chapter 14 is parenthetical. It gives an overall view of the tribulation period from beginning to end. This scene is in heaven, which is quite a contrast to chapter 13. What a refreshing thing it is to turn from the greatest wickedness imaginable on the earth to the beauty and splendor of heaven!! Here the Lord Jesus is seen as the Lamb of God standing upon His Holy Hill, Mt. Sion. What a glorious thought this is to see the Lord Jesus in His triumph and glory, all the things of earth are left behind; He is known by all to be the conqueror, all things are put under Him as earth becomes His footstool. But He is not alone! He is seen with the 144,000 which are those who were sealed in the foreheads and called out by God which we read in chapter 7. As John sees them now they have lived their lives and have been put to death in the body. These are the ones specially chosen of God to preach the gospel during the tribulation period. They are put to death at the hands of the antichrist but they are gloriously received in heaven.

Verse 2 - "And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:" - This is the strong and mighty voice of the Savior, the voice described in chapter 1:15. Then the second of many harps, how beautiful this must be. God's children love and appreciate good music now in this life because God prepares their hearts for it. To hear a beautiful choir like we have at Northside and the sweet strains of organ music is a true spiritual delight that thrill the heart of any Christian but this is nothing to be compared with what we will hear in heaven. I'm glad and thankful I'm not a Campbellite who doesn't believe in using musical instruments in church. It's strange how people can be seduced into believing such nonsense. In the Old Testament the people of God sung Psalms which were always accompanied by stringed instruments. The sweet singer of Israel David (II Samuel 23:1) the man after God's own heart wrote the Psalms and specified the instruments to be used while singing them. John sees and hears beautiful singing and harps playing in heaven, now isn't it "passing strange" that God would forbid us to use musical instruments to sing by in this time? Especially since He exhorts us through the Apostle Paul to sing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Ephesians 5:19. Heaven

is a wonderful, marvelous, glorious place and I hardly think God would allow any thing there that would be sinful here.

Verse 3 - "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders:" - Let us note here that even though these 144,000 have a glorious position before the throne of God, they are not the highest order of saints. These were not saved until after the rapture and beginning of the tribulation. The most exalted of God's children are already home with Him. The Bride of Christ has already been chosen from the faithful churches of the Lord. Remember that when Christ makes His initial appearance in the heavens and with a shout summons all the saved from the earth the church age is closed; His Bride which is, so to speak, the elect of the elect of the elect is then taken unto Himself. The Bride of Christ, of course, is the most exalted position of the redeemed in heaven. Every Christian should seek to be in the Bride. This can come only by continual faithful service to God in His church here on earth. The song sung by the 144,000 is only for them. They are a peculiar group, God called them out in a way and for a purpose not experienced by anyone else. Thus this new song is written just for them. Evidently the four living creatures nor the twenty four elders who are the representatives of all the redeemed prior to the tribulation have the privilege of joining in this song. **"and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."** - Some Bible expositors believe this song is sung by all the redeemed as the "new song" mentioned in chapter 5:9. Thus the expression "no man" would signify only those who were not saved. However, since the 144,000 are clearly specified I believe this song excludes all except them, this is their special song.

Verse 4 - "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins." - During the reign of the antichrist all manner of sin and immorality will prevail as is always the case when God is left out. The sin of adultery will be much more widespread then than now, terrible as it is now. These 144,000 are not necessarily men who have never been married but men who have never been guilty of adultery. They have not been "defiled" with women. There is no defiling act in marriage. Hebrews 13:4. The term "virgin" means sexually pure. A man who has known only his wife may have this purity. The 144,000 are men who have kept themselves sexually pure. **"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."** - The 144,000 were faithful unto the Lord while upon the earth. They refused to bow to the antichrist in face of bitter suffering and death. They had their faith and trust in Christ and so went to heaven. They are the first fruits or representatives of all who put their faith in Him they are in heaven as a result of the redeeming blood of the Lamb as will be all who have like faith.

Verse 5 - "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." - These were honest and trustworthy while on earth; they would not join with the wicked rulers nor have part in their ungodly schemes. In heaven, of course, all are perfect. It will indeed be a wonderful experience to leave this world of sin with all its temptations and trials to be made perfect before God having no desire for anything unholy. Now we have a battle with the flesh but then the battle will be over.

Verse 6 - "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," - The mercy of God is indeed great, even in the midst of all the wickedness of the earth the warning is still given and space to repent, soon, however, the day of grace will be passed and there will be no hope for any who reject the Lord. The gospel is ever the same. God has only one way to save souls and that is through faith in Christ. In the Old Testament days they looked forward to the cross, now that Jesus has died we look back to the cross but whether before or after, it is the same Christ we look to and trust. So it will be in the tribulation.

Verse 7 - "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come:" - During the tribulation all except the elect are turned to the antichrist, they worship him out of convenience and fear, but the message from God is still true, He is the one to be feared and worshipped. Hundreds of times in the Bible the warning of judgment is given. No one can truthfully say they didn't understand judgment was coming. It is indeed sad that so many are blinded to this terrible reality. **"and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."** - Our God who is the creator is the only one worthy of worship. The one who made the earth and sea also made heaven and hell. Man may refuse to worship Him now as will many during the tribulation but all who act so foolishly will have eternity to regret it. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, He is the door, He bids you enter now. Why risk another day. Why not trust Him right now.

Verse 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." - As we noted chapter 14 is parenthetical giving an overall picture of the tribulation. The things mentioned here are brought out in greater detail in other places as we shall point out as they come up. A second angel is seen flying in the midst of heaven. The first angel proclaimed the everlasting gospel that God who made heaven and earth is the one who is to be worshipped and feared and He is the one who will bring all things into judgment. The world has not done this, from the beginning man has turned away from God to worship false gods and idols. During the Tribulation Period all the world will turn to worship the antichrist as the devil makes a great

stand against God trying to defeat His purposes. The second angel brings the announcement that Babylon is fallen and the reason for her falling. This is described in detail in chapters 17 and 18. We will make a full discussion on that then. Babylon is all the false religions of the world come together under one head lead by the beast out of the land who is the false prophet. Roman Catholicism will be the main body of this group. She is the mother of all the apostate Christian religions today. The reason for the destruction of this ecclesiastical Babylon is her great atrocities committed in trying to force herself upon all mankind. She is getting repaid for all the threats, trials, troubles, suffering, and death she brought upon those who refused her and for all the wicked subtle evil conniving to turn the world against God unto herself. Political Babylon will also be destroyed as we shall see in the study of chapters 17 and 18.

Verses 9, 10 - "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, (10) The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." - The third angel flying in the midst of heaven brings a message of warning to those who worship the antichrist and receive his mark. The false prophet will succeed in getting all the world except the elect of God to worship the beast, the world emperor. They are led by the false prophet to enjoy spiritual fornication with the false religions and to drink of the wine that brings the wrath of God. So all those who thought they had it made following the deceit of the antichrist find themselves under the wrath of an omnipotent God who is able to destroy both soul and body in the fires of hell. **"which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation;"** - When God pours out His wrath it will be so terrible no one has even imagined its intensity. It is poured out "without mixture," that is, it will not be watered down. It was a custom among the Jews to mix water with wine to weaken it. The wine of God's wrath will not be mixed with water to weaken it. Those who think God will repent and finally give in because He is a God of love will find they are sorely mistaken. **"and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:"** - Every day it becomes less popular to preach "hell fire and brimstone" but be sure of one thing it is still true. The blind and stupid S.D.A.'s, J.W.'s and L.D.S.'s that try to do away with hell will find out too late they made a sorry mistake. They will have for ever to wish they had taken God's word and believed it. They will be in hell not because they didn't believe in hell but because they didn't believe the gospel of Christ. They make God a liar by denying the doctrine of hell and so God doesn't enlighten them to the gospel of Christ. It's the wise thing to just believe what God says whether we like it or not. Those who are cast into hell and tormented are in the very presence of holy angels who don't try to help them. They are in agreement with God. Christ rejectors deserve to go to hell. Oh yes! Even Christ the Lamb of God is present when they are cast into hell and tormented. He

doesn't do anything about it either. He is the one they rejected; the one they sold out for the antichrist. They didn't want Him then and He doesn't want them now. What a sad, sad thing. Jesus gave His life, shed His precious blood to save sinners and they wouldn't believe Him. Now they spend eternity in hell while the Lamb of God looks at them. What a terrible experience, what a horrible memory!! The one who would have saved them had they accepted Him now stands by and they know He can't help them; He doesn't want to help them. These agonize in horrible remorse "oh why didn't I trust Him!!" Friend do you trust Him? If not, why not? What excuse do you have? You had better listen now; the word of God is not a fairy tale.

Verse 11 - "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever:" - This is a description of hell. People in hell are in torment. Hell is for ever. A J.W. in trying to explain away hell said to me "it's just the smoke that ascends up the torment is gone". Well one thing is sure only God could teach the truth to anyone who would make such remarks. Just as sure as Heaven is eternal, Hell is eternal; the same words "eternal, everlasting, for ever, etc." are used to explain both. **"and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."** - It's a hard thing to be caught up in a job where an emergency arises and after a hard days work you have to go on and work all night; you begin to ache and your eyes burn, you seem to hurt all over. Just imagine what it would be like if you had to keep on and on for ever with no rest. Or suppose you are very sick and you can't rest day or night. You are worn out yet the pain won't let you sleep. Suppose that would continue all your life. Soon you wouldn't want to live. Well Hell is much worse than that. Hell is a fire and fire burns. How long could you hold your hand on a red hot stove? How long would you want to live if you were thrown into a fiery furnace? In Hell there is torment in flames. There is no rest, no relief day nor night. This is for ever and as the song goes which one of our ladies sings "for ever is a long, long time". How foolish to risk a day without Christ!! Think of the terrible danger, the awful risk and nothing to gain. All those who are saved should loudly praise His name. Those who won't should flee to Him right now.

Verse 12 - "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." - Christian friend have you endured too much of Jesus? Has the way become too hard? Are His commandments too grievous? Is it worth all the trouble? Take a look into hell, see what goes on there, consider what you have escaped! Consider that Jesus suffered that hell for you, what you would have suffered in hell for ever Jesus suffered for you on the cross. Surely these thoughts will give you patience, surely that will cause you to desire to do His will, surely that will make you continue faithfully for Him.

Verse 13 - "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:" - The believers of the Tribulation Period will suffer such terrible torture and agony that it will be a blessing for them to die. Of course it is far better to be with the Lord than to be upon the earth anytime but especially so when life becomes so difficult and there is no ray of hope left as will be the case in the awful days of tribulation. Just thank God if you're saved and know you'll escape this terrible time. **"Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."** - Those who die in the Lord will be rewarded for their works done for the Lord. What a Savior who saves from Hell and then rewards for good works!! Those without Him burn in Hell for ever without rest. Those who have Him rest from their labors and enjoy the rewards they receive for ever and for ever. Alleluias, what a Savior!!

Verse 14 - "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle." - The one sitting on the white cloud is none other than the Lord Jesus. He is coming to direct one final and fierce battle against the followers of the antichrist. This is shortly before the end of the Tribulation Period. The white cloud speaks of judgment. The golden crown sets forth His kingship. The sickle is the instrument of death. The Son of God who on His first advent came to seek and to save now comes to kill and destroy the enemies of God. The sickle is sharp and well fitted for the slaughter. When God unleashes His wrath none will be able to stand.

Verse 15 - "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." - This angel comes out of the temple in Jerusalem. The message is that the iniquity of the earth is full; it is time to put an end to the ungodliness here. When God decides to bring judgment and destruction, there is no one to stay His hand. The wicked shall be cut down like wheat under a sharp sickle. What a sad commentary for the world; after thousands of years of human history mankind grows progressively worse until God has to wipe them out.

Verse 16 - "And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." - God has always been in control of things. He lets the devil have his way only to the extent he works out God's will. All the followers of the antichrist had said *"Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"* Now they find out who is able! When God gets ready to reap the earth, the earth will be reaped. The seven last plagues as the vials of God's wrath are poured out tells us how God intends to reap. Men will gnaw their tongues in agony as they are tortured but yet they do not repent. God gives space now for repentance, that day will pass however, so the wise

thing to do is trust in Jesus right now and receive assurance of escape from that awful time.

Verse 17 - "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle." - This angel coming from the temple in heaven is thought by many to be the same as the one sitting on the cloud, that is the Lord Jesus. This is probably correct.

Verse 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." - These commands to the one with the sharp sickle are from God the Father through the angels. The angels are not exercising authority over the Son. This vintage refers to the Jews while the harvest of grain has reference to the Gentile as is believed by many Bible expositors. The Jews are often referred to as the vine. Some hold that the harvest and vintage are the same and that "*the vine of the earth*" stands opposed to "*the vine of heaven*" the first being the antichrist and his followers and the latter refers to Christ and His followers. It is hard to determine which is correct but this we know that the Gentiles and the Jews who follow the antichrist are going to be the objects of this reaping.

Verse - 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." - That this angel out of the temple in heaven is the Lord Jesus appears to be so from the last part of chapter 19 which gives the details of this vintage. Then in Isaiah 63:1-6 we see again the Lord Jesus as the one who puts in the sickle and treads out the grapes. This is a terrible thing to think about. Jesus shed His blood for sinners but now He will tread out their blood like a man tramples grapes. People think they are free and independent of God. They think they can shove Him around and do what they please but the day is coming when they will learn differently. God can squash a man as a man can mash a grape.

Verse 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 of course is a preview of the battle of Armageddon. What a horrible sight to imagine!! Men are killed by the hundreds of thousands, their blood crushed out like the juice from a grape in a winepress. Blood, human blood, will flow in a stream two or more feet deep and 160 miles long. All the armies of the earth will set themselves against God but they will be wiped out. Psalm 2:2-6. Isaiah 34 gives a description of this time. This is no exaggeration. The world has never seen anything so terrible. It is

much better to be washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus than to have His garments stained with yours.

