

Revelation

A Simple Guide to a Simple Book
By David Allendorfer



Tower of Babel by Pieter Bruegel the Elder 1563

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The Introduction to the Book

Chapter 1

1:1 This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things which must happen soon, which he sent and made known by his angel to his servant, John, **1:2** who testified to God's word, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, about everything that he saw. **1:3** Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written in it, for the time is at hand.

This book is a letter to Christians explaining the end of the world. This letter is written in 90 A.D. by John, one of the 12 disciples of Jesus while He was on earth. John received this information from an angel, probably Gabriel who came to Mary to tell her about giving birth to Jesus. Verse 3 pronounces a blessing on those who read this book and believe what it says, and to those who tell others about this book, because the end is near!

1:4 John, to the seven assemblies that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from God, who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits who are before his throne; **1:5** and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us, and washed us from our sins by his blood; **1:6** and he made us to be a Kingdom, priests to his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The “seven assemblies” are 7 churches (verse 11). “who is, and who was, and who is still to come” refers to God the Father – Yahweh of the Old Testament. “The seven spirits who are before His throne” refers to the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, who empowers us to live for God. The Holy Spirit in His purest form is 7. In Isaiah 11:2, the Holy Spirit was referred to as 7 Spirits. 7 in the Bible is the number of fullness and perfection. The number 7 is mentioned 54 times in this book alone.

“Jesus Christ, the faithful witness” The second member of the Trinity of God. He is considered “the faithful witness” because He lived a perfect life and honored the Father by dying for our sins on the cross. He is “the firstborn from among the dead” because He was the first one to be raised from the dead. At the end of this book, we will all be raised and given new bodies like He was. Jesus will rule the world when time ends and He will also appoint believers in Him as rulers and priests at that time.

1:7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, including those who pierced him. All the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. Even so, Amen. **1:8** “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Jesus will return and everyone will recognize Him as being the Savior of the world. “Pierce” refers to His crucifixion on the cross. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet. This phrase signifies the completeness of God.

1:9 I John, your brother and partner with you in oppression, Kingdom, and perseverance in Christ Jesus, was on the isle that is called Patmos because of God's Word and the testimony of Jesus Christ. **1:10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, like a trumpet **1:11** saying, "What you see, write in a book and send to the seven assemblies: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."



Patmos is an island 15 miles into the Aegean Sea (Northern Mediterranean Sea). John was exiled there for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "In the Spirit" means that God placed John in a sort of trance and came to him in a vision. In the Old Testament, it was common for God to come to people in visions. These seven churches are in the Roman province on Asia which is now part of present day Turkey. John preached throughout Asia but spent most of his time in Ephesus. That is where he most likely wrote the Gospel of John and his 3 letters. Ephesus is also probably where he was arrested.

1:12 I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. Having turned, I saw seven golden lamp stands. **1:13** And among the lamp stands was one like a son of man, clothed with a robe reaching down to his feet, and with a golden sash around his chest. **1:14** His head and his hair were white as white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. **1:15** His feet were like burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace. His voice was like the voice of many waters. **1:16** He had seven stars in his right hand. Out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining at its brightest.

The seven golden lampstands represent the seven churches of Asia (verse 20). "One like a son of man" This refers to Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament this phrase was sometimes used when referring to Jesus before he was born in Bethlehem. (Dan. 7:13) This is also Jesus' favorite title for Himself. He almost always called Himself the Son of Man. This description of Jesus designates Him as a priest and a judge. Jesus is a priest because He intercedes for Christians when we sin. And He is a judge in that he will judge the entire world. The depiction of Him in verse 14 is similar to that of God in Dan. 7:9. The seven stars represent the angels of the seven churches (verse 20).

The double-edged sword is the word of God, a manifestation of the will of God, the Bible. (Hebrews 4:12).

1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me, saying, “Don’t be afraid. I am the first and the last, **1:18** and the Living one. I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever more. Amen. I have the keys of Death and of Hades. **1:19** Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will happen hereafter; **1:20** the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lamp stands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven assemblies. The seven lamp stands are seven assemblies.

Jesus states that He, like God, is the first and the last. “*I was dead, and behold, I am alive*” This is a reference to His crucifixion when He died and raised again the third day. The keys indicate authority over physical death and even Hades, the place that the unbeliever goes after they die. It is a holding place before all unbelievers are sentenced to Hell. Hades, like Hell, is also a place of torment and misery. John is told to write everything down that he sees. The things he sees happening now and the events that will happen in the future. Verse 20 explains verses 12 and 16.

The Letters to the 7 Churches in Asia Chapters 2-3

The next 2 chapters are letters to the individual churches in Asia. These churches were real physical churches in John's day, but they also represent all churches throughout time. Everyone can learn from the pros and cons of these churches. Each of these churches received all seven letters and the rest of the book of Revelation which signifies that this book is for everyone to hear and obey (verse 3)

2:1 “To the angel of the assembly in Ephesus write: “He who holds the seven stars in his right hand, he who walks among the seven golden lamp stands says these things: **2:2** “I know your works, and your toil and perseverance, and that you can't tolerate evil men, and have tested those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and found them false. **2:3** You have perseverance and have endured for my name's sake, and have not grown weary. **2:4** But I have this against you, that you left your first love. **2:5** Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I am coming to you swiftly, and will move your lamp stand out of its place, unless you repent. **2:6** But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. **2:7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of my God.

Ephesus was the capital of Asia. It was also home to one of the 7 Wonders of the world, the Temple of Diana (Artemis in Greek). The church at Ephesus is commended for its perseverance and its intolerance towards evil. It is also praised for having discernment and not allowing false teaching. The church also hated the Nicolaitans. Nicolaitans were followers of Nicolas who advocated that Christians had license to sin: more specifically they practiced free love. But the church at Ephesus also had some bad points. They had left their first love (Christ). They had forsaken their devotion and desire to please Jesus. Christ tells them to repent and go back to where they were. “*Him who overcomes*” This is a reference to all believers in Jesus Christ (1 John 5:5).

2:8 “To the angel of the assembly in Smyrna write: “The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life says these things: **2:9** “I know your works, oppression, and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. **2:10** Don't be afraid of the things which you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested; and you will have oppression for ten days. Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life. **2:11** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. He who overcomes won't be harmed by the second death.

Smyrna is a seaport city and is today called Izmir. It was a center for emperor worship. The church at Smyrna was very poor financially, but they were rich spiritually. They were also persecuted by Jews. Christ exposes that these Jews were not serving God at all but really serving Satan. Jesus reveals that some of them will be arrested for their faith. They will be imprisoned for ten days. God is allowing this trial

to come to them in order to test their faith. Some will even be put to death for their faith. Christ promises all true believers a crown of life (everlasting life with Him in Heaven). The “second death” is Hell, and it has no power over true believers.

2:12 “To the angel of the assembly in Pergamum write: “He who has the sharp two-edged sword says these things: **2:13** “I know your works and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. You hold firmly to my name, and didn’t deny my faith in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. **2:14** But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to throw a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. **2:15** So you also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans likewise. **2:16** Repent therefore, or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth. **2:17** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows but he who receives it.

Pergamum had one of the largest libraries of antiquity at the time. It is also the city in which parchment was first used. It had once been the capital of Asia before Ephesus had become the capital. “Where Satan’s throne is”- Pergamum was a city of intense false worship of both the emperor and of Zeus. But even amidst the sin of this city, the church did not deny Christ. Even though Antipas was martyred, the church held firm to Jesus. But the church was not perfect. Some of its members were following in the way of Balaam. (see Numbers 22-24) Balaam was a false prophet who hired himself to do religious work for profit. There were also followers of the Nicolaitans who we talked about earlier.

“Hidden manna” was sufficiency in Christ. Just as God gave the Israelites manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16:4) Christ gives believers the strength to live for Him in the midst of trials. “A white stone” refers to judging a person. People put black or white stones into an urn to vote for or against a defendant. A white stone meant not guilty and a black stone meant guilty. Giving the overcomer a white stone means that he is innocent before God of his sin.