CHAPTER XV

Verse 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." - The last seven plagues are pictured as coming from vials or bowls that are poured out upon the earth. We will study these in chapter 16.

Verse 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." - Here the saints of the Tribulation Period are pictured in their glory. They would not yield to the antichrist and so were put to death but being put to death they became the real victors.

Verse 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." - I am glad there is going to be lots of singing in heaven because I surely enjoy it here. This song is sung by those saints saved out of the Tribulation Period. The theme of their song is the same as the one Moses and Miriam sang in Deuteronomy 32. The redeemed of the Lord have something to sing about. The songs that they sing are songs that glorify Christ. There won't be anyone in heaven singing anything to call attention to themselves. All glory and praise go to the Lamb of God who is worthy. Moses knew it was God who delivered them out of Egypt. He didn't praise himself. He knew it was God who parted the Red Sea and destroyed the armies of Pharoah and so those who are delivered from sin and the power of the devil know it was God who delivered them. Saved people don't praise themselves for their relationship with God; they give Him all the praise and glory.

Verse 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." - Since the beginning of man's existence as a fallen creature he has turned from the Lord and worshipped the creature rather than the creator but the time is coming when all the heavens and earth shall fear the Lord and serve Him. When God gets finished with the Tribulation Period the world is going to know it has been judged and who judged it. It will be too late to turn to Christ but all will still recognize Him as King. Is Christ your Savior? If He came today would you go to be with Him? Will you rule and reign with Him? If you say "yes" to the first question you can say "yes" to the last two!!

Verse 5 - "And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:" - After seeing the seven angels with the seven vials of the wrath of God and after seeing the saved of the Tribulation Period standing in safety upon the sea of glass with their harps, singing praise to the Lord, John sees the innermost part of the tabernacle opened. The holy of holies of the tabernacle which is seen opened here is the resting place of the ark of the covenant where the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled. When Christ was crucified the veil that led to the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom signifying that the way into the presence of God was now opened through the body of the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 10:20). It is this place where Jesus sprinkled His blood in making atonement for the sins of his people (Hebrews 9:12) that John sees opened.

Verse 6 - "And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues," - What a contrast this is!! What irony!! That from the place where the eternal, infinite mercy of God freely flowed now comes the fullness of His wrath. In these plagues the consummation of God's hatred of sin is stored. Through these plagues He will unleash the height of His fury against the sin cursed earth and its inhabitants. Do we speak too much of coming judgment? Beloved God wants us to be aware of it!! His word is filled with warnings of impending judgment. Why will men not listen!! **"clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles."** - These angels are from God as their golden girdles indicate and they are pure and holy as their clothing signifies. The devastating judgments of God are as much a part of His holiness and justice as any act of mercy He performs.

Verse 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." - These beasts or living creatures are the same we first read about in Revelation 4:6-9. These are especially created for the work and worship of God. They hand out the vials or bowls of the wrath of God to the angels who will pour them out upon the earth to bring the greatest destruction, torment and suffering the world has ever seen.

Verse 8 - "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power;" - Smoke is another symbol of judgment. When the tabernacle was given there was no smoke in it but the glory of God filled it and likewise when the temple was completed. (I Kings 8:10,11) - When God gave Moses the law on Mt. Sinai the whole mountain was in smoke because the law spelled judgment to all who broke it. When Isaiah saw the temple it was filled with smoke because God sent him with a message of judgment to the house of Israel. So now as God begins this judgment on the earth the temple is filled with smoke. **"and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."** - The way of repentance and

faith up to this time has been opened but now that door will be closed. Even under the most horrible suffering man will not repent nor give God the glory. Salvation is all of the Lord. If He does not grant repentance then man will not repent no matter what the outward circumstances. Those who are wise will turn to God now while the door of mercy is open.

CHAPTER XVI

Verse 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."* - The command is given to begin the judgments on the earth. God is long suffering and merciful but He will only put up with man's sin so long and then He pours out His wrath as He did in the days of Noah.

Verse 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 plague will be terrible annoying sores that cannot be cured. When the fifth vial is poured out men are still suffering from these sores. God allowed the devil to afflict poor old Job with sores and boils from the top of his head to the soles of his feet (Job 2:7), and Job stood faithful to the Lord. Now the Lord sends sores and boils upon the worshippers of the beast and they remain followers of him. Job had the confidence that even if he was slain God would one day raise him up. These who are tormented with sores have only greater torment to look forward to when their bodies are destroyed.

Verse 3 - *"And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea."* - The second plague is a horrible sight. Earlier in the Tribulation a third part of the seas were turned to blood, but now the sea becomes as the blood of a dead man, that is clotted and putrefying. Imagine an ocean of clotted blood!! Of course nothing could live in such a horrible mess.

Verse 4 - *"And the third angel poured his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood."* - So all the waters of the earth became unfit to drink or to use in any way. Water is a great blessing to the earth, a necessity that can not be done without for long.

Verse 5, 6 - *"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. (6) For they have shed the blood of the saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."* - One thing that will never be heard in heaven is that God is unjust. In our time we hear folks accuse God for this or that saying He is unfair because of

some judgment or chastening. In heaven everyone understands how things are and they understand that it is right for God to bring havoc upon the earth. They know it is right for God to cast Christ rejecters into hell. In Heaven or Hell everyone has to acknowledge that the judgments of the Lord are just and good. During the reign of the antichrist people wouldn't listen to the message of God. They killed the two witnesses and left them lying in the street. They killed all those who wouldn't take the mark of the beast, now it is only right they suffer for their sin. They are worthy or they deserve everything they get.

Verse 7 - "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." - God wants it made clear that all Heaven is in agreement with His judgments. Through all of human history God has extended His hand of mercy. The message has been proclaimed since the Garden of Eden but man would not listen. When he is caught in his own trap he has no reason to complain against God. God wants us to know that what He does is right and that when we get to Heaven we will be in full agreement with Him on every thing.

Verse 8 - "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire." - The fourth plague affects the sun in such a way that its heat is greatly intensified upon the earth. There is no scientific explanation for this but that doesn't mean it won't happen. The sun becomes so hot that men are scorched. God controls the whole universe. He can give us nice warm days or cool days. He can send frigid cold like He did this winter or He can make the sun scorching hot. We should praise God for the good things He gives us; He could just as easily destroy us.

Verse 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." - Man is so foolish and stubborn! Here they will be scorched with the heat of sun, common sense should tell them this is not the power of man but of God. Yet they will not repent and admit that God is the one to whom all glory is due. Outward circumstances no matter how severe will not change the hearts of man. Only the gospel of Christ in the hands of the Holy Spirit can do that. To be burned like this would indeed be terrible but this is nothing compared to Hell. No one in Hell ever repents, the only guilt and remorse they feel is that they got caught. Only God grants repentance and faith and that is for us now. Tomorrow we have no promise.

Verse 10 - "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain," - The beast, the ruler of the federation of nations is the one whom the people worship and hold as being God. This plague is directed

specifically at him. His followers will see that he is not able to do anything about it, but do they turn to God? Let's read further.

Verse 11 - "And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." - The pain and torture becomes so great that they grit their teeth and bite and chew on their tongues. They are in darkness and not able to see and wait upon or comfort one another. In all their agony they refuse to admit they have sinned; they will not turn from their evil ways to God. This should be a warning to all who have not trusted in Christ. It would be bad enough to go through all the torment on the earth but that's just a starter, none of these people will repent so they all finally go to the fires of Hell for ever.

Verse 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 plague is in preparation for the great battle of Armageddon in that the Euphrates River which divides the east from the west is dried up leaving the way unobstructed for the armies of the east to join with the armies of the west to fight against the Lord and His host of Saints. The region of Armageddon has been the scene of many a great battle in Bible times but never anything to equal this great battle, the final battle on the earth. The armies of the world will think the drying up of the Euphrates as a great benefit to them but they will find out God only did it to get them gathered together for His great slaughter upon them. God promises in Romans 8:28 *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* But the wicked will find that everything in the world, whether seemingly good or bad has worked against them from beginning to end.

Verse 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. (14) For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." - The devil gives the antichrist and the false prophet power to work miracles. The news of these miracles is published throughout the world to convince them that the beast is really God and that they should come and join with him in the battle against the Lord Jesus. The working of miracles is a mighty tool in the hands of the devil. He uses them now and always has to turn people away from the truth unto himself. God's people today should be very careful in having anything to do with any miracle-working crowd. God still performs miracles but He does not do it in a way to exalt or enrich men. These men who fall into the hands of Satan will surely be surprised when they find out why God allowed them to be gathered against Him.

Verse 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." -

This is the voice of the Lord Jesus, evidently a general warning to all to be alert. The allusion is to a person laying aside his clothing to sleep and then being overtaken by surprise not having time to put on his clothes and so caught naked. Christians should always be alert, ready to work, fight or serve at a moment's notice. We should never be asleep on the job.

Verse 16 - "And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." -

There is some argument as to who does the gathering and who is gathered. Certainly those gathered are the armies of the world and the devil is the one who gathers them. God is over all and allows this to happen because it is according to His plan and purpose. They are gathered as it were into God's great wine press to have their blood trampled out.

Verse 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 plague is loosed from heaven into the air. This also is Satan's domain, *"the prince and power of the air"*. God shows He is the final authority and power over all. Satan is an usurper, God allows him but God is still behind the scenes at all times. Nothing is ever out of hand with God. The voice from the temple in Heaven declares *"It is done"*. That is the final plague and is sent as the seventh vial is emptied.

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

We have read of some terrible earthquakes in the world, while cities being virtually destroyed, thousands being maimed or killed. But the world has never seen anything like the earthquake that strikes then.

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

Babylon will be the headquarters for the antichrist, a great and powerful city but God remembers all the evil and wickedness that has come from both political and ecclesiastical Babylon. He shakes that wicked city to rubble as well as the other cities of the nations. The world has never seen anything like this!!

Verse 20 - "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." - Imagine that! God even shakes down the mountains and sinks the islands beneath the sea.

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

Men are forced out of the cities into the open fields because of the quake and then great hailstones of over a hundred pounds fall upon them crushing out their life. Man had better trust Christ now. Now is the time for the wise to turn to God.

CHAPTER XVII

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

- John is now shown the judgment of God upon the world religious system. This system is spoken of as being "*the great whore*" because the term signifies unfaithfulness. So all the religions of the world have been unfaithful to God; they have disgraced Him in presuming to worship Him. The great whore is spoken of as sitting on many waters which means the kingdoms of the world. False religious systems have always had a part in the government of the world and will continue so until the end of the Tribulation Period.

Verse 2 - "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

- Christianity has always been separated from the state or government. True religion is not to be dictated or legislated; it is a matter of the heart, no government system has the right to impose any kind of religion upon its subjects. Neither does any religious system have the right to gain control of the government. False religion acts as an intoxicant taking away reason and wisdom. Many governments have been taken over by the influence of false religions because of the great benefits they think they can obtain. Man is naturally religious and the devil knows how powerful a religious system can be in the right place. So rulers think "what can be better for me than to have favor with the religious system" and the religious leaders think "what can be better for me than to have favor with the government?"

Verse 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."

- The woman seen here is the great whore thought by many to be the Roman Catholic Church. This is true but she is more than the Roman Catholic Church, she is the representation of all false religions such as Buddhists, Moslems, Protestantism, and all the cults of the world. Roman Catholicism will undoubtedly be the prominent factor in the system but not the only one. The scarlet beast is the same as the beast out of the sea in chapter 13. This being the confederation of nations headed by the antichrist. The woman is seen sitting upon the beast, which means the false church is supported

by the government. The false prophet has aligned all the false religions of the world to worship the antichrist. They work together. The government supports the false church in return for its allegiance to it. From the very beginning it has been the desire of the Catholic Church to be the state church. It has always been her goal to bring the whole world under her religious control. Everywhere you find Catholicism you find her trying to get control of the government. Wherever she can she uses the government to force out true Christianity. Catholics in government control have made rivers of blood from slain Baptists. So in the Tribulation Period the Catholic Church will get her wish, she will become the state church, she will ride high upon the beast.

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

Here her extreme wealth is shown. There is no single organization upon the earth that possesses the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church. The worth of corporations such as General Motors, Ford Motor Company, General Electric, etc. does not even approach the vast wealth of the Catholic Church. The golden cup in her hand filled with abominations and filthiness symbolizes the wicked, evil and ungodly ways she got her wealth. There is nothing more abominable and atrocious than to take money from people making them think they are buying safety for their souls when all the time they are being led blindfolded into Hell.

Verse 5 - "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." - As stated before all the religious systems are represented in the Great Whore from the time of Cain until the Tribulation but Roman

Catholicism is the leader for she is the only great apostate body of Christianity. False religions have permeated the earth especially since the time of Nimrod and his tower of Babel but most of these do not even pretend to worship the God of the Bible. This Great Whore is an apostate, one who leads nations of people to believe she is the true church. There is no other organization under the sun except the Roman Catholic Church that can match this description. She is the mother of harlots. Where did all the false churches come from? Where did the Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopalians, Pentecostals, etc. come from? They came either directly or indirectly from the Catholic Church. What was the outcome of the "reformation period"? The Great Whore mothered a host of offspring. What is the "ecumenical movement" today? It is an attempt of the devil to get the estranged daughters of the Great Whore back home again. The Great Whore is the mother of abominations. Who started the idea of baptismal regeneration and infant baptism? Who began the worship of Mary? Who spawned the idea of indulgences? Whose idea is purgatory? Who started saint and image worship? Who thought up such a thing as transubstantiation? Whose idea was it to confess sins through a hole in a booth into a priest's ear? Who is it

that bleeds money from their people to get their loved ones out of a nonexistent purgatory? These are all abominations in the sight of God. Where did they start? With the Roman Catholic!!