2:18 “To the angel of the assembly in Thyatira write: “The Son of God, who has his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like burnished brass, says these things: **2:19** “I know your works, your love, faith, service, patient endurance, and that your last works are more than the first. **2:20** But I have this against you, that you tolerate your woman, Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. She teaches and seduces my servants to commit sexual immorality, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. **2:21** I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. **2:22** Behold, I will throw her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great oppression, unless they repent of her works. **2:23** I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the assemblies will know that I am he who searches the minds and hearts. I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. **2:24** But to you I say, to the rest who are in Thyatira, as many as don’t have this teaching, who don’t know what some call ‘the deep things of Satan,’ to you I say, I am not putting any other burden on you. **2:25** Nevertheless, hold that which you have

firmly until I come. **2:26** He who overcomes, and he who keeps my works to the end, to him I will give authority over the nations. **2:27** He will rule them with a rod of iron, shattering them like clay pots; as I also have received of my Father: **2:28** and I will give him the morning star. **2:29** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

Thyatira was a city famous for its working guilds. Lydia, a friend of Paul, was from Thyatira. Jesus commends the church at Thyatira for its love, faith, service, and endurance for the Gospel. Christ also praises the church's increased work. But like the church at Pergamum, this church also tolerated sin. They had a false prophetess in their congregation. They lacked the ability to discern between true and false revelation that they had. Christ tells them that He has been patient with her but she wouldn't repent of her sin so He is striking her, and all who continue to follow her, with a physical illness.

The “*deep things of Satan*” refer to false teachings within the church. Those who do not follow the false teachings won't have more burdens to worry about. “*authority over the nations*”- Christ will give all believers authority to rule in the Millennial Kingdom. (see Revelation 20:4) “*Morning Star*” is a reference to Jesus (2 Peter 1:19)

3:1 “And to the angel of the assembly in Sardis write: “He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars says these things: “I know your works, that you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. **3:2** Wake up, and keep the things that remain, which you were about to throw away, for I have found no works of yours perfected before my God. **3:3** Remember therefore how you have received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If therefore you won't watch, I will come as a thief, and you won't know what hour I will come upon you. **3:4** Nevertheless you have a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments. They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. **3:5** He who overcomes will be arrayed in white garments, and I will in no way blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. **3:6** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

Sardis was the capital of the Province of Lydia before the Roman Empire conquered it and made it part of Asia in 133 B.C. Lydia was later revived under Roman Emperor Diocletian in 296 A.D.

The Church at Sardis outwardly looked like it was alive, but inside it was dead – destitute of spiritual life and activity. Their work for God was incomplete, only done outwardly, not done from the heart. Christ tells them to wake up spiritually and remember the teachings they had received and obey them. This church is not a great testament of faith, but there were a few people in it that were true believers. “*in White*” refers to purity. “*I will in no way blot his name out of the book of life*” This is a promise to those that are truly believers that they will never lose their salvation. (see John 10:28) On the book of life see Revelation 20:12, 15. The believer not only gets the gift of eternal life, we also acquire recognition before God and all the angels, amazing!

3:7 “To the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write: “He who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, he who opens and no one can shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says these things: **3:8** “I know your works (behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one can shut), that you have a little power, and kept my word, and didn’t deny my name. **3:9** Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of those who say they are Jews, and they are not, but lie. Behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. **3:10** Because you kept my command to endure, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, which is to come on the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. **3:11** I am coming quickly! Hold firmly that which you have, so that no one takes your crown. **3:12** He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will go out from there no more. I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and my own new name. **3:13** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

Philadelphia – the name comes from the Greek word *philia* which means brotherly love. Philadelphia was called the “city of brotherly love.” This is the only church that has stayed completely faithful to Christ and the Gospel. Jesus refers to Himself as having the key of David. This is a quote from Isaiah 22:22. The key denotes authority over David’s kingdom or Christ’s kingdom. I think the door that Christ put in front of the Philadelphians refers to the ability for Gentiles (non-Jews) to be saved and enter into the Kingdom of God. Or also it could be an opportunity for the church to share the Gospel to the unbelievers around them. “*Synagogue of Satan*”- as in chapter 2 verse 9, these are Jews who are persecuting the church. “*The hour of testing*” - Testing is also translated as tribulation. The hour of testing is the Great 7-year Tribulation that will befall the earth. (Revelation 6-16) The crown in verse 11 is the reward that believers get for the good deeds they do. Good works cannot get us to Heaven, but if we have already believed we get rewarded for our good works we do. We cannot lose our salvation, but we can lose rewards for sinning. “*Pillar in the temple of my God*” means that believers will be honored in the New Jerusalem (see Revelation 21:9 – 22:5)

3:14 “To the angel of the assembly in Laodicea write: “The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Head of God’s creation, says these things: **3:15** “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot. **3:16** So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of my mouth. **3:17** Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing;’ and don’t know that you are the wretched one, miserable, poor, blind, and naked; **3:18** I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich; and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. **3:19** As many as I love, I reprove and chasten. Be zealous therefore, and repent. **3:20** Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with me. **3:21** He who overcomes, I will give to him to sit down with me on my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father on his throne. **3:22** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.”

The church at Laodicea was closely tied to the church at Colossae. (Colossians 4:15-16) This church met in the home of Nympha. Amen means truly and amen confirms what you say, that's why people usually end prayer with "Amen." Jesus calls Himself the Amen confirming what He says. "*The Head of God's creation*" – Jesus was actually the one who created the universe. (see John 1:1-3 and Hebrews 1:2)

The church at Laodicea was neither hot nor cold. This refers to their indifference. They are neither on fire for God nor outwardly against God, but Jesus says that He wishes they were one or the other. A compromising person who professes to be a Christian is repulsive to God. This analogy of hot and cold is like a drink. Either a cold drink or a hot drink is ok but a lukewarm drink is disgusting.

This church was so entangled in their material possessions that they were not aware of their true spiritual condition. They were poor spiritually. "*Buy gold from me refined by fire that you may become rich!*" – Isaiah 55:1 says come buy from me without money. This refers to the free gift of salvation that God is offering us. Jesus stands at the door and knocks. He wants to have a relationship with us, but we must repent from our sin and ask Him into our hearts.

The Scene in Heaven

Chapters 4-5

4:1 After these things I looked and saw a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, like a trumpet speaking with me, was one saying, “Come up here, and I will show you the things which must happen after this.” **4:2** Immediately I was in the Spirit. Behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting on the throne **4:3** that looked like a jasper stone and a sardius. There was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald to look at.

“After these things” – this is the beginning of the future part of this book. **Everything after this will happen at the end of the world.** (see Revelation 1:19) The imagery of John going through the door to Heaven is a reference to the Rapture. The Rapture is when all believers who are on the earth will be brought to Heaven in their bodies. Also all the believers who have died will rise from the dead and go to Heaven. (see 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) The throne is God’s throne and the one on it (God) is indescribable. (See Daniel 7:9-10) The rainbow represents God’s faithfulness. (see Genesis 9:11-17) But more than just a normal bow, this rainbow is a morning glory, a full circular rainbow, showing that God’s faithfulness is perfect and complete.

4:4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones. On the thrones were twenty-four elders sitting, dressed in white garments, with crowns of gold on their heads. **4:5** Out of the throne proceed lightnings, sounds, and thunders. There were seven lamps of fire burning before his throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. **4:6** Before the throne was something like a sea of glass, similar to crystal.

The twenty-four elders are saints, believers in God, who have died. The white garments as mentioned before are given to them that overcome (Revelation 3:4 and 3:11). I do not believe they are angels because they wear a crown (Revelation 2:10) and sit on a throne. Many people think they represent the Raptured Church.

I agree with that view but it expressly mentions 24 of them. I believe that to be important. God used the number 12 many times throughout the Bible (12 tribes of Israel, 12 Disciples etc.) Maybe there is a reason there are two sets of 12 elders. It could also be a reference to 1 Chronicles 24:1-19. Here King David divides the Levites (the priestly tribe) into 24 groups that represent Israel. This is possible since Revelation 1:6 refers to Christians as priests.

The description of God here in verse 5 is similar to other descriptions in the Old Testament (Daniel 7:9-10, Isaiah 6:4). This shows God’s awesomeness, if I can use the full meaning of that word. Though God is omnipresent, He chooses to manifest Himself in Heaven for now. God is spirit and does not have a physical form. Also here is another mention of the Holy Spirit in His true sevenfold form.

In the middle of the throne, and around the throne were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. **4:7** The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle. **4:8** The four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around

and within. They have no rest day and night, saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come!” **4:9** When the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to him who sits on the throne, to him who lives forever and ever, **4:10** the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives forever and ever, and throw their crowns before the throne, saying, **4:11** “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, the Holy One, to receive the glory, the honor, and the power, for you created all things, and because of your desire they existed, and were created!”

The four living creatures here are most likely Cherubim, an order of angelic beings. The reason I have to believe that is a passage from Ezekiel. Ezekiel 1:4-14 mentions four living creatures and his description of them is very similar to the description that John gives us here. And in Ezekiel 10:20, he calls the four living creatures Cherubim.

These four living creatures also represent the way Jesus Christ was shown to us in the four Gospels. The “Lion” represents Jesus’ kingship of Israel as shown in the Gospel of Matthew. The “Ox”, a sacrificial animal, represents Jesus as a servant as shown in the Gospel of Mark. The “Face like a man’s” is a reference to Jesus’ humanity as shown in the Gospel of Luke. And the “Flying eagle” associates Jesus with Heaven and God as does the Gospel of John.

The four living creatures endlessly proclaim God’s glory. “Who was and who is, and who is to come!” God existed in eternity past, He exists now, and He will exist in eternity future. When the four living creatures give glory to God, the 24 elders do as well. God deserves all of our worship because He created everything and every one of us. If we really saw God like the four living creatures and the 24 elders do, we would never cease to praise and honor Him.

5:1 I saw, in the right hand of him who sat on the throne, a book written inside and outside, sealed shut with seven seals. **5:2** I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to break its seals?” **5:3** No one in heaven above, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look in it. **5:4** And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look in it. **5:5** One of the elders said to me, “Don’t weep. Behold, the Lion who is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome; he who opens the book and its seven seals.”

Here God the Father is holding a scroll sealed with seven seals. The seven seals are in a line. When the first seal is broken, you can read a little farther until you reach the next seal, and so on. The contents of this scroll are not told, but as each seal is broken, a new judgment is poured out on the earth. It may be the story of the world with the first seal marking the beginning of the culmination of history. It’s just a hypothesis.

An angel asks who is worthy to open the scroll, but no one is found, alive or dead, who was able to open it. John is distraught because if no one can open the scroll and break its seal, then history can never come to a conclusion. But one of the 24 elders points him to Jesus Christ who is worthy and able to open the scroll because He

overcame sin and death at the cross and when He was raised from the dead three days later.

“Lion who is of the tribe of Judah” refers to the kingly line coming from the tribe of Judah. (see Genesis 49:8-10) *“The root of David”* refers to Jesus as being the heir to King David with whom God made a covenant promising him an eternal kingdom. (see Matt 22:42, Isaiah 11:10, and 2 Samuel 7:12-13) Jesse is David’s father.

5:6 I saw in the middle of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the middle of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. **5:7** Then he came, and he took it out of the right hand of him who sat on the throne. **5:8** Now when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Now John sees Jesus Christ – *“a Lamb as though it had been slain.”* Jesus is often called the Lamb of God referring to Him being a sacrificial offering for the sins of the world just as lambs were sacrificial animals in Jewish Law. *“as though it had been slain”* refers to the scars from His crucifixion which He will have for eternity as a reminder to us of the cost of redemption. (see John 20:27) The seven horns and seven eyes again are the manifestation of the Holy Spirit as seen in Revelation 1:4.

When Christ takes the scroll from God the Father, the four living creatures and the 24 elders worshiped Him just as they did God the Father. Apparently the prayers of believers will be used as instruments of worship. On earth, now, prayer is a form of worship for the believers so this makes sense.

5:9 They sang a new song, saying, “You are worthy to take the book, and to open its seals: for you were killed, and bought us for God with your blood, out of every tribe, language, people, and nation, **5:10** and made us kings and priests to our God, and we will reign on earth.” **5:11** I saw, and I heard something like a voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousands of ten thousands, and thousands of thousands; **5:12** saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who has been killed to receive the power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing!” **5:13** I heard every created thing which is in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb be the blessing, the honor, the glory, and the dominion, forever and ever! Amen!” **5:14** The four living creatures said, “Amen!” The elders fell down and worshiped.

The song sung to Christ is saying that He is worthy to take the scroll because He died on the cross for the sins of the world and paid the penalty of sin which is death. Everyone’s penalty has already been paid by Christ, but you can only receive that gift of salvation if you believe in Jesus. You must turn away from your sins and trust in Jesus’ death on the cross. Not everyone will be saved, but here it says that people from *“every tribe, language, people, and nation”* will believe, and those Jesus has purchased

for God. Not only have these people been saved from the penalty of sin, they will also reign with Christ over the earth. (see Revelation 2:26)

All the angels in Heaven join in with the four living creatures and the 24 elders and then all of creation joins in. Like I said before “amen” means “truly”.

The 7 Seal Judgments

Chapters 6-7

6:1 I saw that the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying, as with a voice of thunder, “Come and see!” **6:2** And behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow. A crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

This is the first seal judgment. This seal marks the beginning of the seven-year Great Tribulation, also called the 70th Week of Daniel (see Daniel 9:27). The Tribulation begins with the Rapture of the believers (see Revelation 4:1). This seven-year period will be known for its judgments and will be ruled by one man called the beast, also known as the antichrist elsewhere. There are three sets of judgments: the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls. The judgments will get increasingly more severe.

The first four seal judgments are sometimes called the four horsemen of the apocalypse. The first horseman is the beast/antichrist. Here the antichrist starts to peacefully conquer the nations with diplomacy and treaties. He will eventually create a one-world government with a one-world religion. Many people have tried unsuccessfully to do this but the antichrist will finally succeed. This is taking place right after the loss of many millions of people in the Rapture (people from “*every tribe, tongue, people, and nation*” - Revelation 5:9) and people will look to a strong leader to get them through this. So the idea of a one-world government is not too unbelievable.

6:3 When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come!” **6:4** Another came out, a red horse. To him who sat on it was given power to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another. There was given to him a great sword.

The second seal judgment takes peace from the world initiating a global war. The red horse signifies bloodshed. Diplomacy will only work so far. After that war comes. This will continue to increase the antichrist’s power.

6:5 When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, “Come and see!” And behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a balance in his hand. **6:6** I heard a voice in the middle of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius! Don’t damage the oil and the wine!”

This third seal judgment is a worldwide famine. The scale denotes rationing of food. A denarius was a day’s pay in the Roman Empire. Normally a denarius in the first century A.D. would buy eight quarts of wheat and 24 quarts of barley. So the famine will cause there to be roughly only a $\frac{1}{8}$ supply of food.

6:7 When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see!” **6:8** And behold, a pale horse, and he who sat on it, his name was Death. Hades followed with him. Authority over one fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword, with famine, with death, and by the wild animals of the earth was given to him.

This judgment kills ¼ of the people alive on the earth by war, famine, disease, and wild animals. The judgment does not end, though, with death. “Hades followed right behind.” After the people are killed their soul will go to Hades, or Hell. Death seizes the bodies and Hades claims the souls. Evidently all the people dying in this judgment will be unbelievers.

6:9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed for the Word of God, and for the testimony of the Lamb which they had. **6:10** They cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, Master, the holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” **6:11** A long white robe was given to each of them. They were told that they should rest yet for a while, until their fellow servants and their brothers, who would also be killed even as they were, should complete their course.

These souls will be the ones of Tribulation martyrs. Evidently with people will come to believe in Christ during the Tribulation. There won't be Christians at the beginning of the Tribulation to share the Gospel since they will have already been taken up to Heaven at the rapture. But people will see what is happening around them, question the propaganda the antichrist will give them, and will read their Bibles and come to a saving faith in Christ. Many of these new Christians will be killed for their faith.

6:12 I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake. The sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became as blood. **6:13** The stars of the sky fell to the earth, like a fig tree dropping its unripe figs when it is shaken by a great wind. **6:14** The sky was removed like a scroll when it is rolled up. Every mountain and island were moved out of their places. **6:15** The kings of the earth, the princes, the commanding officers, the rich, the strong, and every slave and free person, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. **6:16** They told the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, **6:17** for the great day of his wrath has come; and who is able to stand?”

This judgment brings tectonic and astronomical pandemonium. There will be an earthquake, the sun will not shine and the moon will turn red. The stars falling to earth may be references to huge meteors hitting the earth. The tectonic plates will shift violently and the face of the earth will change. Now people are sure that the world is ending. Maybe when the sky is “removed” men will see a glimpse into Heaven. Either way, they know that God is definitely judging the world and they know that they cannot stand before His judgments so they ask the rocks to crush them.

Notice they do not ask God to save them or repent of their sins. Sinful man does not reject God because of a lack of evidence for Him, they reject him out of a desire to rebel go on sinning. Even in the face of death and judgment, men reject God.

7:1 After this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth, or on the sea, or on any tree.