Verse 6 - "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:" - No power in the world has so freely shed the blood of God's people as has the Catholic Church. History tells us that over fifty million Baptists were killed in all manner of horrible ways by the Catholics in eleven and a half centuries from 450 A.D. until 1600 A.D. In some countries today Catholics will kill Protestants and Baptists for preaching the gospel if they can. Missionaries the world over send in reports of Catholic interference and harassment. Yes the Great Whore would still make herself drunk with the blood of the saints if she could. In the Tribulation when she again has the authority she will slaughter God's people by the millions. **"and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."** - The term "*admiration*" doesn't have the meaning that we commonly attach to it. It means "wonder" or "amazement". John was stricken with amazement and wonder as he viewed the Great Whore. A lot of other people are going to be surprised when they see the true character of Roman Catholicism.

Verse 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." - As the Apostle John stands in amazement the angel tells him he will show him what the beast is and who the woman is and what is going to come of them. All who follow evil will be overcome of evil. The devil is the destroyer, he can do nothing constructive. No matter what heights of success a person or organization may obtain, without God they are only building for eternal ruin.

In our last lesson we identified the "Great whore" with the Roman Catholic Church. By way of review let us consider again the facts.

1. The great whore is a religious system.
2. This religious system is supported by government.
3. This system is exceedingly wealthy.
4. It is a false religion that tries to appear as true Christianity.
5. It's doctrine and principles are against God and are abominable in His sight.
6. This system is the mother of many other branches of religion.
7. This religious system has been cruel and murderous toward the true people of God.

8. All nations of the world are fooled into believing this is the true religion of God.

All of the forgoing things are exact descriptions of Roman Catholics. Furthermore this woman appears in the wilderness. A wilderness is a place where there is no water, in other words a desert. A false religion is to the spiritual aspect of man what a desert or wilderness is to the physical man. Imagine the richest of men with tons of gold and precious stones crossing a desert and becoming lost without water! Would he give his riches for a lasting water supply? Could his riches quench his thirst? So the spirit of man cannot be satisfied with false religions, they cannot quench his spiritual thirst. He for ever drinks but is never satisfied. What man upon finding the fountain of living waters would not give up all to drink of Him that he may never thirst again?!! Roman Catholicism can not do for the soul of man what the true religion of Jesus Christ can do. It is basically the religion of Cain, a system of works, a clever counterfeit that can only further damn the soul of men. In verse seven the angel announced that he would unveil the facts concerning the woman and the beast upon which she rode.

Verse 8 - "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition:" - Again we are reminded that this beast is political or governmental. It is the confederation of nations led by a world emperor who is the antichrist. The antichrist is either a person who lived on earth before and has been brought back to life or a person living at the time of the Tribulation who is especially indwelt and empowered by a demon out of hell. The latter is probably the case. **"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 reign of the beast will be so different from what the world has seen before, so spectacular in its effects that the people will be amazed and beguiled by it, that is all except the chosen of the Lord who will not be taken in by it but rather will see through its subtlety and will cling unto the Lord. We noted in a former lesson that those who have their names written in the book of life have them written there before the foundation of the world. God knows and has always known whom He has chosen so why should we think it strange that He wrote their names in the book of life at the beginning rather than at the end or any time in between! Contrary to what some folks seem to think God isn't surprised when a person gets saved. He is the one who planned it all and He calls the ones He has chosen when He gets ready. Their names are prerecorded.

Verse 9 - "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." - In this verse the angel continues the identification of the beast and of the woman. The seven heads of the beast upon which the woman sits are seven mountains. Many able Bible scholars identify these mountains as being the seven hills upon which Rome is built. Thus further setting forth that the woman *"the Great Whore"* is

indeed the Catholic Church who has her headquarters in the city of Rome. It certainly is true that Rome is built upon seven hills and the Catholic Church does have her headquarters there. The Pope dwells in the Vatican in the city of Rome. If it is true that the seven mountains refer to the seven hills of Rome then this must be a double type since the next gives a different interpretation. It is not unscriptural to have a double type i.e. Satan is referred to as a "lion", he goes forth as a roaring "lion" seeking whom he may devour. At any rate there is much more convincing evidence that this woman is an apostate Christian religion headed up by the Catholic Church; so it isn't necessary to have this interpretation to prove it.

Verse 10 - "And there are seven kings:" - Mountains are symbols of kingdoms. Each of the kings has a kingdom. The seven heads then are seven mountains or seven kings with their kingdoms. **"five are fallen,"** - At the time of John's writing the five world emperors that had fallen were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Greece. **"and one is,"** - The kingdom then in power was Rome. **"and the other is not yet come;"** - The kingdom yet to come is the revived Roman Empire or political Babylon. **"and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."** - The revived Roman Empire will only last a few years, the last part of the Tribulation Period. The reference to its brevity suggests the longevity of the former kingdoms. This would refute the idea of some that the other kings were former Roman Emperors since most of them had short reigns.

Verse 11 - "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." - The meaning of this is a little obscure but it seems as though the last stages of the revived Roman Empire will be a little different than the early part. Though this change is obvious yet it is not radical enough to be considered a different kingdom so the "eighth" is spoken of as being "of the seventh". The final end of the kingdom is destruction and hell.

Verse 12 - "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." - The ten horns of the beast, which the woman sits upon, represent the kings that had no kingdom in John's day but in the Tribulation Period will be over each of the ten confederate nations and will rule for a short period with the antichrist.

Verse 13 - "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." - The ten kings have one purpose in mind. They are puppet rulers surrendered and dedicated to the antichrist.

Verse 14 - "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them:" - The one mind or purpose of the antichrist and his confederates is to destroy the Lord and His people. As intelligent as the devil is one would think he would know he couldn't overcome the Lord. But we must remember that while the devil is the great deceiver and blinder of the minds he is himself in spiritual darkness and void of true understanding. The devil is a loser all the way and those who follow him are indeed foolish. **"for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."** - Jesus is indeed Lord of lords and King of kings. He is the Almighty God and has always had things in control. Anytime He seemed to be losing was only preparation for the final great victory. All who are with Him will be winners; there is no such thing as losing with the Lord. Are you one of the called and chosen and faithful ones?

Verse 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 mentioned here are the same as in verse one. The expression *"peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues"* refers to all the people of the world. So the figure of the *"great whore"* sitting upon many waters signifies that the Roman Catholic Church is the leader in a world wide religious system that controls all the people of the world. This has been the goal of Roman Catholicism since its beginning. She wanted to reach around the world and have control of every government in existence. She will achieve that goal during the Tribulation Period.

Verse 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 horns represent ten kingdoms that will be confederated under the leadership of the antichrist. At first these kings or rulers are satisfied to have an alliance with the religious system. But after a time they see they are being ruled by this religious system and they resent it. So as soon as they see they have benefited all they are going to from this ecclesiastical order they decide to destroy it. After the many hundreds of years the Roman Catholics have sought to become a world power they succeed but their success is short lived. The very government she is able to get to fully support her and make her dream come true is the power that utterly and totally destroys her. Thus ends the reign of the arch enemy of the saints of the Tribulation Period. She made herself rich and powerful by preying upon those unaware. She murdered the faithful servants of God for centuries but finally vengeance comes; she is totally destroyed.

Verse 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." - It is the great God of Heaven and earth who puts it in the

hearts of these kings to destroy this pagan, depraved and murderous system. Those who trust in Christ need not fret, worry or fear because God is still in control. He turns this old world just as He pleases to suit Himself. While all of this is coming to a head it may seem God is out of it but He isn't. He is just setting the stage. When all the kings of the earth put their heads together to form a confederacy and accept the antichrist, the man of sin, as their leader they are only fulfilling the words, the plan and purpose of the God who rules everything. When the Roman Catholic Church comes into the fullness of her earthly glory she is only being set up for the great fall. When the kings of the earth fall upon her and rob and desolate her taking all her wealth and fame they are only performing the will of Him who rules and reigns in Heaven and earth.

Verse 18 - "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." - The Roman Catholic Church has never been content to go her way and leave others to go theirs. She wants to control everyone. Neither is she content to just have the government aid her, she works to obtain positions where she can control the government. Roman Catholicism can work with any form of government but she fares better with communism and dictatorship than with governments similar to ours. This is evident by studying the history of the countries where she has taken control. She has not given up on this country for every day she plans generations ahead and moves as a great monster, slowly but surely. Great as she is, our God is greater and at exactly the right time He will see that she is destroyed.

CHAPTER XVIII

Verse 1 - "And after these things I saw another angel come down from Heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." - This angel comes down to announce the good news that mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots has been destroyed.

Verse 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 great and powerful religious system which claimed to be the true church of Christ is now shown for what it really is a habitation of demons and foul spirits. What an appropriate end for such an atrocious enemy of God and His people.

Verse 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 fornication spoken of here refers to the unscriptural union of church and state and of the alliance of religion and worldly

practices. All the nations of the world will have benefited economically and politically through their affairs with this religious system. The Roman Catholic Church is not only an ecclesiastical body, it is also a commercial system. Nations have been made rich by her in times past and this will be multiplied many times over during the Tribulation Period.

Verse 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." - There are many who though not deceived by the doctrine of the Catholic Church are in some way connected with it. God calls for total separation from her. This call is not only for the people of God during the Tribulation but it is for us now. We should not be in any way affiliated with them. We should not seek to gain profit in any dealing with them. God's people should teach their children against this evil and especially when they are old enough to date, they should be forbidden to date a Catholic. The parent who ignores this is consigning his grandchildren to hell.

Verse 5 - "For her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." - God has not forgotten the atrocious crimes of the Catholic Church. Those 50,000,000 Baptists that were murdered at her hand are every last one remembered by God. His wrath has waited these many years to finally be poured out upon her for all her wickedness.

Verse 6-7 - "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 - 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." - Even today the Pope of Rome claims to be the vicar of Christ and vice regent of God. He claims perfection and infallibility, attributes that belong only to God. The Roman Catholic Church acts as though she thought she were invincible. God will show what He can do with her in that day.

Verse 8 - "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." No doubt there are many who read this who say within themselves that they know lots of Catholics and none of them meet these descriptions. Let it be known that now God restrains them through governments and other means but this system has never changed. When God withdraws His restraining hand this system will revert to what it was during the dark ages. In the heart of every Catholic who is not saved lies the potential to kill and destroy all who stand in the way. God says stay away from her and we had better do it. There are many fine people who are Catholics today, helpful, harmless, friendly, good neighbors and citizens but things will be

much different during the Tribulation Period. Not only Catholics but many Protestants and some so called Baptists will be caught up in the scheme of the antichrist.

Verse 9 - "And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning," - Immediately after the ten kings destroy the great whore they realize their great mistake. The wealth and power and influence of ecclesiastical Babylon is so great that when she crumbles, commerce tumbles with her. Thus the whole system is destroyed. It is a bad mistake to underestimate the power of religion in the lives of men.

Verse 10 - "Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." - The very kings who destroy this religious system are amazed at how quickly her destruction comes. Perhaps it will be much easier than they imagined but of course they don't understand the hand of God being in it. The fact that they stand afar off indicates they do not want to be identified with her in her destruction. No doubt they know what the reaction of the merchants and others will be when they see what has happened to world commerce. They don't want to take the blame for what happens.

Verse 11 - "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:" - The destruction of Babylon brings economic collapse. Earlier in the Tribulation Period the saints of God are barred from buying and selling because they refuse to take the mark of the beast. Now even the followers of the beast are unable to buy because they have nothing to buy with.

Verse 12- 13 - "The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble. (13) And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men." The things mentioned here touch virtually every phase of man's life from the bare necessities to the finest luxuries. The church of Rome now possesses untold wealth in every category known to man. During the Tribulation this will be multiplied hundreds of times over. Governments even now do not realize the power and influence of Catholicism neither will they then until it's too late. It is a sad thing for a religious system to have such control over commerce and the affairs of man but the real tragedy is found in the last two items mentioned "*slaves and souls of men*". Most Bible expositors agree that "slaves" should be rendered "bodies". The idea is that

men were considered as no more than livestock such as horses or cattle handled only for monetary gain. A.T. Robertson states that the conjunction "and" (Greek kai) should be "even" making the reading "bodies even souls of men". There is no secret about the Catholic Church making merchandise of the souls of men. She takes advantage of men's religious inclinations and collects money for souls. Roman Catholicism began the sale of indulgences back as far as the sixth century. This means she collected money for granting the right to sin. In the seventh century purgatory was invented and soon after money was collected from living relatives and friends to ease the suffering of their loved ones. These practices did not end with the dark ages but continue until this day. A few years ago my wife received a copy of a legal document concerning the dispersal of the estate of a great aunt. One of the items was a certain amount to be paid to the Catholic Church to aid this woman's husband who was in purgatory. Now if anyone doubts the abominable practices of this group let them do a little investigating and they will be as surprised as John was when God showed him. There can be no doubt that the "Great Whore" of Revelation is the Roman Catholic Church with all the other false religions under her. No wonder God says "Come out of her my people".

Verse 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." - So complete is the downfall of Babylon that there is no hope for her ever being restored. Men are deprived of the things she dealt in, the necessities of life along with the luxuries.

Verse 15 - "The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing," - The world becomes so enamored with the great whore because of the things she has which appeal to the flesh that they weep and mourn for her destruction. The ways of the world never change. People are more concerned about their own comforts, satisfactions and lusts than they are about the souls of men. Today we hear millions cry because of the energy crisis and the thought that gasoline may take a large price hike; they weep because they may have to drive a smaller car but where are the ones weeping because thousands and millions are on their way to hell?

Verse 16 - "And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!" Their weeping and remorse is all for those things which benefited them in this present life. They are not concerned that this devilish system swept untold millions into Hell with her false doctrine. Neither are they concerned that millions of righteous children of God were murdered with her bloody hands.

Verse 17-18 - "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, (18) And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!" -

The whole system of the antichrist religion is represented by the great city Babylon. This destruction as of a great city is of course metaphorical. The world has never seen so rich, so great, so powerful a system as that of the mystery Babylon but though it took her centuries to come into this position it takes but a very short time for God to cut her down as He works in the hearts of the rulers of the world to destroy her.

Verse 19 - "And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate." -

The world weeps over anything that brings material loss. They are blind to the things of true value, they do not understand the things of the Spirit. The reaction of the people of God to the destruction of the Catholic Church is quite different than that of the world. People today need to learn to love the things God loves and to hate the things He hates. Too many of God's people are involved in worldly matters and false religions. We are called to separation. There should be no doubt in anyone's mind where the people of God stand. In the Tribulation the difference will be made plain and clear.

Verse 20 - "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." - The scriptures before this tell of the weeping and wailing of the kings and merchants of the earth due to the destruction of the Great Whore, the city Babylon, but here we see the attitude and feeling of the people of God. God commands His people to rejoice over her destruction because He is the one who really destroyed her.

Verse 21 - "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." - This action is symbolic of the destruction of this ungodly religious system. So complete and swift will be its destruction it is like the casting and sinking of a great stone in the ocean, which will never arise or be seen again.

Verse 22 - "And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee;" - The Roman Catholic in many of their churches have beautiful choirs and the most talented musicians. They can set an atmosphere that will make anyone sit in awe and amazement but all of this is false religion. It is not the spirit of God that affects men who see and hear them. All this will cease when God pours out His wrath upon her. No one else will be moved by the charm of her beautiful music. **"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;" -

There is no more beautiful art and craft to be found anywhere than in the Catholic Churches the world over. The greatest artists, craftsmen and artificers have plied their trade in the Catholic Cathedrals. In these arts and crafts alone lies a fortune so vast it knows no equal. From the finest most skilled work of men to the mean trade of the miller comes a mute silence, all their works cease alike. God sinks her in the depths of oblivion.

Verse 23 - "And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee:" -

Certainly the Catholic Church has kept the popularity of the candle. She uses them in almost every ceremony; there seems to be some sort of mysticism about them in their eyes but the day is coming when the last candle will be burned. The Roman Catholic Church makes matrimony a sacrament and without her sanction upon a marriage those entering it can not get into heaven. She has forced millions of her people to have a second ceremony because she would not recognize the first performed without her authority. But in that day there will be no marriage in the Catholic Church because there won't be any such thing anymore. ***"for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."*** - In our country and most all other countries where Catholicism has a hold the most influential and wealthiest people are Catholics. This is true for two reasons. The Catholics want the businessmen, the socialites, the politicians, etc. because they add to her store. Likewise such influential people join the Catholic Church because she will be profitable to their causes. This unholy purpose and practice is intoxicating and deadening to the reasoning of man. While God is supposed to be represented in the church He is completely left out. His word is ignored and the doctrine of the devil are used in its place and no one seems to be the wiser.

Verse 24 - "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." -

Let us be reminded again that the religious system during the Tribulation is not composed only of Catholics but of all false religions joined together with the Catholic Church as the head. The first murder was caused by conflict over religion. Cain murdered Abel because Abel worshipped God in the right way and he didn't want to. God was pleased with Abel for doing right and displeased with Cain for doing wrong. Cain's response was to promptly kill Abel. Ever since that time false religions have had the same thoughts and ideas. The Bible is full of stories telling of the terrible bloodshed because the enemies of God wouldn't do right. It has always been the devil's tactics to kill anyone who would not agree with him. We read of how his followers killed the prophets and priests of the Lord. Jesus reprimanded the Pharisees with the reminder of how their forefathers had killed the prophets and

those that God sent unto them. In the Christian era we read of the same things. The Apostles were put to death because of the opposing false religions. The early churches were persecuted and scattered because they believed the Bible. Roman Catholics slaughtered Baptists by the millions because they believed and practiced the word of God. Do not be deceived the devil hasn't changed. Not many people are being persecuted for following Christ in these days. One of the reasons being not many people are following close enough to Him to worry the devil. In the Tribulation things will be different. God's people will take a stand for Christ and be put to death by the same system that has murdered them in the past.

CHAPTER XIX

Verse 1 - "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:" - Here we see the response of God's people to the destruction of the Great Whore; they do as God commanded in 18:20. The antichrist is not loved and praised by the people of God. Jesus the Christ is the center and object of all their love, adoration and worship. In the first six verses of this chapter are four "alleluias". The first is the alleluias of Salvation and redemption. In heaven all the redeemed of the Lord will praise Him first of all for Salvation that is in Him. All creatures will fully realize that the great purpose of all God's creative acts is to bring salvation to His chosen ones.

Verse 2 - "For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." - Those who know the truth know that God is righteous. They know the ungodliness and abominations that have come out of the Catholic Church. They know there is no worse crime against God or man than to so deceive men that their souls are lost in hell for ever even while they presume to teach the truth. Even with these facts in view there are folks today who get angry because a Baptist preacher speaks out against false religion. They are completely ignorant of the fact that the word of God from beginning to end concerns the subject of the true religion as opposed to false religions. John the Baptist, Jesus, and all the Apostles continually cried out against the false religions calling them by name. The command was left for us to do the same thing yet some so-called Baptists get upset because the preacher does his job.

Verse 3 - "And again they said, Alleluia; And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." - This "alleluias" is given in regard to what is said in verse 2. So we could say this is the "alleluias" of retribution. God is praised for His vengeance. He has said *"...Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord"* Romans 12:19. God's people need never be dismayed or discouraged because things don't seem

to work out right now. God will even things up when the time comes. His promise to work all things out for our good is still in the Bible and so is His promise to punish the wicked. Let us day by day praise His name and shout "Alleluias"!

Verse 4 - "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia." -

As we learned earlier in our study of this book the twenty four elders represent all the redeemed in heaven. The four beasts or "living creatures" are heavenly beings created, as it seems, for the worship and direction of worship unto God. The significance of this scene is that all of heaven is in agreement with God. All worship Him for His wonderful works and this includes the destruction of the wicked. In this verse we hear the "Alleluias" of worship. This is a marvelous thing that creatures have the privilege of being in the presence of such a holy being and are able to see His glory. To know that one day we shall be in heaven and be able to worship God without any hindrance is indeed reason enough to shout "alleluias".

Verse 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." -

In heaven it will not be any effort to praise the Lord because that will be the sincere desire of everyone there. On earth we are liable to forget or neglect the fact that God deserves all the praise for everything. We may find ourselves praising one another but in heaven all praise is directed to the only one who deserves it.

Verse 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 thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." -

The heavens resound as all voices blend in this mighty "Alleluias" for Christ's reign. After thousands of years of being under the bondage of Satan, the great usurper, the world is set free. Satan has been the god of this world since the Garden of Eden. He has directed his forces against God all this time. Untold millions have followed him but at last he will be put down and destroyed and Christ shall rule upon the earth as well as in heaven.

Verse 7 - "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." -

This is indeed a great event, "the marriage of the Lamb". Many talk about it but few know anything about it. This is a highly important happening! What time in the life of a man can equal in importance as the day of his marriage? Certainly God uses terms to impress upon our minds the greatness and magnitude of this heavenly marriage. This marriage takes place at the close of the Tribulation Period before the thousand-year reign begins. The bridegroom of course is Jesus, God's Lamb but who is the bride? Some speak of Israel as being the wife

of God. God did say He was married to Israel but she was His wife upon the earth not in heaven. No, this bride is not an adulterous generation but a pure and chaste virgin. Others say this bride is the redeemed of all men since the days of the earthly ministry of Jesus but how can that be? This is a bride who has never committed spiritual adultery with kings and rulers of the earth. This is a bride who is not a harlot daughter of the Great Whore and who has had no part with her. This bride is from the true churches of the Lord. II Corinthians 11:2 tells us the church of Corinth was espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin. This does not mean only the church at Corinth but all churches like Corinth. Since the bride is a "Chaste Virgin" she cannot be the "Great Whore", neither can she be a daughter of her. This eliminates the Catholic Church and all others who come from her either directly or indirectly. This bride must be from the Baptist Churches. Are all the members of all Baptist Churches a part of the Bride? We say "no" since many of them are not chaste and pure. We believe the Bride of Christ will be the faithful members of true New Testament Churches since the time of its establishment during Christ's personal ministry upon the earth. Let us note here the expression *"his wife hath made herself ready"*. We know the Bible does not teach salvation by works. No one makes themselves ready for heaven. Only God can do that. This is not referring to salvation but to the preparation of the Bride. While Salvation is not based upon what a person does, becoming a part of the Bride and preparing for the wedding does depend upon what he does. Of course this is all by the grace of God *"...for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."* Philippians 2:13 At the same time man is not an automaton or robot who has no choice but he is a responsible being capable of making choices to either obey or disobey. When a person is saved he has the choice of joining a true church or a false one. If he joins a true church he has the choice of faithfully serving or of neglecting his responsibility. Those who are in the Bride of Christ will be those who have chosen to become a part of the Lord's Church and who have made themselves ready by faithfully serving God.

Verse 8 - "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

- There is much controversy as to exactly what is the wedding garment. Let us say first that this garment of the Bride is not the same as the garment spoken of in Matthew 22:11. The garment there mentioned seems to be the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to every believer. It seems that every believer will be present at the marriage but certainly not all will be in the bride. Likewise all who are present must have the righteousness of Christ but not all will have on the bride's garment. Next let us call attention to the word "righteousness." In our text this is singular but all Greek scholars agree this should be plural or "righteousnesses." The fine linen then is not symbolic of Christ's righteousness but the righteous acts or deeds of the saints in the sense that all righteous acts are a product of the righteousness of Christ and all who have His righteousness

will produce good works. Also no good works or righteous acts can be produced without the righteousness of Christ. We still maintain, however, that Matthew 22:11 speaks basically of the righteousness of Christ while Revelation 19:8 speaks of the righteous deeds of the Bride. No one can be in the bride who was not ready for it. As an old custom in our country where the bride to be begins to fill her "hope chest" in preparation for the wedding and married life, so those who expect to be in the Bride of Christ must prepare for it now. Those favored few will be those who have faithfully followed the Lord here on earth.

Verse 9 - "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb; And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." - There are many Bible scholars who believe in what is called a "universal bride" which means they believe all the saved people will be the bride of Christ. We cannot accept that anymore than we could a universal church. The analogies and metaphors used to describe the Bride certainly do not teach a universal bride. For example - at a wedding there are attendants to the bride, servants and helpers of various kinds; friends of the bridegroom as John the Baptist said he was, guests and etc. All of these are present at the wedding but they certainly are not in the bride. Thus it will be at that great wedding and marriage feast. The highest of honors will be to those chosen few who are the Bride but it will be a blessed event to all who are called to attend. No one is going to be unhappy or disappointed in heaven. Some have greater rewards than others, greater capacities to enjoy heaven but there will be no jealousy, no covetousness; everyone will be singing, rejoicing and praising God for all eternity. Let us say again "praise the Lord, Alleluias"!!

Verse 10 - "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethern that have the testimony of Jesus" - John is so overwhelmed at what he has seen that he immediately falls down to worship the messenger before him. The angel forbids him to do such and states that he too is a servant of God. Servants of God are not the objects of worship even though they be angels. **"worship God!"** - He is the only one worthy of being worshipped. To worship anyone or anything else is idolatry. **"for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."** - The end and purpose of prophecy, whether it is spoken by the Old Testament prophets, the apostles or in a wondrous scene that John saw is to bear witness of Jesus Christ.

Verse 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." - In chapter 6:2 we read of a rider on a white horse going forth conquering. This was the antichrist, the arch counterfeiter starting his reign of terror. The rider of this horse is called Faithful and True and is none other than the Lord Jesus. In all the history of the world it may be that

never a war was fought in complete righteousness but when King Jesus makes war it is one hundred percent righteous. The enemy will be struck down without mercy but they get exactly what they deserve.

Verse 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."

- The Lord Jesus will be glorious to behold to all the saints but He is awesome to His enemies. His eyes like flames of fire, penetrate to the depth of the soul. He sees all and knows all. There are none who can escape out of His sight or do anything without His knowing it. The many crowns set forth His complete Kingship and authority. How these crowns were arranged and worn is not stated, they may be crowns made into one or perhaps the symbols of the crowns of many kings put together. At any rate this is no doubt a very beautiful and distinguished looking sight; not a grotesque pile of crowns stacked upon His head. The name written that no men knew does not mean that it was illegible but rather no man could fathom the depth of its meaning. This name is probably the name mentioned in Verse 13 - *"The Word of God"*. In John's gospel he states that Jesus is the *"Word"* and the *"Word was God"*. Many volumes have been written to explain how Jesus is *"the Word"* and how *"the word became flesh"*, also how the Bible, the written word, relates to Jesus the living word. From these writings of men came wonderful thoughts and great truths but no one understands the full meaning of it. Jesus is the *"Word of God"* the divine "Logos" and we will not understand the fullness of this name until we get to heaven. Men upon the earth are not capable of this spiritual depth.

Verse 13 - "And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."