7:2 I saw another angel ascend from the sunrise, having the seal of the living God. He cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to harm the earth and the sea, **7:3** saying, “Don’t harm the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the bondservants of our God on their foreheads!” **7:4** I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel: **7:5** of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand, of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, **7:6** of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, **7:7** of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, **7:8** of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

The four corners of the earth is a popular saying even today. It may mean the four cardinal directions. The four angels responsible for carrying out God’s next judgment on the earth and the sea were told by a superior ranking angel to belay that judgment. (We know from other passages that there are different ranks of angels: Cherubim, Seraphim, thrones, dominion etc.) He then tells the other angels to come with him and seal 144000 Israelites with God’s seal: 12000 from each tribe. This seal means that they are owned by God and thus redeemed from their sins. Ephesians 4:30 mentions the seal of God.

This list is interesting in a few ways. For one, it mentions the tribe of Levi. Levi was the priestly tribe of Israel and did not get a normal inheritance like the others. For example, they did not get a tribal land in Israel after the Exodus. They received the Levitical cities within the other tribes’ land.

This list also does not mention the tribe of Dan. The reason may be that Dan was the northern sanctuary place set up by Jeroboam. Jeroboam lives in infamy as the one “who caused Israel to sin”. This is merely conjecture, and God will redeem Dan later. In Ezekiel 48:1, Dan is mentioned first as having a portion of land in the Kingdom and is mentioned on one of the twelve gates in verse 32 of that chapter. (on the gates see revelation 21:12)

Lastly, it mentions Joseph and Manasseh. Joseph is not a tribe of Israel. His sons Ephraim and Manasseh both fathered tribes and they are always mentioned as two separate tribes. Because Levi is never mentioned, Ephraim and Manasseh make 12 tribes. Apparently Joseph is used here instead of Ephraim. Ephraim was also a place of residence of Jeroboam if we are going by the same theory as with the exclusion of Dan.

7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. **7:10** They cried with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation be to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” **7:11** All the angels were standing around the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before his throne, and worshiped God, **7:12** saying, “Amen! Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might, be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

This multitude is different than the 144000 Israelites. It describes an innumerable crowd of every nation, tribe, and people. This scene is in Heaven because it mentions the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures. These saints and angels are rejoicing at the salvation of the 144000 Israelites. In Luke 15:10 Jesus says, “*there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.*”

7:13 One of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are arrayed in white robes, who are they, and from where did they come?” **7:14** I told him, “My lord, you know.” He said to me, “These are those who came out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes, and made them white in the Lamb’s blood. **7:15** Therefore they are before the throne of God, they serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne will spread his tabernacle over them. **7:16** They will never be hungry, neither thirsty any more; neither will the sun beat on them, nor any heat; **7:17** for the Lamb who is in the middle of the throne shepherds them, and leads them to springs of waters of life. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

One of the Elders asked John a rhetorical question to tell him who the saints are. They are saints who “*came out of the great tribulation*”. These tribulation saints are differentiated from the raptured church in that they do not wear crowns and they do not sit upon thrones. The raptured church will reign with Christ, but these tribulation saints will “*serve Him day and night*”.

These saints are not lesser Christians by any means; they will have a special service to perform for God in the temple during the Kingdom after the Tribulation is over. Notice they also receive the joys of Heaven. They will not suffer hunger or thirst or discomfort of any kind, and they will enjoy the presence of Christ as will all believers. This passage reminds us that people will be saved during the Tribulation: lots of people.

The 7 Trumpet Judgments Chapters 8-9

8:1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

8:2 I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. **8:3** Another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer. Much incense was given to him, that he should add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. **8:4** The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. **8:5** The angel took the censer, and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it on the earth. There followed thunders, sounds, lightnings, and an earthquake.

The seventh seal is broken and Heaven is in awe of what will happen next. This last seal opens the book fully and sees a transition into the 7 Trumpet judgments. Revelation 5:8 mentions the incense “which are the prayers of the saints”. During this transition, the crying mentioned in Revelation 7:10 has stopped and all is silent as Heaven waits for the next set of judgments. Meanwhile on the earth, they are experiencing storms and an earthquake.

8:6 The seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. **8:7** The first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. One third of the earth was burnt up, and one third of the trees were burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The first trumpet brings “hail and fire mixed with blood”. This judgment is similar to the seventh plague on Egypt as seen in Exodus 9:23-25. The difference here is that it is mixed with blood. The result of this is that $\frac{1}{3}$ of the earth's vegetation will be destroyed.

8:8 The second angel sounded, and something like a great burning mountain was thrown into the sea. One third of the sea became blood, **8:9** and one third of the living creatures which were in the sea died. One third of the ships were destroyed.

The second trumpet brings destruction to the sea. This judgment is similar to the first plague on Egypt. In Exodus 7:20-21, God turns the Nile River to Blood and the fish die.

“Something like a great burning mountain” – John does not say it was a mountain; He just says it was like a burning mountain. Something, either figuratively or literally, falls into the sea and causes $\frac{1}{3}$ of the earth's oceans to turn to blood. Like in Exodus The sea creatures die where the water is turned to blood. This will likely cause disease to increase. Also $\frac{1}{3}$ of ships are destroyed.

8:10 The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from the sky, burning like a torch, and it fell on one third of the rivers, and on the springs of the waters. **8:11** The name of the star is called “Wormwood.” One third of the waters became wormwood. Many people died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

The third trumpet destroys $\frac{1}{3}$ of the earth's fresh water. Wormwood is a woody bitter herb. Wormwood is not poisonous, but it very bitter. The idea of bitter undrinkable water is not new in the Bible. In Exodus 15:23, the Israelites came to a pool at Marah. They were thirsty, but they could not drink the water because it was bitter. The destruction of fresh water will be devastation after these previous judgments.

8:12 The fourth angel sounded, and one third of the sun was struck, and one third of the moon, and one third of the stars; so that one third of them would be darkened, and the day wouldn't shine for one third of it, and the night in the same way. **8:13** I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe! Woe! Woe for those who dwell on the earth, because of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels, who are yet to sound!"

The fourth trumpet blocks out sun, moon and stars for $\frac{1}{3}$ of their time. This judgment is similar to the ninth plague on Egypt. In Exodus 10:21-23, God sends complete darkness to Egypt for three days. This judgment only delivers complete darkness for a third of the day. This passage does not tell us how long this will last. Assumedly it's until the Tribulation is over.

John then sees an eagle flying over the earth; "mid heaven" just means sky here. The eagle is declaring woe to the earth because of the next three trumpet judgments. As bad as these last four were, the worst is yet to come.

9:1 The fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from the sky which had fallen to the earth. The key to the pit of the abyss was given to him. **9:2** He opened the pit of the abyss, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke from a burning furnace. The sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke from the pit.

During the fifth trumpet, John sees a "star which had fallen to earth". This star is most likely an angel because it refers to him as "he". (for stars referring to angels, see Job 38:7) The way John says speaks; it seems the star had already fallen to earth in the past: not just fallen when the fifth trumpet blew. The star most likely refers to Satan. Isaiah 14:12 says of Satan, "How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! How you are cut down to the ground".

The "pit of the abyss" is a kind of holding cell for the demons. In Luke 8:31, Christ casts the demons called Legion out of a man and they begged Him not to send them to the abyss before their time. He granted their request, and sent them into a herd of pigs. In Revelation 20:1, Satan is held in the abyss for a thousand years during the Millennial Kingdom.

9:3 Then out of the smoke came locusts on the earth, and power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. **9:4** They were told that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those people who don't have God's seal on their foreheads. **9:5** They were given power not to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion, when it

strikes a person. **9:6** In those days people will seek death, and will in no way find it. They will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

Out of the abyss come demon locusts. These are not ordinary insects as we will see in verses 7 – 11, they are demonic. These locust are given the power of the scorpions sting, but not to kill men. For five months, these demons torment those who do not have the seal of God; those who are not saved. Revelation 14:1 mentions the 144,000 saints as having the name of Christ written on their foreheads. Mankind is not allowed to die here. The demons cannot kill them and suicide is not an option. Notice God is still in control. He does not give to them the authority to hurt the grass or tree.

9:7 The shapes of the locusts were like horses prepared for war. On their heads were something like golden crowns, and their faces were like people's faces. **9:8** They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like those of lions. **9:9** They had breastplates, like breastplates of iron. The sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, or of many horses rushing to war. **9:10** They have tails like those of scorpions, and stings. In their tails they have power to harm men for five months. **9:11** They have over them as king the angel of the abyss. His name in Hebrew is "Abaddon", but in Greek, he has the name "Apollyon". **9:12** The first woe is past. Behold, there are still two woes coming after this.

These Locusts are truly terrifying beasts, and this will be a devastating five months. The king, the angel of the abyss is, as we assumed earlier, Satan. The name he is given, Abaddon, is Hebrew for destruction. Apollyon is the Greek translation: also means destruction. Interestingly enough Apollyon comes from the root word Apollo which is associated with locust in mythology.