- Nearly two thousand years ago the Lord Jesus wore a garment stained with blood, the blood from His own wounds from the terrible scourging received at the hand of His enemies. When He comes the next time it will be different for then His garments will be stained with the blood of His enemies. Read Isaiah 63:1-6. This is a prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus in the day of vengeance.

Verse 14 - "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

- Who are the armies in heaven? They are angels no doubt and the multitude of the redeemed men from the earth. This means that each one of us who today believes in Jesus will one day come riding upon a beautiful white horse in a vast army following the Lord. What a sight that will be!! All the children of God clothed in gleaming white garments riding upon snow white horses. This will indeed be a spectacular scene!!

Verse 15 - "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations:"

- The sharp two-edged sword is an emblem of the

destructive forces of the Lord Jesus issued by His commands. It was by His word the worlds were made; He literally spoke them into existence. So by the word of His mouth the enemies of the Tribulation Period will be smitten and utterly destroyed. **"and he shall rule them with a rod of iron:"** - After the destruction of the armies of the wicked the Lord Jesus will come to earth to reign a thousand years. It is my understanding that all the redeemed of the Tribulation will have been put to death before the reign of Christ begins. I believe there will be no saved people on the earth in their natural bodies during the thousand year reign. The Lord Jesus will rule with a rod of iron. There will be perfect obedience upon the earth during this time but it will be a forced obedience. Those upon the earth in their natural bodies will be lost men. They will obey the Lord because they know it's best for them, not because they love Him and are devoted to Him. Being under the reign of Christ will not make a person a child of God. As we shall see later in the book, after a thousand years of perfect government and ideal social, environmental and economic conditions, the hearts of men are still unregenerate. This is exemplified by the fact that the devil when he is loosed for the *"little season"* at the close of the millinium is able to deceive the inhabitants of the earth and make them believe they can overcome the Lord who has governed them and blessed them for a thousand years. All these, of course, will be destroyed as the Lord rains fire and brimstone from heaven and destroys the world and all that is in it. **"and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."** - Read again Isaiah 63:1-6 It will explain this verse. The meaning is simple. At the time signified the Lord will march against the armies of the wicked and with great strength and fierceness will crush them as grapes are crushed in a winepress. This is the battle of Armageddon we read about in chapter 14, where the blood of the enemy flows two feet deep for a distance of nearly 200 miles. Those who are not convinced God is a God of wrath had better take another look. God will not allow the wicked to go unpunished.

Verse 16 - "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." - Jesus is a King now and He is Lord now but He has allowed Satan to have control of this world system. It is not that He is not or was not able to control but in His infinite wisdom He purposed to let Satan have control. All this will work to bring glory to His name when He again seizes control. In that day there will be no other kings, no other lords. Everyone will recognize Him as being over all things. When all the activities of the earth have ceased, when God gets ready to present the new heavens and new earth Satan will have been cast into the lake of fire along with all his followers and never again will he be able to deceive anyone. Jesus Christ who alone is King of Kings and Lord of Lords will be worshipped and adored by all His people and all the hosts of heaven. Those who foolishly followed Satan will have eternity to suffer in shame and disgrace as their sins are know to all and all will agree that God has judged righteously. Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Verse 17 - "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;" -

This supper is quite different from "the marriage supper of the Lamb". In that supper the people of God rejoice and fellowship and feast. In the supper mentioned in this verse, all the fowls of the air which are carnivorous or carrion eaters, the ravens, crows, owls, buzzards, condors, hawks, falcons, eagles, and etc. will come to this great supper.

Verse 18 - "That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." - After the battle of Armageddon the bodies of the wicked will be strewn over all the battlefield in countless numbers. There will be no escaping of the kings and generals; they will be killed just like the privates and orderlies.

Verse 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." - One would think the devil would have more sense than to fight against such an army but we must understand the devil though highly intelligent and wise in some matters is blind and ignorant of other matters. So the battle is put into array, the beast who is the devil's general and the kings of the earth with their armies go against the Lord Jesus and the heavenly hosts. This will be the most one-sided war that was ever fought. Over 200 million of the wicked will be slain but there will not be one casualty in the Lord's army. All in His army have already died once and they live to die no more. The clubs, swords, bullets and bombs can not touch them. Thus Satan's army is wiped out.

Verse 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 leader of the devil's army and his preacher have their careers brought to an abrupt end. They are cast into the lake of fire while they are still alive. There are those who do not believe in a literal burning hell but the language used here certainly seems to be literal; the Lord says it is burning with brimstone. If the Lord didn't mean real fire He wouldn't have used such vivid terms. Those who think hell is only for a little while and then the subject is burned up need to look a little farther into verse 10 of chapter twenty. Here we see the beast and the false prophet, who are real men, are still in the lake of fire after a thousand years. That, however, is just a beginning for hell is not for a few thousand years; hell is eternal.

Verse 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." - There are none of this army who are not cut down. The sword used is the word of the one who sits on the white horse, that is the Messiah, Lord of Lords, King of Kings. Either He directs the battle with His words or His word cuts down the enemy before Him. He, whose word is powerful enough to speak worlds into existence, certainly is powerful enough to cut down mortal man. Now all the fowl of the air that are called together for the supper begin to fill their bodies with the flesh of the slain. These do not have a decent burial but are devoured by the scavengers of the air. What an end for those so foolish as to follow the great deceiver!!

CHAPTER XX

Verse 1 - "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand." - Who this angel is, is not told and it makes no difference, he is the one sent by God to do a job. The bottomless pit from whence came the dread locusts under the fifth seal, now will be unlocked to allow Satan to be cast into it and locked up. What kind of a chain this is we do not know but it is capable of holding Satan. Fallen angels are said to be held by chains - Jude 6. We know one thing for sure, God is able to make bonds that no creature can break.

Verse 2 - "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years," - Satan, since his fall from heaven, has been given a great amount of freedom. He caused the first parents to sin against God and so introduces sin into the human race. He has been *"the god of this world"* ever since. During the Tribulation Period he will be given great freedom and will not be hindered by the Holy Spirit, thus he is able to execute his reign of terror. But at the end of the Tribulation he is taken as easily as a man would take a rag doll and is thrown into the bottomless pit. There he remains for a thousand years.

Verse 3 - "And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled:" - Satan will be locked up in the bottomless pit, bound with chains for a thousand years. This is the time the Lord Jesus will be ruling upon the earth. The Devil will not be able to deceive people during the reign of the Lord, so there is peace on earth; no stealing, no killing, no wars, no violence of any kind, even the animal kingdom will be at peace. **"and after that he must be loosed a little season."** - After a thousand years of captivity the Devil will be turned loose for a little while; how long is not said but the time will probably not be more than a few weeks or months at the most. Immediately upon being loosed he begins his work of deceiving again.

Verse 4 - "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:" - Who the judges are upon these thrones is not mentioned here. Jesus said to the Apostles in Matthew 19:28 that they would judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Paul said in I Corinthians 6:2 that the saints shall judge the world. At any rate whoever sits there will judge the world and the judgment will be to everlasting condemnation. **"and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."** - During the reign of the antichrist it will seem to be the easiest thing to join up with him. Many millions will be deceived by him and take what they think is the easy way out but they will see too late they really took the hard way. When they see those who refused to worship the beast reigning with Christ in heaven while they spend eternity in hell they will all say with one accord "It would have been much easier and so much better to follow the Lord Jesus." And so it will be with all who go to hell; they think the way of sin and lustful pleasure is the best in this life but they will have eternity to regret their foolish mistake. How about you? Are you following Satan to destruction or are you following Christ to eternal life?!! After the seven year Tribulation Period Christ shall rule over the earth with the redeemed for a thousand years. This will be a time of peace on earth because the Prince of Peace shall be ruling. There will be no wars; all the instruments of warfare will be made into farming implements. Isaiah 2:4. Even the animal kingdom will be at peace. Isaiah 11:6-9, Isaiah 65:25. This will be a time of great prosperity and happiness. But the people on the earth in their natural bodies will still be lost and will finally be destroyed.

Verse 5 - "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." - All those who are saved will be in the first resurrection. This resurrection is completed at the end of the Tribulation Period. The first resurrection is constituted by at least three phases. In I Corinthians 15:20 we read of Christ's resurrection as being the first fruits and then of those who are raised at His coming. So we have first Christ's resurrection, secondly the resurrection at the end of this age I Thessalonians 4:16 and then the resurrection of the Tribulation saints. This resurrection is completed at the end of the Tribulation Period. All these are in the first resurrection, which is a resurrection *"unto everlasting life"* Daniel 12:2; it is the resurrection of the just, Luke 14:13,14 *"the resurrection of life"* John 5:29. This resurrection is of the body not of the soul as some would have us believe. All who believe in Christ shall have a glorified body just like the Lord Jesus. The next phase of this resurrection will be when Jesus comes in the air, I Thessalonians 4:13-18. At this time all the dead in Christ will be raised and all the living believers will be changed.

Verse 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." - It is

indeed a great and marvelous thing to be a child of God. The devil can not touch one of these so as to harm him. Every believer has the promises of God that one day he will be in His presence in a glorified body. The second death is the burning for ever in the Lake of Fire of those who reject Christ as the Savior. Revelation 20:14. What a difference! Those without Christ suffer for ever in Hell but those who believe in Him and trust Him shall rule and reign upon the earth for a thousand years with Him and then when the earth is destroyed they live for ever in the glory of His presence.

Verse 7 - "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison," - While the saints of God are ruling the earth for a thousand years, the devil has been bound and locked in the bottomless pit. After the thousand years have passed he is turned loose again for a little while.

Verse 8 - "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." - Here indeed is a strange thing. After a thousand years of perfect government and great prosperity one would think the world would never want to hear of the devil again but he deceives them and they fall into his command again. This proves that man is totally depraved; he has no spiritual life or inclination to things of the Spirit. He is dead in trespasses and in sin. The only reason the world follows the Lord during the thousand years is because Satan is bound and they realize the reign of Christ is a good one. When Satan is turned loose he deceives the people into thinking he can do more for them than Christ has done and so they begin to follow him. A good environment or a good society can not change the evil heart of man. The only way man's heart can be changed is to have God change it for him. God does this when a person believes the gospel of Christ. The Number of those who go to battle is beyond man's imagination. During the thousand year reign of Christ there will be the world's greatest population explosion. There will be no sickness and disease as we know it now so those who are born live and grow to have children of their own. There will be no economic hindrances because the earth will bountifully bring forth her fruit. Thus at the end of this period there will be perhaps many billions of people on the earth.

Verse 9 - "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city:" - As we see it all the people on the earth in natural bodies will be lost people and all of God's people will have glorified bodies. Again we say it is a strange thing that Satan could make people even want to fight against the Lord much less make them believe they could win. This, however, seems to be the case else why

should they fight? This, indeed, will be a terrible sight as the whole earth around Jerusalem is covered with troops of the devil trying to destroy the Lord Jesus and His people. **"and fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them."** - Satan and his great army are not allowed to fire the first shot in this battle; before they can make war again the Lord sends down fire from Heaven and destroys the world. Imagine such a scene as this - an army so vast it cannot be numbered is literally burned alive as fire falls from Heaven. Everything on the earth is destroyed; there is not a living thing left, neither is there any work of man that is not burned up.

Verse 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." - Thus ends the career of Satan, the one who has deceived the multitudes into following him instead of the Lord. The devil, who has been responsible for millions and millions going to Hell to suffer eternally will himself be cast into the lake of fire. He will never again be loosed but will for ever and ever suffer the torments of hell. Surely those who have the power of reason can see the foolishness of having Satan as a leader! Who wants to be on the losing side?! Especially when the stakes are so high! It is not a mortal life that hangs in the balance, it is the immortal soul. No one knows how long he has to live; God can call for a man's life anytime He chooses. How foolish to risk another day without Christ!!!

Verse 11 - "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." - The time of this judgment is at the end of the one thousand year reign of Christ. The judge is none other than the Lord Jesus, Himself. This is the one, sitting upon the Great White Throne, who came into the world to save sinners. He is the one whom the Apostles preached, the one who commissioned His church to preach His gospel. He is the one who promised to save all who would come unto Him. But as we see Him now, He is no longer the Savior, He is the judge of all the earth. What a terrible scene this is. All the wicked must face him with no covering for their sin. Desire as they may a place to hide, yet they cannot escape. The inevitable day has come. Judgment!! What a horrible word for those who stand alone!! What a terrible feeling to stand condemned before a judge, guilty, no defense, no advocate, only awaiting the terrible verdict!! What an awful place in which to be!!

Verse 12 - "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;" - All those who die without Christ must appear at this awful judgment, even those whose bodies had just been burned to a crisp as God rained down fire from heaven upon them. None can escape this judgment. Wealth, political power, social standing, nothing can rescue the sinner from the judgment throne. **"and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the**

book of life:" - God keeps books and there are no mistakes in them. The record is there. **"and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."** - Every evil deed that every lost sinner has ever committed is written in the books. They cannot deny the record, neither can they make excuse for not knowing, for God's law, that is written in the heart is there to face them. The Bible, the written word of God, is there to condemn them. The penalty for breaking God's laws is before them. The book of life with all the names of the redeemed is opened and they see their names are not there. The wicked unbelievers are not judged unjustly but from the true and accurate record of the deeds they did while in their bodies. There are no trumped-up charges, no false accusations, the things written in the books are the things they did. They can't deny them. They are judged according to their works. Nothing could be more fair than that. The lost sinner had better stop and think because every minute of every day he is writing his own book and all those things will be read back to him one day.

Verse 13 - "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." - The bodies of the wicked will be resurrected and reunited with the lost souls. The wording used here *"the sea", "death and hell"* shows the completeness and entirety of this resurrection. All will be raised and brought to judgment, whether buried in the depths of the sea since the time of the flood, or buried under mountains of earth, all the domain of the wicked dead will be disturbed as the bodies come forth to stand in judgment to receive their final condemnation.

Verse 14 - "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." - Each lost soul is judged and then cast into the lake of fire. The second death is eternal separation from God in the depths of the molten sea. Though all the lost will be in the lake of fire, yet not all will suffer alike. This may not be easy to understand yet we know it is true. Why have a judgment of the lost if all of them are to receive the same punishment? Jesus said to some of the wicked cities in His time that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them. Matthew 10:15, Matthew 11:21-24. On another occasion He said that some would be beaten with few stripes and some with many. Luke 12:42-48. These passages clearly teach that there will be different degrees of suffering in hell. We can understand this is the only just way. Surely it would not be right for the man who was a murderer, thief and adulterer to have no more punishment than a teenager who neglected to trust in Christ. The question may arise: "how can there be a difference in punishment if all are in the same lake of fire?" To this we can only say that God is certainly able to figure that out. Perhaps it is that some are given a greater capacity for suffering such as we see in life today. A cat or dog is able to suffer more than a bug or fly because of a more complex nerve system, or a normal

person is able to suffer greater mental anguish than an idiot or imbecile. There will be a difference in punishment however God does it.

Verse 15 - "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." - The names written in the book of life were there before the foundation of the world. Revelation 17:8. God chose some to salvation before He ever made the world. Ephesians 1:3-5. Those He has chosen to save He will save. Romans 8:29, 30. All others He leaves alone and they do exactly what they want to do. They live lives in rebellion and disobedience against God. They willingly reject Christ when He is preached unto them. They want to have their own way and they do. They do not care about eternal things and so give attention to the things of the earth. Those who hear the truth reject it and believe the lie instead. Their being cast into hell is their own fault, they have no one to blame but themselves. God is under no obligation to save anyone. Those whom He has chosen would have been like all the rest had He not turned them around. Salvation is by God's grace; He does not owe it to any man to save him. No one need to worry about whether or not God will save him; anyone who wants to be saved God's way can be. The difference in heaven and hell as far as man is concerned is whether or not one trusts in Christ as the Savior.

CHAPTER XXI

Verse 1 - "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;" - After the judgment of the lost and their casting into hell, John sees a new heaven and a new earth that takes the place of the first heaven and the first earth. He does not tell how this came to pass. In the scripture we have reference to three heavens. There is the atmospheric heaven where the birds fly, stellar heaven where the moon, sun and stars are and the third heaven, which is the abode of God. The heaven which John sees made new is the atmospheric heaven. There are two major schools of thought on how the new heaven and earth came into being. One thought is that God annihilated the old and creates the new. The other thought is that the old is renovated after having been purged by fire. I believe the latter is correct. It really makes little difference because all of man's works will be burned up and every thing touched by sin will be destroyed. Read II Peter 3:10-13. In these verses we see that the destruction of the earth will be swift and violent. God will destroy it with fire. Now to the question as to whether or not the heavens and earth will be annihilated, the words of Peter do not indicate such. In II Peter 2:5, Peter states that the world which was before the flood perished, but it did not cease to exist. God just renovated or changed it. When a lost man is said to perish he does not cease to exist. Likewise when a sinner is saved it is said "*old things are passed away behold all things are become new*" yet the old nature is still with the regenerated man. So it will be, we believe, with the first heaven and

first earth. They will be renewed or regenerated. Everything that has been touched by sin will be purged and made new. God will destroy it with fire and then make it over like He wants it. Satan will be in the lake of fire so he can never contaminate it with sin again. Where will the fire come from? In olden times men scoffed at the idea that the world could be burned with fire but in later times when they began to learn more about the structure of the earth and then later still the structure of the heavens they ceased to make light of it. The earth we live on is a sphere 8,000 miles in diameter and 25,000 miles in circumference. The center of it is molten heat, a boiling, seething lake of fire. Sometimes this boiling mass finds a weak spot in the earth's crust and it literally explodes into a smoking fiery volcano spewing rock, ashes and molten lava for miles around. The earth on which we live is nothing less than a gigantic bomb that God could explode at any minute blowing it into millions of pieces. Since the discovery of nuclear power man understands the possibility of the heavens suddenly exploding into one huge flame of fire. It is possible to have an explosive chain reaction in the atoms of the atmosphere that would make all we see in the first heaven disappear in one conflagration. Will God use anything we know about to destroy the world? We do not know. We do know, however, that He used water already available from the heavens and earth to destroy the world the first time and He could do the same with fire. We also know He has the fire reserved to do the job when the time comes. Remember this destruction and regeneration comes at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ. ***"and there was no more sea."*** - There are many different interpretations of the statement, some take it figuratively saying the sea is a symbol of separation and there will be no separation of loved ones in heaven. Others say it is symbolic of the separation of nations, that is, there will be no distinction of nations as we have now, there will be no need of seas to separate the races. We take it literally, meaning there will be no seas or oceans on the new earth. Now about three fourths of the earth's surface is water and there is a definite need of it. Climate is controlled by the seas. Plant and animal life are dependent upon the oceans. God uses the process of evaporation and condensation to water the earth so vegetation can grow. Almost all their water comes from the oceans. In the new earth this will not be necessary so there is no need of the oceans.

Verse 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."

- This city is further described later in this chapter and in the last chapter. Let us say here, that this is a beautiful sight to behold. It is a city 1,500 miles cubed. It is a real physical place; it is made of real gold and precious stones. It is the dwelling place and possession of those who compose the bride of Christ.

Verse 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." - In the Garden of Eden God walked and talked with Adam and Eve until they sinned against Him. From that time on man could approach God only through or by means of a sacrifice. All the Old Testament offerings and sacrifices spoke out saying "man cannot fellowship or commune with God without a substitute." When the children of Israel were in the wilderness God gave them a tabernacle, a place where He could meet with them but they had to have a sacrificial substitute. Jesus came into the world and He was "God with us" but He was in a world steeped in sin and He only stayed thirty three years and then gave Himself in sacrifice as *"the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"*, and then ascended back into heaven. In the new earth He will dwell for ever with His people in a place where sin can never enter. All of His people will be perfect and will love, adore and worship Him in perfection. Yes, Adam lost the Garden of Eden because of sin and all his posterity has lived in a sin cursed world because of his disobedience, but praise the Lord we gain more than Eden, much more than Adam lost, through the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam. Indeed the Garden of Eden was a marvelous place but it was nothing compared to the New Jerusalem! Perhaps we should not say we are glad Adam sinned but we can say "Praise the Lord, Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification". Praise the Lord. He is coming again to make all things right. Praise the Lord, He loved us and wants us to live with Him for ever"!

Verse 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." - Some have the idea that there will be a time when God's people will be crying in heaven. To me this seems to be completely out of reason when we consider the nature of heaven itself. Why should God's people who understand as He understands, seeing justice and righteousness prevail, why should they cry? We believe this means the tears are wiped away before they get to heaven. This is an expression that means there will be no cause for crying in heaven. The following words tell us these things such as sorrow, crying, pain, etc. belong to earth not to heaven. On earth the most dreaded thing is death. Man will do anything and everything he can to preserve his life. Billions of dollars are spent each year on medicine, hospitals, doctors, etc. to stay alive a little longer, but sooner or later death comes anyway. This will not be true in heaven. Death is an enemy, a result of sin, it is the last enemy that will be destroyed, I Corinthians 15:26. There will be no sorrow. Here we dread to see loved ones get sick, it tears our hearts out to think of broken hearts, Mothers, Dads, children, weeping at the loss of the one they loved. In heaven there won't be anything like that. All these things will have passed away. What a glorious future for those who trust in Christ!!!

Verse 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." The wonderful things the Lord tells us about heaven are not fairy tales

or insincere promises. What He says is the truth, He is God who cannot lie. What an awful shame it is that so many do not believe God!! The things He says about hell are just as true as the things He says about heaven. Imagine, what will be the feeling of those who are cast into the Lake of Fire when they realize the terrible torment that is theirs for ever and ever and that they could have had heaven instead!! Can a few years of worldly pleasure compensate for such a loss?? How foolish to risk a day without Jesus!!!

Verse 6 - "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." - He who sits upon the throne is none other than the Lord Jesus. He is the beginning and the end of all things. He is the one who made everything that is made. John 1:3. *"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."* - Hebrews 1:2 *"....by his Son.... by whom also he made the worlds"* - Colossians 1:16 - *"for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him."* - John is allowed to see all that is to come to pass. From Revelation 4:1 to 21:6 we read about the things that are going to happen as the Lord reveals them unto John. Now the Lord says *"it is done"*. The things of the earth have run their course. The world is destroyed, the saved are in heaven, the wicked are in hell and God has made a new heaven and earth. **"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."** - After having shown what the outcome of all things will be the Lord makes another appeal, another invitation is given. There is no need for anyone to go to hell. The Lord Jesus will freely save all who come unto Him now. He is the fountain of life! He issues the water of life! Those who drink of Him shall never thirst! No man need despair or make excuse. He gives the water of life freely. There is no cause in man to encourage God to give to him; He gives solely because He wants to. The moral man, the terrible sinner, the great, the small, the young or old; it makes no difference to Him. He will give the water of life to all who come to Him. Salvation costs man absolutely nothing, no merit, no work, no money, nothing - it is freely given. What a terrible mistake to let Him pass by!!

Verse 7 - "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." - He that overcometh is he that has faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. I John 5:4 *"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"*. Those who trust in Christ are born again children of God. As sons of God those who are born of the Spirit of God are heirs of all things joint heirs with Christ. Romans 8:14-17 (read). What a marvelous thought! Sons of God! Heirs of God! Joint heirs with Christ! *"Inherit all things"*! Imagine that, what wealth, what glory, everything that belongs to Christ belongs to me as His child! My friend if you are a child of God you should dwell upon this and glory in God's grace which

brings it. My friend if you are lost you should ponder this and then consider in all seriousness and gravity what is to follow if you die without Christ!

Verse 8 - "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." - A last warning is given. What a comparison! What an alternative! Those who trust in Christ safely enter the glories of heaven but look at what happens to all the others! Let us consider some of these classes of people mentioned. *"The fearful"* - There are people who are cowards, they are afraid of ridicule from friends and associates. They try to act brave and make it look like they are man enough to face life and death by themselves without the help of the Lord but in reality they are cowards; they are afraid to turn from the world to stand for Christ. They may be good moral people as the world judges or they may be the lowest of sinners but they are cowards. What happens to them? They are cast into the lake of fire to burn for ever! Indeed it takes a man to stand for Christ but the stand is infinitely worth it! Those who reject Christ because of fear will for ever wish they had come under the shelter of His wing. *"The unbelieving"* - Who is in this class? Is this the murderer? Is this the idolater? Is this the thief or adulterer? Is this the blasphemer or atheist? They may be but, not necessarily so! This may be that nice kid next door or that person next to you in the church pew. It may be your brother or sister, your mother or dad, or it may be you! The only thing the matter with this class is that they did not believe in Christ as Savior. That may seem to be a small thing but we must understand not to believe in Jesus is to make God a liar. It is no small thing to accuse God, who is holy above all things, of lying. Many of these folks would have nothing to do with the open wicked upon the earth. They would not think of associating with the murderer and whoremonger but where do they go? Into hell with all the lowest, wickedest, most sinful people the earth could produce. Remember this my friend, you don't have to do anything to go to hell! You are already on the road! You need to be rescued, you need to be turned around. Belief, faith and trust in Jesus is the only thing that can save you from hell. Don't ever say "I'm as good as the church members," the only thing is I don't believe. Unbelievers will be cast into the lake of fire. *"Liars"* - Hell will be full of liars. Does this mean everyone who has lied will go to hell? No, if so everyone would go there. The devil is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44. If you habitually lie, if lying does not bother you, you should question yourself. "Why do I tell lies?" It may be you are of your father the devil!! God is full of truth. Jesus said *"I am the way the truth and the life."* He is truth personified. If we are of Him, why do we not practice truth? There is too much at stake for anyone to be unsure about their salvation. If you lose your soul you've lost everything. Be sure your faith is in Jesus Christ and Him alone. Do not take man's word for anything. Go to the word of God. Man will lie to you and deceive you, the truth is with God. He has only one plan of salvation. Search

the scriptures and you will find His plan is "*repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Acts 20:21. Let us remind you again, consider heaven and hell. Where are you going? Is it worth the risk of living one more day without Christ? Is there anything to gain without Him? "*...we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*" II Corinthians 5:20.

Verse 9 - "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." - In verse two of this chapter John sees the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven, in this verse he is invited to go take a close look and see all about it. This city, that is, the inhabitants of this city compose the Bride of Christ. Who are the inhabitants? Let us state, as true Baptists we do not find many who agree with us in our interpretation of this, but we can see no other way. Most expositors believe the Bride is the church but they do not know what the church is. The church is not a great universal body of all believers. It is a local congregation of baptized believers who have covenanted together to carry out the Lord's commission. A true church is one who has as its head and founder Jesus Christ. It is one who practices and teaches the word of God and keeps the ordinances as given. The Bride of Christ will be those who have been faithful members of the Lord's churches.

Verse 10 - "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God," - From verse nine we learn that the inhabitants and owners of the New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ. As all reputable Bible scholars agree the Bride of Christ is the church. As we have stated before the difference of opinion comes as to what a church is. True Baptists have always held to the local visible concept of the church. We do not believe all saved people of any age are members of a great universal body either visible or invisible. Let us state again that a true church is a body of scripturally baptized believers who have covenanted together to carry out the commission of the Lord. We believe the Bride of Christ will be those who were faithful members of the Lord's churches while on earth. The Bride of Christ will be the owners and inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. Now let us note some things about this remarkable and marvelous city.