9:13 The sixth angel sounded. I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God, **9:14** saying to the sixth angel who had one trumpet, "Free the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates!" **9:15** The four angels were freed who had been prepared for that hour and day and month and year, so that they might kill one third of mankind. **9:16** The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million. I heard the number of them.

For the sixth trumpet judgment, the angel sounding the trumpet unbinds the four angels (demons) held at the Euphrates River. The Euphrates is the longest river in western Asia, and an important river in the Bible. The Garden of Eden was set at the mouth of the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Pishon, and the Gihon rivers. In Revelation 16:12, the sixth bowl judgment is that the Euphrates River will dry up to create a path for the Armies of Armageddon.

These demons were being prepared for this exact time to kill $\frac{1}{3}$ of the remaining population. Notice that God is sovereign. All of this is part of God's plan: even demons whose main goal is to defy God are prepared for a specific purpose. These four demons bring out a new army of incredible vastness. This could be a human army, but the next verses seem to indicate another demonic army.

9:17 Thus I saw the horses in the vision, and those who sat on them, having breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of lions. Out of their mouths proceed fire, smoke, and sulfur. **9:18** By these three plagues were one third of mankind killed: by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur, which proceeded out of their mouths. **9:19** For the power of the horses is in their mouths, and in their tails. For their tails are like serpents, and have heads, and with them they harm.

The riders wore brightly colored armor of red blue and yellow. Hyacinth is a blue flower native to northern Israel. Other translation say Jacinth, a blue stone. “fire, smoke, and sulfur” these are the weapons of Hell: of demons. With these weapons, the army kills $\frac{1}{3}$ of mankind.

9:20 The rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, didn't repent of the works of their hands, that they wouldn't worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk. **9:21** They didn't repent of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their sexual immorality, nor of their thefts.

Those that the demons did not slay, did not repent. You would think that after all this terror on earth, people would turn to God who obviously exists, but mankind is sinful and unrepentant here. Like Pharaoh, who hardened his heart before Moses, these people have seen the power and wrath of God and continue to rebel against Him and sin.

The word sorceries is the Greek word pharmakon from which we get the word pharmacy. Sorcery includes magical arts such as demon worship, potions and drugs, and poisons.

The Midpoint of the Tribulation Chapters 10-12

10:1 I saw a mighty angel coming down out of the sky, clothed with a cloud. A rainbow was on his head. His face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. **10:2** He had in his hand a little open book. He set his right foot on the sea, and his left on the land. **10:3** He cried with a loud voice, as a lion roars. When he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices. **10:4** When the seven thunders sounded, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from the sky saying, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders said, and don't write them."

A mighty angle comes from Heaven and sets his feet on both the land and the sea. This is a reference to the fact that God is in authority over all the earth. As we have seen before, God is sovereign.

This mighty angel had a book that was already opened. This book contains the rest of history. It speaks of judgment and the Kingdom. Notice here that John was about to write what he saw, but the angel stopped him. God showed John a glimpse into what will happen, but this vision was not meant for us. This shows us that Revelation is not meant to be an all-encompassing guide to the future; it is meant for a specific purpose: to show that God is in control and that he will fulfill His promises.

10:5 The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to the sky, **10:6** and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there will no longer be delay, **10:7** but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as he declared to his servants, the prophets.

The angel swears by the Lord that there will no longer be any delay. Some have assumed that this strong angel is Jesus Christ, but the fact that he swears by God and not himself indicates that this is not the case. The mystery of God is what has been revealed throughout history and what will still be revealed in the second coming of Christ when He sets up His Kingdom on earth.

The idea is that after the 7th angel sounds his trumpet the end will come. In Revelation 11:15 it says, "The seventh angel sounded, and great voices in heaven followed, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ. He will reign forever and ever!'" That trumpet will not mark the beginning of the Kingdom of Christ, but it does mark the beginning of the second half of the Tribulation: the last portion of time before the end.

10:8 The voice which I heard from heaven, again speaking with me, said, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land." **10:9** I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. He said to me, "Take it, and eat it up. It will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey." **10:10** I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up. It was as sweet as honey

in my mouth. When I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. **10:11** They told me, “You must prophesy again over many peoples, nations, languages, and kings.”

God, after He told John not to write down the contents of the book is told to take it from the angel and eat it. This same imagery is used in Ezekiel 2:8-3:3. Ezekiel is told to eat a scroll and prophesy its words to Israel. *It was sweet as honey...my stomach was made bitter* – This is the revelation of the last half of the Tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus spoke of the second half of the Tribulation in Matthew 24:21. He explains that it will be much worse than the first 3 ½ years. That is the bitter in the stomach. But the sweet taste is the Kingdom. Revelation 21:9-22:5 is a beautiful description of what awaits believers in Jesus. John is then commanded to prophesy to the nations. This is different than before when he was told not to write what he saw. Here he is writing only what the Lord has specifically commanded him to write.

11:1 A reed like a rod was given to me. Someone said, “Rise, and measure God’s temple, and the altar, and those who worship in it. **11:2** Leave out the court which is outside of the temple, and don’t measure it, for it has been given to the nations. They will tread the holy city under foot for forty-two months.

This chapter goes back to the beginning of the 7 year Tribulation. This passage is similar to Ezekiel 40:5 where Ezekiel is told to measure the temple that is to come. This verse in Revelation is telling us that a new temple will be built during the Tribulation: the previous temple having been destroyed by Rome in AD 70. “and the altar” refers to the fact that the temple will be used for sacrifices like it was in Biblical times.

The temple will be used by Jews in worship for the first 3 ½ years. Daniel 9:27 says of the Tribulation, “*He shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the middle of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease; and on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate*” The antichrist will make a treaty with Israel to ensure peace and allow them to rebuild the Temple. They aren’t legally allowed to do that now. But in the middle of those 7 years, 3 ½ years or 42 months, he will break the covenant and put an end to sacrifice.

As mentioned before the second half of the Tribulation will be much worse and Israel’s peace will turn to persecution. (see Revelation 12:13-17) Verse 2 of this chapter is a reference to this time when Israel’s worship has been stopped and the antichrist himself will sit upon the throne and be worshipped as god. “*for it has been given to the nations*” – All the world (save a select few saints) will worship the antichrist as god.

11:3 I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” **11:4** These are the two olive trees and the two lamp stands, standing before the Lord of the earth. **11:5** If anyone desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies. If anyone desires to harm them, he must be killed in this way. **11:6** These have the power to shut up the sky, that it may not

rain during the days of their prophecy. They have power over the waters, to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

We are not told the identity of the two witnesses. Some have guessed that they are Moses and Elijah because they were with Christ during the Transfiguration. (see Luke 9:28-36) Another reason Elijah is thought to be one of the witnesses is because they are said to be able to “*shut up the sky that it may not rain*”. (see James 5:17) Verse 4 is taken from Zechariah 4:3 and 14.

***“They will prophesy one thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”* These witnesses will proclaim God for the first half of the Tribulation, 1260 days. They will be clothed in sackcloth so they will be mourning prophets preaching destruction. They will have miraculous powers to back up their words and they will be untouchable until their time is up. (see verse 7)**

11:7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. **11:8** Their dead bodies will be in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. **11:9** From among the peoples, tribes, languages, and nations people will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not allow their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. **11:10** Those who dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and they will be glad. They will give gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

After the three and a half years are up, the beast (antichrist) will kill them. This the first specific reference to the beast in Revelation though he is the subject of the first seal judgments. At this mid-point in the Tribulation, he rises to the place of extreme power. This act will gain him support from the nations who hated the witnesses.

The great city in verse 8 is Jerusalem. (*Where their Lord was crucified*) Jerusalem is denoted as Sodom and Egypt: being the epitome of perverse wickedness. The bodies of the witnesses were denied even the respect of burial. Even the worst criminals are allowed to be buried. The nations will look on them and rejoice over the destruction of the prophets even to the point of making a celebration out of it.

11:11 After the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet. Great fear fell on those who saw them. **11:12** I heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” They went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies saw them. **11:13** In that day there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified, and gave glory to the God of heaven. **11:14** The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe comes quickly.