1. It has its origin in heaven and descends to the earth.
2. The time of its descent is after the millennial reign of Christ. This is controversial among Bible expositors. Many believe it descends before the millennium and stays suspended in the air above the earth and then ascends while the old heaven and earth pass away and the new heaven and earth are prepared. After that they think it will descend again and rest upon the earth.

Others think it never comes to rest upon the earth. These are good guesses perhaps but the scriptures do not say anything like that. It seems to me that the New Jerusalem descends from heaven after the destruction of the old world and the making of the new. Also it seems reasonable that it will rest upon the earth and the inhabitants of the earth go in and out of it as they would any city. All the confusion about the time of this city's descending is brought about by the misunderstanding of the Bride of Christ. We will point this out further in the following verses.

3. It is a real city made of material. It is not just a spirit concept or figment of imagination.

Verse 11 - "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;" - This city is filled with the glory of God and is self illuminated. It is like a gigantic crystal prism.

Verse 12,13 - "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: (13) On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates." - This city is encompassed by a wall and has twelve gates, three on each side. This wall and gates are evidently symbolic and are for beauty. They are not to keep out intruders because the gates remain open at all times. The names of the tribes of Israel are written on the gates. Israel is God's chosen people. All who believe in Christ are spoken of as being "spiritual Israel." Perhaps this is to signify that all who trust in Christ have the right to enter the Holy City.

Verse 14 - "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." - This huge wall rests upon twelve stones which are for the foundation. Man has never seen anything like this. It is difficult even to imagine.

Verse 15 - "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof." - It is hard to understand why the city is measured unless it is to show the proper architectural proportions and its tremendous size.

Verse 16 - "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." - The language used here seems clear enough that the city is a giant cube fifteen hundred miles wide and fifteen hundred miles high. Some, however, think the

city is like a pyramid with a fifteen hundred mile square base and a peak rising fifteen hundred miles. Those with this idea think the river and streets, etc. are all on the outside. If the city is fifteen hundred miles cubed it is probably storied with many, many levels. Some one has calculated that if each of the streets were a mile apart there would be over eight million miles of paved gold (over fifteen hundred times around the world). It is almost impossible to imagine the immensity of this city. It would cover about one fourth of continental United States and would be over two hundred fifty times as high as the highest mountain in the world. If this were laid out anything like our cities today or like a gigantic shopping mall with story on top of story it would take thousands of years just to explore it one time. If the stories were each one mile high, which is much higher than anything man has built, the surface horizontal area would be over twenty times that of the entire earth.

Verse 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." - An angel did the measuring of the city and wall but he used

measurements man uses. If he had used unknown measurements it would give us no idea of the size of the city. The wall was one hundred forty four cubits or about two hundred sixteen feet high. Let us note a thing or two about conditions within and without the city. Some expositors say the walls are for protection to the city and the angels who are at the gates are placed as guards. If this is true we must suppose there is danger of wicked ones coming into the city. If the city is above the earth during the millennium the wicked on the earth could get to it if they wanted to and the evil spirits with the devil will be shut up in the bottomless pit during that time so they could not get in. If the city comes after the millennium the wicked both of spirits and men will be in the lake of fire and they can't get in. Therefore again we believe the city will descend to the earth after the millennium. The Bride of Christ possesses the city and the nations that come in and out are not men in their natural bodies but rather the glorified saints who are not of the Bride of Christ. If one does not have a proper view of the Bride of Christ but supposes all the saved live in the holy city then he must find someone to go in and out who does not live there. This leads to all kinds of views untenable with the scriptures. It is certain the city is an eternal one and conditions will not change, which of course they would have to if it is here during the millennium. NOTE - There is a current writer who believes when the world becomes too full, due to this propagation, they will begin filling other planets of outer space. Don't be too disturbed, this fellow also believes no one will be in the Bride of Christ who does not wear a head covering to church. Some writers have even gone so far as to say there would be a natural continuing of live propagation with babies being born on the new earth in the animal kingdom as well as with man. With no death the world would sooner or later fill up under such conditions. Thus we see the folly of those who will not accept church truth. Let us say now that few people, even Christians, realize the importance of

church doctrine. The church reaches into eternity; it is not something to take lightly here thinking it will soon pass away and be heard of no more. The New Jerusalem is concerned about the church and vice versa. No wonder Paul said in Ephesians 5:25 *"...Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it"* and again glory be to Christ in the church throughout all ages. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. It is foolish not to take our proper place in it.

Verse 18 - "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." - The "jasper" of the scripture is definitely not the jasper stone we know today. The stone we call jasper is an opaque, reddish quartz, which is fairly common. The jasper of the Bible is a very precious stone, clear and transparent and is probably what we call diamond today. Imagine a wall over six thousand miles long and two hundred sixteen feet high made of pure diamond!! What an unbelievable sight that would be!! The whole city, that is, all buildings were pure gold so polished and burnished that it reflects like clear glass. If we could imagine a great city made of crystal and see it glisten from a distance as the sun we would have a faint idea of what this beautiful city will be like.

Verse 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; (20) 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." It is not said how high this foundation for the wall is but it must be a breath taking sight in itself. Notice the materials from which it is made. Jasper as already noted is no doubt diamond. Sapphire, a precious stone blue or azure in color in various shades or hues. Chalcedony, a white-like translucent quartz, very lustrous. Emerald, a green precious stone, very beautiful, sardonyx, a reddish yellow stone very much like onyx. It is a precious stone used frequently for signet rings. Sardius, a variety of agate, usually blood red in color. Chrysolite, a yellow stone or gem, probably like what we call topaz, or yellow sapphire. Beryl, a stone identical to the emerald in substance but having a bluish green color. Topaz, this is probably not like our topaz but is rather a pale green color. Chrysoprasus, a precious stone of greenish golden color. Jacinth, a zircon of deep purple color. Amethyst, a quartz of violet color. Together these are all the colors of the rainbow; imagine what a sight this would be with all these colors reflected through the diamond walls around this vast city!! Even the thought of it makes one stand in awe and amazement.

Verse 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 size of these gates are not mentioned but we

would suppose they are as high or higher than any gates made by man. The width also is probably tremendous. Pearl is a substance formed in an oyster shell when foreign matter such as a grain of sand enters and irritates. Some believe that since no pearl as we know them could be this large that some other substance is meant. Pearls are mentioned often in the scripture and they are the same kind of pearls we know of today. There is no reason not to believe that God could make a real pearl any size He wanted to. The natural beauty of pearl would surely enhance the magnificence and beauty of the rest of the city. The gold of the streets, as mentioned in verse 18, are purest gold so polished and shining as to appear as crystal glass. The New Jerusalem will be a sight far beyond any man's imagination in beauty and splendor.

Verse 22 - "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." - In this beautiful and holy city there is no temple, there is no need for one. When God gave the tabernacle in the wilderness and later the temple in the promised land His purpose was to have a dwelling place with His people in a sin curse world. In the New Jerusalem there will be no need for a special holy place to meet because all of the city is holy; it is all temple. It is the fulfillment of all the types set forth by the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament. God's holy presence is over the whole city. There is no taint or hint of sin anywhere; all is perfection.

Verse 23 - "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." - John spoke of the Lord Jesus as being the light of the world. Jesus, Himself said He was the light of the world. Again it is said *"He is the light and in Him is no darkness"*. The scriptures teach us that God is light. This may be hard for us to understand since we are acquainted only with natural and artificial light. God is light and the source of all light. When He created the world the Bible says darkness was over the face of the deep and in Genesis 1:3 *"...God said Let there be light and there was light."* When darkness came over the land of Egypt there was a light in the houses of God's people, Israel. When Moses led them out of Egypt a pillar of cloud went before them; it was darkness to the Egyptians but a pillar of fire or light to the children of Israel. When the tabernacle was built a strange light rested upon the mercy seat in the holy of holies. Where did this light come from? It was the presence of God Himself. So John saw in this beautiful shining crystal clear city a beautiful light not from the sun, moon or stars but from the very presence of the triune God. No natural light or artificial light made by man could be used to light this glorious city; only God Himself could be the light for such a masterpiece of creation. Praise the Lord that God in His wonderful love and grace provided the way for sinful man to behold such a sight as this. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:6 *"...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* Jesus, the Lamb of God is the way. This one who is the light of that celestial city is man's only hope today.

No one need think or hope they will ever see that city if they reject the Lord of Glory. Unbelief is the sin of all sins. Why? Think of it! Jesus is God, He is the Lord of Glory. He has made all things. He left heaven to come to earth to take the place of sinful man to die on a cruel cross, to suffer the eternal pangs of hell for those who would trust Him. Who is Jesus?!! He is the Creator; He is the one who made everything we know of now; He is the builder of this magnificent city we are studying about. Think of it! What a crime for puny sinful man to turn his back upon such a one as this!! No wonder God said in Hebrews 2:3 *"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation!"* Again we say: "Praise the Lord we have access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ." I don't know about you, but I'm glad Jesus is my Savior; I'm glad I'm going to see that beautiful city. I'm glad my hope is in Him. I'm glad salvation is by His grace. I'm glad my assurance and security rests in Him because He never fails.

Verse 24 - "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." - The light of this beautiful city is shed upon the earth. What a privilege to walk in this light!! In the new heavens and earth dwelleth righteousness. There will be no sinners upon the earth after it has been made new. It is the nations of the saved that walk in the light of this city. These saved ones are in their glorified bodies. The kings of the earth, those who have been made rulers over many things are saved kings in glorified bodies; their honor and glory that is brought into the city is the honor and glory given them through Christ our Lord. All the saved will not possess the New Jerusalem nor dwell in it: this privilege belongs only to the Bride of Christ, but all the saved will be permitted to enter the city as often as they please and they will be able to walk in its light continually. They are never out of the presence of God. Heaven is a wonderful place no matter where you are in it. Some will have more, some less but all will be as happy as they have capacity or ability to be. Where are you headed???

Verse 25 - "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." - John further describes the New Jerusalem. The twelve gates of pearl are open continually because there are no thieves or sinners of any kind to bother anything. This great city is lighted by the Lord Himself, and so there is no darkness. It is impossible to even imagine the glory of this wonderful place. It will be everything the saved could desire and much more.

Verse 26 - "And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it." - The nations whose glory and honour is brought into the city are those which are saved. All others will be in the Lake of fire. Everything in the new heaven and earth will be for the praise of the Lord. No one will be doing anything that is sinful, all works will be good works done for the honour and glory of the Lord.

Verse 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." - Some interpreters believe that the mentioning of these evil things indicates their presence outside the city. We cannot accept this teaching. These evils are mentioned as a warning and exhortation to the wicked now that they might know there will be no possibility of their entering into heaven without Jesus as their Savior. The only ones who will enter the city are those who have their names in the Lamb's Book of Life. The only way for one to know that is to have their faith in Christ to save them.

CHAPTER XXII

Verse 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." - The great cry today is "water pollution" but that's another thing we won't have to worry about in heaven. This river is 100% pure. Some may wonder why there should be a river if the saints in their glorified bodies won't need to drink. Let us say we do not know all the reasons but at least we can say it is there for beauty and for pleasure. Glorified saints do not need a material earth or a New Jerusalem but it will be there. They don't need walls of jasper or streets of gold but they will be there. God wants us to know that the new heavens and earth and the New Jerusalem are real. It is a place in which to go.

Verse 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 first mentioned in the book of Genesis. The tree of life stood in the midst of the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat of it after they had sinned. God did not want them to live for ever in a sin-cursed state. In the New Jerusalem the streets and the river will be lined with the tree of life. The inhabitants of the city may eat freely of it. The question may arise "will the glorified saints need to eat"? We answer we do not know but they certainly can if they want to. Jesus in His glorified body ate of the food given Him by the apostles. He didn't have to eat but He did. Glorified saints will eat and drink for their pleasure. It may be this is God's way to sustain glorified bodies. Our earthly bodies must eat and drink of the food and water from the earth. Perhaps glorified bodies will be sustained by the heavenly fruit and water. This we do not know because God doesn't reveal it. The tree of life bears twelve different kinds of fruit every month. No doubt the fruit of this tree will be as exotic as all the rest of the city so there is no way to describe how delicious it will be. The leaves are for the healing of the nations. This is rather difficult to understand but we know for certain there will be no sickness or disease in heaven. This can not be explained by saying the nations are those

during the millennial period because John is clearly defining an eternal city and eternal conditions. It may be this is God's way of preserving or maintaining eternal health. At least we know the tree will be there and it will have and serve a purpose.

Verse 3 - "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him:" - The curse of sin is for ever taken away. Satan entered the Garden of Eden and spoiled it and brought a curse upon all mankind and upon all the earth. Through the Lord Jesus the curse is taken away and Satan will never have the opportunity to ruin anything again. All the glorified saints will continually serve God and it will be of the highest pleasure to them. This does not mean that the saints will be on their knees before the throne all the time. Heaven is going to be a place of activity. There will never be a dull moment in that place. We cannot say what manner of things will bring pleasure but we know that everyone will be exceedingly happy and no one will wish for more than they have.

Verse 4 - "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." - This is one of the most blessed passages of scripture in the Bible. We shall see the face of the Lord Jesus. As bright and beautiful as the New Jerusalem will be the real attraction will be the Lord Jesus. Here in this mortal body with our finite minds we may be tempted to hide the fact we belong to the Lord, we may let fear of ridicule keep our lips sealed for a time but in heaven we will wear His name in our foreheads. What a wonderful thing it will be to see face to face the one who loved us and died for us. We know we love Him now but until we see Him face to face we will never know the fullness of love. Now we talk about wanting to see all our loved ones again and all our friends, this is good and we will get to see them but they will not have first place. In our hearts we know even now that Jesus is the one we really want to see.