During the celebration of the death of the prophets, while everyone is watching (verse 9), God will bring them back to life. They will stand up and God will call them back to Heaven. This will undoubtedly let people know there is a power greater than the beast’s

That same day, 7000 people will die in an earthquake that will level 10% of Jerusalem. Those not killed will glorify God. Some will probably repent and be saved; others will just glorify God out of fear. The second of three woes is over. (see Revelation 9:12)

11:15 The seventh angel sounded, and great voices in heaven followed, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ. He will reign forever and ever!” **11:16** The twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God’s throne, fell on their faces and worshiped God, **11:17** saying: “We give you thanks, Lord God, the Almighty, the one who is and who was; because you have taken your great power, and reigned. **11:18** The nations were angry, and your wrath came, as did the time for the dead to be judged, and to give your bondservants the prophets, their reward, as well as to the saints, and those who fear your name, to the small and the great; and to destroy those who destroy the earth.” **11:19** God’s temple that is in heaven was opened, and the ark of the Lord’s covenant was seen in his temple. Lightnings, sounds, thunders, an earthquake, and great hail followed.

The seventh trumpet sounds and a statement is made: “*The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord*”. Refer to the commentary on Revelation 10:7. This trumpet is a prelude to the bowl judgments and marks the beginning of the second half of the Tribulation.

In verse 19, God’s temple is mentioned. The temple of Solomon was modeled after the temple in Heaven. (see Hebrews 9:23) The Ark of the Covenant is seen in Heaven showing that God has not forsaken His covenant with Israel. God is still faithful to His people even amid great turmoil. He will come to earth and save Israel from the beast.

12:1 A great sign was seen in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. **12:2** She was with child. She cried out in pain, laboring to give birth. **12:3** Another sign was seen in heaven. Behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven crowns.

This sign is given at the midpoint of the Tribulation. The woman in verse 1 is a symbolic representation of Israel. The imagery of the sun and moon and twelve stars is a reference to Joseph’s dream in Genesis 37:9-11 “*He (Joseph) dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brothers, and said, “Behold, I have dreamed yet another dream: and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me.” He told it to his father and to his brothers. His father rebuked him, and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Will I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves down to you to the earth?”*

In Joseph’s dream, the sun and the moon were Jacob and Rachel, and the 11 stars were Joseph’s 11 brothers. (He would be the 12th star.) Jacob immediately knew this to be the case and we can see his rebuke in verse 10. Furthermore, we can infer the woman to be Israel because she is persecuted for the second half of the Tribulation. (see verses 13 and 14.)

The second sign in heaven is the “*great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns*” This is a reference to Satan (verse 9). The imagery of the seven heads and ten horns is a reference to the beast. The seven heads and ten horns are explained more in chapter 13. We see here that the beast gets his power from Satan (Revelation 13:4). The color red denotes that Satan is desirous of bloodshed. We see in verse 13 that Satan is desperate to destroy Israel.

12:4 His tail drew one third of the stars of the sky, and threw them to the earth. The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. **12:5** She gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. Her child was caught up to God, and to his throne. **12:6** The woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that there they may nourish her one thousand two hundred sixty days.

Here Satan draws out a third of the stars from the sky. Stars sometimes refer to angelic beings as in Revelation 9:1 or Job 38:7. Many people believe this to be the fall of Satan. When God created the heavens and the earth, Satan (Lucifer) was created as the covering Cherub, the highest being in the angelic realm. (see Ezekiel 28:1-19) In Isaiah 14:12-17, Isaiah speaks of Satan’s desire to become God and God’s subsequent banishment of Satan. In Jude 6, Jude tells us that many of the angels followed Satan when He rebelled against God. “*Angels who didn’t keep their first domain, but deserted their own dwelling place...*” 2 Peter 2:4 also speaks of the fall of the angels.

In Revelation 12:4, we are told that Satan took with him a third of angels of Heaven. As seen in previous chapters, there are at least hundreds of millions of demons (Revelation 9:16) so there must have been billions of angels created.

The rest of verse 4 and verse 5 are about the birth of Christ. We see in Revelation 19:15, when Christ returns “*He will rule them with an iron rod.*” This is a reference to Psalm 2:9 in which God declares He will establish the Messiah as ruler of the nations. In verse 4, it says Satan waited for Israel to give birth to the Messiah so he could kill Him. This is a reference to Matthew 2:13-19, where Herod killed all the babies in Bethlehem to try to destroy Jesus. At the end of verse 5, Jesus was caught up to God. Acts 1:9 records the ascension of Jesus.

Verse 6 fast forwards to the second half of the Tribulation. As seen before, the antichrist will break his peace treaty with Israel and a period of intense persecution will begin. It will last 3 ½ years or 1260 days. In Matthew 24:15-20, Jesus speaks of this time. He says to flee to the mountains and to not even hesitate to get a cloak. Revelation 12:13-17 speaks of this persecution in more detail.

12:7 There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels made war on the dragon. The dragon and his angels made war.

Still part of this sign, there is war in Heaven; Michael and the angels of God against Satan and the fallen angels. This also happens at the midpoint of the Tribulation. There are only three angels specifically named in the Bible, Michael, Gabriel, and Satan. Michael is the only angel ever called an archangel. He is also

called the protector of Israel. (Daniel 12:1) Michael is seen here as the commander of the angelic army. In the hierarchy of angels, Michael is usually considered to be in charge.

In Daniel 10:13, Daniel prays for understanding concerning the future of Israel. 21 days later an angels comes to him and explains to him why he was three weeks late. He said that a demon was restraining him and he was not able reach Daniel. *“Then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me,”* Michael, a more powerful angel helped him defeat the demon and go to Daniel.

Michael is an archangel and possibly first among the angels, but Satan was created as the covering Cherub. Satan was created foremost among the angels of God and even though he defected, he still has power and authority among the angels. In Jude 9 it says, *“But Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil and arguing about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him an abusive condemnation, but said, ‘May the Lord rebuke you!’”* Michael recognizes that Satan, while being in rebellion against God, is still God’s anointed Cherub.

Verse 1 of this chapter differs from Jude 9 in that here Michael is fighting with Satan. Here, God has given Michael the authority to defeat Satan and bar him from Heaven.

12:8 They didn’t prevail, neither was a place found for him any more in heaven. **12:9** The great dragon was thrown down, the old serpent, he who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. **12:10** I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ has come; for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. **12:11** They overcame him because of the Lamb’s blood, and because of the word of their testimony. They didn’t love their life, even to death. **12:12** Therefore rejoice, heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has gone down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time.”

Through the authority of God, Michael and his angels defeat Satan and his demons. *“neither was a place found for him any more in heaven”* Satan has been removed from his position at the covering Cherub due to his mutiny, but he still has access to Heaven. Job 1:6 shows Satan’s access to Heaven. *“Now on the day when God’s sons came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan also came among them.”* The following verses show us a dialog between God and Satan. As seen in Job, Satan stands before God and accuses the righteous of sin. In verse 10, we see that he accuses the saints day and night before God.

Satan is called here the great dragon, the serpent of old, the devil, Satan, and the deceiver. Great dragon means a destructive monster related to a serpent. Serpent of old refers to the Garden of Eden where Satan, in the form of a snake, deceived Eve into eating the forbidden fruit. Devil means slanderer and Satan means adversary. He is also called the deceiver of the whole world. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, it says Satan has blinded the minds of the unbelieving.

In verse 11, we see how one overcomes Satan. They overcome by the death of Christ, their testimony of belief if the death of Christ, and the love for Christ even

over their own lives. James 4:7 says, *“Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”* Heaven is rejoicing because they are finally rid of Satan, but woe to the earth for he will make one last effort to destroy Israel and nullify God’s promises to her. He is desperate to do this because he knows he only has 3 ½ years left (1260 days).

12:13 When the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. **12:14** Two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, so that she might be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. **12:15** The serpent spewed water out of his mouth after the woman like a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. **12:16** The earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon spewed out of his mouth. **12:17** The dragon grew angry with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep God’s commandments and hold Jesus’ testimony.

When Satan is banished from Heaven he goes to persecute Israel (the woman), but in verse 14, we see that God has a special place prepared for her to keep her safe from Satan for the second half of the Tribulation(3 ½ years). (see Revelation 12:6) Satan then tries to flood Israel out of her place of sanctuary, but God causes the ground to open up and swallow the flood. Angry at his inability to destroy Israel here, Satan goes off to destroy what remains of Israel. This is a time of great persecution for those who did not or could not flee to the wilderness. In Matthew 24:19 Jesus says, *“But woe to those who are with child and to nursing mothers in those days!”*

The Antichrist's Reign Chapters 13-15

13:1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads. On his horns were ten crowns, and on his heads, blasphemous names. **13:2** The beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority

The next part of the sign is of *“a beast coming up out of the sea”*. The beast here is the antichrist first mentioned in Revelation 11:7. Like Satan in Revelation 12:3, the beast has ten horns and seven heads. This passage has its roots in a prophecy from Daniel chapter 7. In verses 3-6 of Daniel 7, Daniel sees four great beasts come up out of the sea: a beast like a lion, a beast like a bear, and a beast like a leopard. In verses 7-8, Daniel sees the fourth beast a strong and terrifying beast with 10 horns and the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

In verse 17, it is explained that the beasts were kingdoms of the earth. These kingdoms are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. In verse 24, it is said that the fourth beast will be different than the other kingdoms. It will be a 10 king confederacy (10 horns). This also coincides with the 10 toes of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2:41-42. The ten toes are made of iron and clay. Iron, we know from the dream, is Rome so this confederacy will also have its roots in Rome's empire. We know that the beast in Revelation 13 is also Rome because of the imagery of 10 horns and 7 heads. Rome is famously known as the city built on 7 hills.

But Rome in Biblical times was not a confederacy. We see in Revelation that in the last days the Roman Empire will be revived and form a 10-nation confederacy. This new Roman Empire will then be ruled by one man, the antichrist. In Daniel 9:26, it talks about the *“prince that is to come”* from Rome. The 10 horns and 7 heads are explained more in Revelation 17:8-18. At the end of verse 2 we see that the empire and the antichrist get their power from Satan

13:3 One of his heads looked like it had been wounded fatally. His fatal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled at the beast. **13:4** They worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” **13:5** A mouth speaking great things and blasphemy was given to him. Authority to make war for forty-two months was given to him. **13:6** He opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his dwelling, those who dwell in heaven.

The antichrist will suffer a fatal wound and will be miraculously brought back to life by Satan. Revelation 17:8 mentions this again. *“The beast that you saw was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go into destruction. Those who dwell on the earth and whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel when they see that the beast was, and is not, and shall be present.”*

This happens at the midpoint of the Tribulation. The antichrist is killed and comes back to life. This is a simulation of Jesus's death and resurrection. He will then blaspheme and declare himself to be God as did the Roman emperors before him. Because of this miracle the whole world, except those chosen by God, will worship the beast and Satan, and understandably so.

As bad as the Tribulation gets, we must remember that God is still in control. The beast may be the extreme ruler of earth at this point, but his authority is still only given to him by God. *"The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he will."* Daniel 4:32.

13:7 It was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. Authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation was given to him. **13:8** All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been killed. **13:9** If anyone has an ear, let him hear. **13:10** If anyone is to go into captivity, he will go into captivity. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, he must be killed. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.

This will be a time of great persecution for believers just as it will be for Israel. The Roman Empire will rule over every nation and people and the antichrist will rule the Roman Empire claiming to be God. Only those whose names are written in the Book of Life (believers) will see him for who he truly is and refuse to worship him.

Verse 8 is an important passage theologically. It says that the Book of Life was written before the foundation of the world, i.e. before God created the world and everything in it, He decided who would come to salvation. Ephesians 1:4 says, *"He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love;"*

Verse 10 is a word of encouragement to the saints. While in persecution, believers will be assured that the beast will be punished. Revelation 19:20 tells of the beast being thrown into the Lake of Fire that burns forever.

13:11 I saw another beast coming up out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke like a dragon. **13:12** He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. He makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. **13:13** He performs great signs, even making fire come down out of the sky to the earth in the sight of people. **13:14** He deceives my own people who dwell on the earth because of the signs he was granted to do in front of the beast; saying to those who dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who had the sword wound and lived. **13:15** It was given to him to give breath to it, to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause as many as wouldn't worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Continuing with the sign, there comes a second beast out of the earth. This is in contrast with the antichrist who comes out of the sea. This beast is called the false prophet (in Revelation 16:13, 19:20, and 20:10) because his purpose is to cause the earth to worship the antichrist. Also as a prophet, he does miraculous works even causing fire to come from the sky (as the two witnesses did in Revelation 11:3 or as

Elijah did to the prophets of Baal in 2 Kings 1:10). The false prophet can do supernatural wonders because his authority comes from the antichrist whose authority, in turn, comes from Satan.

These three, Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet, make up a false Trinity. Satan parallels God the father, the antichrist mirrors Jesus Christ, and the false prophet mirrors the Holy Spirit.

The false prophet rallies the people to make a statue of the antichrist and he proceeds to breathe life into it. He allows this image to be able to speak. This act and the other miracles he does, works to deceive the minds of the masses to worship the antichrist, who will set himself up as God. This image is then set up in the holy place to be worshiped. This is what is called the “Abomination of Desolation” prophesied in Daniel 9:27 and mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24:15.

13:16 He causes all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, and the free and the slave, to be given marks on their right hands, or on their foreheads; **13:17** and that no one would be able to buy or to sell, unless he has that mark, the name of the beast or the number of his name. **13:18** Here is wisdom. He who has understanding, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. His number is six hundred sixty-six.

The false prophet is given the authority to enforce worship of the image of the antichrist with capital punishment. He also causes the masses to be marked with the mark of the antichrist, his name or his number. He parallels the Holy Spirit in his work of causing the people to worship. He also mirrors the Holy Spirit in sealing believers. Ephesians 1:13 says, “*having also believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*”. The Holy Spirit seals all believers in Christ as a pledge of glorification in Heaven. The false prophet’s seal is a mark of identification with the antichrist. The false prophet will also make it to that those who did not receive the mark of the antichrist will not be able to buy or sell putting obvious pressure on people to get the mark.

In verse 18, the infamous number of the antichrist is given as six hundred sixty-six. “*for it is the number of a man*” means that it is a real number not just three sixes strung together (666). A lot of time has been spent in the study of numerology and gematria trying to identify the antichrist from his number. It is probably safe to say that all of it is bogus, but we are told that we are to identify him based on his number when the time comes. The number is interesting in that each numerical column is one short of seven, the number of completeness, used extensively in the Bible. This may imply that the antichrist and his world order is incomplete and will soon be replaced by Jesus Christ and His Eternal Kingdom.

14:1 I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him a number, one hundred forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. **14:2** I heard a sound from heaven, like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of a great thunder. The sound which I heard was like that of harpists playing on their harps. **14:3** They sing a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the one hundred forty-four thousand, those who had been redeemed out of the earth. **14:4** These are those who were not defiled

with women, for they are virgins. These are those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed by Jesus from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb. **14:5** In their mouth was found no lie, for they are blameless.

The Lamb is Jesus and the 144000 saints are the same as the group that was sealed in Revelation 7:4. These saints, sealed from Israel, have God's name marked on their foreheads as opposed to the unbelievers who will have the antichrist's mark on their foreheads. Mount Zion often refers to Jerusalem, but it also can refer to Heaven as it does in Hebrews 12:22: "You have come to *Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.*" It is probably referring to the heavenly Jerusalem here because in verse 3 it says, "*They sing a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders.*"

The 144000 were sealed for a purpose on earth; now that they are in Heaven implies that they are done with their work on earth. If their purpose was to evangelize, that would make sense from verses 6 and 7. These 144000 are called virgins. This probably refers to physical virgins because it says they "*follow the Lamb wherever he goes.*" In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul writes about sex, marriage, divorce, and Christian service. He admits that when you get married you cannot serve Christ in the same way that you can when you were unmarried. A married man must care for and provide for his family. He cannot just get up and "*follow the Lamb wherever he goes*". In 1 Corinthians 7:28, Paul says, "*But if you marry, you have not sinned. Yet such will have oppression in this life, and I want to spare you.*"

"*First fruits*" in verse 4 is a reference to the Old Testament. The first fruits were an offering to God at the beginning of the harvest. They were a symbol that all good things came from God and that more would come. Here it is a promise that more Israelites will be saved at the harvest (i.e. when Christ returns). Christ is called the first fruits of the resurrection as a promise that we too will be resurrected as He was (1 Corinthians 16:20, 23). In Romans 16:5, Epaenetus is called the first fruits of Achaia to Christ, meaning that more would be saved in Achaia.

"*Blameless*" in verse 5 does not mean sinless: because no one is sinless (Romans 3:23), but means above reproach. Job is called blameless in Job 1:1 and Noah is called blameless in Genesis 6:9.

14:6 I saw an angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal Gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation, tribe, language, and people. **14:7** He said with a loud voice, "Fear the Lord, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and the springs of waters!" **14:8** Another, a second angel, followed, saying, "Babylon the great has fallen, which has made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her sexual immorality."

"*Mid heaven*" is a reference to the sky over earth. The Greek word for heaven is also translated sky. It is sometimes said that there are three heavens: first heaven is the sky, second heaven is space, and third heaven is what we think of as Heaven, the abode of God. In 2 Corinthians 12:2, Paul says he was caught up to the third heaven.