Verse 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." - In the Bible night and darkness are connected with evil. The wicked do their evil deeds in the night; they love darkness rather than light. In heaven there will be no night for all will have light from God, light that will never go out.

Verse 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." - This verse on to the end of the chapter is probably the conclusion. John has received the message, the Revelation is complete. God sent His angel to show unto all His servants by means of John, the things that must quickly come to pass. The same God that spoke through the prophets has given this prophecy. It is true, all this book is

true. Much of it is far beyond the reach of man's imagination. There are things that any science would mock at; things that defy explanation yet they are all true. Either this book is the infallible word of God or it is a mockery, a fairy tale, a book of wildest fiction. It is the word of God; everything written in it will surely come to pass. The whole undertone of the book tells us "get ready", "be ready", "do not risk your soul", "Jesus is the only refuge", the only means of escape; Heaven awaits those who trust in Him; Hell has its jaws wide open to devour all who are so foolish to follow the devil. Friend, how is it with you? If Jesus came today, where would you be?

Verse 7 - "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." - The expression "*Behold I come quickly*" does not mean suddenly as to time, which is evident since it has been nearly 2,000 years since it was spoken. When it is time for Him to come He will come at exactly the right second. There will be no warning or build up of any kind to announce His coming before hand. His coming will be as swift as lightning. All the word of God is profitable and we should let it have its proper place in our lives. God promises a special blessing to those who learn and believe the book of Revelation. Above all things God wants us to believe Him. He is the God of all truth; the Lord Jesus said He was the truth, truth personified. It is a great crime against the justice of God to refuse to believe Him. Even if we don't understand all that God says, we should believe it anyway because when we do find out we will see He told the truth.

Verse 8 - "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things." - So great are the things which John sees and hears that he is lost in wonder of the one who showed him and so falls down to worship him. It is an easy thing to worship the messenger instead of the one who sends the message. Man is inclined to worship something he can see. So many great evangelists and other preachers are worshipped because of the greatness of their message and ministry.

Verse 9 - "Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethern the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." - It seems that John may have been so enthralled that he confused the heavenly messenger with his Lord. The angel promptly rebukes him for falling down before him and announces that he is but a messenger and fellow servant as any prophet or Christian who keeps the word of God. This certainly should teach us that saint and image worship is wrong. If such an angel as this, who speaks as though the Lord were speaking, is not to be worshipped then certainly no other creature, including Mary is worthy of worship. We must understand that no worship is accepted in heaven except the worship of God Himself. He is the only one worthy; to worship

anything or anyone else is to be an idolater. Worship God, why should we even want to worship anyone else?!!

Verse 10 - "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." - John is not to conceal or hide the things he had seen and heard; he is to publish them. God wants all His people to know about these things. If there was an urgency then about telling the story how much more today!! Surely the end is drawing near, the time is far spent!! May God help us not to seal up His word but be busy getting it out to others.

Verse 11 - "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." - This verse of scripture is often used to show that when Christ comes everyone will remain in the state they were in when He came. That is there will be no second chance for anyone. This of course is true, there is seeming evidence that the only ones saved during the tribulation will be those who have not heard the gospel before Christ comes. It is certainly true that those who die without Christ will for ever remain in the state they were in when death overtook them. The primary meaning of this verse is that the sayings of this book are not to be sealed up no matter what people think. There are some people who will not receive the word of God; they will go on in their filthiness and sin, others will gladly receive it. It makes no difference how the word is received we are still to preach and teach it. Some will be drawn closer to the Lord, others will be driven further away. His word is a savor of life unto life to some and a savor of death to others. It will either save or further condemn; it will be a stepping stone or a stumbling block. It is not ours to say how God will use His word; it is ours to preach. God will take care of the rest.

Verse 12 - "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." - The time and place of the giving of rewards will be at the judgment seat of Christ. Some think those rewards will be given immediately upon Christ's coming for the rapture of the saints because He says His reward is with Him. This does not necessarily mean that. When He comes the rewarding of His people is surely one of the things He will do but it doesn't have to be the first thing He does. Putting all the scripture together, it seems the judgment seat of Christ will be at the end of the Tribulation Period. Gaining rewards is certainly something for which every Christian should strive. We have no idea of what the rewards are but since they come from the Lord Himself we know they are well worth having. We do not serve God for nought. He not only saved us freely by His grace but He promises to richly reward us for everything we do for Him. He encourages and exhorts us over and over to do good works that we might have rewards. Jesus said to *"lay up treasures in heaven."* Paul said to build with gold, silver and precious stones

that our work may abide and we should receive our rewards. The Lord reminded John to tell each of the churches to do the right things that they might be rewarded. We have every reason to give our lives in service to God. We belong to Him. We love Him. He commands us to serve Him. He promises to reward us for every service rendered. It pays to serve Jesus!!

Verse 13 - "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." - This expression is used several times in the book of Revelation, and is surely worthy of note. We are not dealing with some finite, temporal creature but with an almighty eternal God. He is the Creator of all things and His providence is over all. He ask no one how to bring the world into existence and He need ask no one how to bring things to a close. Jesus is everything we need and without Him we are nothing. It would be much better never to be born than to live and die without Him. It is a terrible mistake for people to let the devil deceive them with the pleasures of the world and then lose everything.

Verse 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." - No one can keep the commandments perfectly. They are kept through our substitute the Lord Jesus. Without Him no one could keep the first commandment. Through faith in Christ as our Savior we are born of the Spirit of God and His love is shed abroad in our hearts. We love Him because He first loved us. We delight to do His will because He first loved us. We delight to do His will because of the new nature He has given us and because He dwells within us. No one wants to do God's will and keep His commandment until he is born again. Only those who trust in Christ will ever get to enter into the Holy City. What a terrible thing it would be for those in hell to see afar off as the rich man saw Lazarus, and behold the waters pure and beautiful as they run in rivers along the streets of the New Jerusalem and yet they cannot have one drop to cool their tongue. My friend let us note again, the words of God are true and faithful. What He says He will do. His words concerning Hell are just as true as the ones about Heaven. Even if there were no Hell just think what a loss it would be to miss Heaven!!

Verse 15 - "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." - All the ungodly Christ rejecters, regardless of how great or small their sin is in their own eyes, will be for ever shut out of the celestial city. Of course they would not want to be there in their sinful state. People in hell still have their sinful natures and they do not love God nor want to be in His presence. They still love darkness rather than light.

Verse 16 - "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." - The contents of the Book of Revelation are to be

preached with confidence and understanding in all the churches of the Lord in all ages. We might further state that no institution except the Lord's church has the right to preach and teach His word. All the false churches that have sprung up since Jesus was here are not authorized to interpret the Bible. **"I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."** - The one who sends the message is Jesus who is the one revealed in this book. He is no impostor; He is the one who was promised to come through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and then through the house of David. He is the light of the world, the one who ushers in the new day. As the sun lights the earth so the Lord Jesus is the spiritual light that shines in darkness and brings to life the sin cursed heart of man. Indeed He is the light and in Him is no darkness.

Verse 17 - "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." - This is the last invitation of the Bible. From Genesis through Revelation the invitation is openly and freely extended to all who will hear. There is no excuse for anyone to say no. The whole ministry of the Holy Spirit points to the fact that Christ died for sinners and they are invited to come. The Bride of Christ who is now being made up is pleading for lost sinners to be reconciled to God. **"And let him that heareth say, Come"** - Everyone who hears the word of God, the gospel of Christ, is to invite others to hear it also. This is the message the world needs, the message they must have if they are to escape hell and gain heaven. **"And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."** The invitation to come to Jesus is for all those who thirst after God. All those who truly desire to have God as their God who sincerely thirst after righteousness shall be filled; for all such come to seek God because He has first spoken to their hearts. **"Whosoever will"** - these are two great words. The invitation is to **"Whosoever will"** or **"Whosoever wants to come"**. The invitation is not to **"Whosoever won't"** but **"Whosoever will"**. No one has ever wanted to come to Jesus who couldn't. All that can be said is that the lost sinner refuses to come to Christ because he wants to be left alone. He does not want Christ to be Lord of his life. All have sinned, all are lost, those who want to come to Christ are no better than those who do not. They come only because God in His infinite love and mercy put the desire in their heart. Jesus is the water of life; all who drink of Him shall never thirst. Everyone is invited to drink of Him without cost to them or without cause in them. Those who drink of Him realize their unworthiness and forsake all effort to boast in themselves. They give all honor and praise to the one who is worthy, this is to the Lamb. How serious this matter is!! Friend we implore you if you are not saved, come to Jesus right now before you read another line.

Verse 18 - "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:" - A very solemn warning is given to those who would tamper with the word of God. In

John's day everything was written by hand and sometimes false prophets would make copies of the word of God adding or taking away what they saw fit. Those who do such manifest they are not of the Spirit of God. Today we have many cults who claim to be Christian yet they add their writings to the inspired word of God. Mormons claim to have inspired writings of Joseph Smith. They are very energetic and make many disciples. In our city of Lexington they are growing by leaps and bounds. Worldly wise and intelligent men follow them but it is a case of the blind leading the blind; they shall all fall in the ditch. These folks prove they are not saved because they do not know the voice of the shepherd. One has only to review the plagues of this book to understand the weightiness of the warning. It is a terrible sin against God to presume to add to His perfect word. May God help us to completely shun those who add to the word of God no matter how attractive or plausible their doctrine may be.

Verse 19 - " And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

- It is just as serious a matter to take away from God's book as it is to add to it. It is much easier to take away than to add and so is more dangerous. Baptist people, the true churches of the Lord, are the only ones not guilty of this. All who claim to be Baptists are not Baptists, there are many so-called Baptists who take away from the word of God. Anytime one leaves out or ignores part of God's word in order to magnify another part that would seem to be contrary to it they are taking away from the word of God. All folks who believe in falling from grace and losing their salvation take away from the word of God. People who knowingly and understandingly believe in the possibility of being lost after being saved are taking away from the word of God. They do not believe in John 3:16 or John 5:24, John 6:37-40, John 10:25,30, Romans 8:28-39 and all such passages. The word of God would be irreparably mutilated if all the passages teaching the eternal security of the believer were taken away. If anyone should think "this applies only to the book of Revelation" let us reply "this is a principle that applies to all the word of God not just the book of Revelation. All the Bible is God's word and we had better believe all of it no more and no less." Revelation is the last inspired writing from God. Some heretics may claim a later date for other books of the Bible but all reputable Bible scholars agree Revelation was written at least six years after any other book. Some will try to use the words of this verse to teach the possibility of falling from grace. We can be sure of one thing, if we have an interpretation of any verse that conflicts with another we have the wrong interpretation. In 17:8 we have the teaching that names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world. God knows all things. It would be extremely foolish for God to write in a book the names of whom He was going to save and take to heaven and then take the names out because they couldn't make it. There is no way to tell who are the elect and who are not. The only way we can surmise is by their profession and actions. It is

possible to act like you are saved and yet not be. Many of these false religionists have all the outward appearances of being saved but are not. Those who take away from the word of God are not saved no matter how much they act like it. The answer to the question "how is the part of one taken from the book of life and from the holy city?" is answered in Luke 8:18 *"...for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have"*.

Verse 20 - "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." - Such is the cry of the soul truly relying upon Jesus for salvation. He knows the sins of the flesh and the continual struggle with Satan to overcome his lusts. He knows that while he is not to seek to be released from his labors yet it will be a blessed relief when he is. Those in love with the Lord do not say "wait a little longer please Jesus" but *"even so, come, Lord Jesus"*. What a wonderful, glorious, happy day it will be when Jesus comes to receive us unto Himself. The battle will be over and the victory won. No more grief nor sorrow, no sickness, pain or death, no parting from our loved ones, no broken hearts, no more remorse for sin. We will be perfect like Him!! Alleluias, praise the Lord!! Don't miss it my friend. Trust in Him now!!

Verse 21 - "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Publications

Books by C.D. Cole:

Definitions of Doctrine

Volume I

Volume II

Volume III

Lectures in Biblical Theology--N.T.

Doctrine of Election

Heavenly Hope

Divine Order of the Sexes

Eternal Punishment

Books by H. Boyce Taylor:

Studies in Romans

Studies in Genesis

Bible Briefs Against Hurtful Heresies

Acts of the Apostles

Studies in the Parables

Why Be A Baptist

Womans Work in Baptist Churhes

Books by Mark W. Fenison

Baptist Women Exalted

Once Delivered

Sunday-the Forth Commandment

Books by Al Gormley

We See Not Our Signs

Why Baptist Believe and Practice Closed Communion

Was Jesus A Child At Conception

Books by Rosco Brong

Following Holiness

Christ Church and Baptism

Better Than the Angels

Love Builds Up

Other Books:

Rethinking Baptist Doctrine

By: Various Authors

God's Astounding Grace

By: D. Scott Meadows

Resetting An Old Landmark

By: Tom Ross

Courtship of Jesus

By: M.W. Hall

Fully After the Lord

By: Steve Flinchum

Studies in Types

By: J. A. Schumidt

Denominationalism Put to the Test

By: Selana E. Tull

24 Sermons on Various Subjects

By: C.D. Cole and Al Gormley

When Loved Ones are Taken

By: Lehman Strauss

Evangelism 101

By: Matt Waymeyer

The Trail of Blood

By: J. M. Carroll

The Biblical & Historical Significance of the Beard

By: Jesse Powell

BSBC: Our History, Our Heritage

By: Various Authors

Who Are The Baptist?

By: Curtis Whaley

Revelation

By: Gerald Smith

Printed by

Bryan Station Baptist Church

3175 Briar Hill Road

Lexington, Kentucky

40516

Internet Address: www.bryanstation.com

E-Mail: mail@bryanstation.com

500 Copies February 2002