This angel is flying around to give everyone on earth one last chance to accept the Gospel of Christ before the final judgments come. The Gospel here is as it has

always been: fear, worship, and glorify God because He is God. To do this means not getting the mark of the antichrist, and as seen in Revelation 13:15, 17, there will be intense persecution for those who do not get the mark. But the ones who do get the mark will not be unpunished when Christ returns. (see Revelation 14:9-11)

Babylon mentioned in verse 8 will be explained more fully in Chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation. Babylon is the religious and political system headed up by the antichrist. The proclamation by the angel is in the past tense even though Babylon does not fall until the seventh bowl judgment. To God, its destruction is a sure thing and has already happened.

14:9 Another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead, or on his hand, **14:10** he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger. He will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. **14:11** The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. They have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. **14:12** Here is the perseverance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” **14:13** I heard the voice from heaven saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.”

The people who receive the mark of the antichrist and thus do not receive the Gospel of God will suffer the wrath of God. God’s wrath is often referred to as a cup of wine. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed that God would take away the cup of wrath that He was to drink. In Matthew 20:22, Jesus asks His disciples “Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?” This is, of course, referring to Hell and it is evident that Hell does last forever. There is no forgiveness by that point and there is no annihilation.

Apparently Hell will be viewable by God and His angels. In Luke 16:22-31, Jesus tells the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. In verse 23, the rich man, being in Hell, sees Lazarus in Heaven with Abraham. In verse 26, Abraham says there is a great chasm between them so that none can cross from one place to the other. Whether those in Hell will actually be able to see those in Heaven is unknown.

Verses 12 and 13 are an encouragement to the believers on the earth at this time. They will be persecuted for their faith and even murdered, but it will not be in vain. Their works will follow them and they will be rewarded for their faith.

14:14 I looked, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud one sitting like a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. **14:15** Another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Send your sickle, and reap; for the hour to reap has come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe!” **14:16** He who sat on the cloud thrust his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. **14:17** Another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven. He also had a sharp sickle. **14:18** Another angel came out from the altar, he who has power over fire, and he called with a great voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Send your sharp

sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for the earth's grapes are fully ripe!" **14:19** The angel thrust his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. **14:20** The wine press was trodden outside of the city, and blood came out of the wine press, even to the bridles of the horses, as far as one thousand six hundred furlongs.

This is the harvest of the earth: a beginning of judgment of the wicked. The Son of Man is Jesus Christ. (see Revelation 1:13) The golden crown is the stephanos crown, a crown of victory. Jesus was the victor at the cross when He overcame sin and death, and he will be the ultimate victor when He finally destroys all sin and death in judgment. Christ is holding a sharp sickle here to reap the harvest of the earth.

In Matthew 13:37-43, Jesus describes this "harvest". *"The field is the world; and the good seed, these are the children of the Kingdom; and the darnel weeds are the children of the evil one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. As therefore the darnel weeds are gathered up and burned with fire"* - Matthew 13:38-40.

In this harvest the wicked are judged by Christ, and in verse 17 an angel casts them into *"the great wine press of the wrath of God."* In verses 8 and 10 of Revelation 14 God's wrath is referred to as wine. In Luke 22:42 Jesus calls his crucifixion a cup. Verse 20 is a reference to the battle of Armageddon. (see Revelation 19:15) Apparently the blood of the horses and men will run for 1600 furlongs (200 miles) which is about the length of the valley of Megiddo. The blood will also rise up to the horses' bridles (about 4.5 feet).

15:1 I saw another great and marvelous sign in the sky: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them God's wrath is finished. **15:2** I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who overcame the beast, his image, and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. **15:3** They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God, the Almighty! Righteous and true are your ways, you King of the nations. **15:4** Who wouldn't fear you, Lord, and glorify your name? For you only are holy. For all the nations will come and worship before you. For your righteous acts have been revealed." **15:5** After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. **15:6** The seven angels who had the seven plagues came out, clothed with pure, bright linen, and wearing golden sashes around their chests. **15:7** One of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. **15:8** The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power. No one was able to enter into the temple, until the seven plagues of the seven angels would be finished.

Chapter 15 is a preface to the seven bowl judgments also known as the bowls of wrath. (see Revelation 16:1) The bowls are poured out on the earth by seven angels. The sea of glass is the same as the one mentioned in Revelation 4:6 before the throne of God. These saints are those that were martyred under the rule of the antichrist. The songs of Moses are recorded in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

“For all the nations will come and worship before you.” In the Kingdom of God there will be other nations, with Jerusalem being the capitol of the world. Isaiah 60:3 says, ***“Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”*** And Micah 4:2 says, ***“Many nations will go and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.’”***

One of the four living creatures (mentioned in Revelation 4:6-8) gives the angels the bowls of wrath as they leave the temple (mentioned in Revelation 11:19). Then God’s smoke fills the temple and no one is allowed in until His wrath is finished.

The 7 Bowl Judgments

Chapter 16

16:1 I heard a loud voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God on the earth!” **16:2** The first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth, and it became a harmful and evil sore on the people who had the mark of the beast, and who worshiped his image. **16:3** The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man. Every living thing in the sea died.

The first bowl judgment is poured out upon those who worshiped the beast and received his mark. The righteous are excluded from this judgment. This is the beginning of the promise made in Revelation 14:10. Like other plagues in this book, this one is a reference to the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. (see Exodus 9:8-12)

The second bowl is poured out on the sea turning it to blood. In Revelation 8:8-9, the second trumpet judgment, $\frac{1}{3}$ of the sea became blood and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the sea creatures died. In second bowl, all of rest of the sea is turned to blood and all of the sea creatures die.

16:4 The third poured out his bowl into the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. **16:5** I heard the angel of the waters saying, “You are righteous, who are and who were, you Holy One, because you have judged these things. **16:6** For they poured out the blood of the saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. They deserve this.” **16:7** I heard the altar saying, “Yes, Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments.”

The third bowl is poured out on the rivers and springs just like the third trumpet was in Revelation 8:10. Then, one third of the fresh waters had become bitter: drinkable but bitter. Now, the rest of the fresh water became blood. The fresh water/blood would still technically be drinkable, but it would be very bitter and extremely unhealthy.

It is deemed fitting for those who have shed the blood of the saints and the prophets to have to drink blood. The judgment is almost poetic. A similar account can be found in Exodus 32:20 when Moses burned the golden calf and ground it to powder and made Israel drink it.

16:8 The fourth poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. **16:9** People were scorched with great heat, and people blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues. They didn't repent and give him glory.

The fourth bowl is poured out on the sun. This judgment intensifies the sun's heat and causes it to scorch the earth and those on it. Just like in Revelation 9:21, the people here do not repent of their sin and trust in God. This shows that a disbelief in God is not because of lack of evidence; it is because of a heart that does not want to give Him glory.

In Luke 16, Jesus tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus. In verse 31 the rich man, being in Hades, asks to send Lazarus to his brothers to warn them of the judgment, but Abraham says, *“If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rises from the dead.”* The truth of this passage is proven at the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

16:10 The fifth poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was darkened. They gnawed their tongues because of the pain, **16:11** and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores. They didn’t repent of their works.

The fifth bowl is similar to the fourth trumpet judgment. The fourth trumpet darkens the earth for a third of the day and the fifth bowl darkens the antichrist’s kingdom for the whole day. This is akin to the ninth plague on Egypt where all was darkened except for Israel in the land of Goshen. Here only kingdom of the beast is darkened. It seems that the sores from the first bowl are still in effect at this time. Also as before the sinners blaspheme the God they know to exist and do not repent.

16:12 The sixth poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates. Its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings that come from the sunrise. **16:13** I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, something like frogs; **16:14** for they are spirits of demons, performing signs; which go out to the kings of the whole inhabited earth, to gather them together for the war of that great day of God, the Almighty. **16:15** “Behold, I come like a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his clothes, so that he doesn’t walk naked, and they see his shame.” **16:16** He gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew, Megiddo.

This bowl prepares the land for the infamous Battle of Armageddon. The sixth bowl like the sixth trumpet has to do with the Euphrates River. In the aftermath of the sixth trumpet, a third of mankind dies. The sixth bowl judgment dries the Euphrates River and makes it a path for *“the kings that come from the sunrise.”* The sun rises in the east so this is saying that armies of eastern nations will join the Battle of Armageddon.

Three unclean spirits (demons) are seen leaving the mouths of the beast, the false prophet, and Satan. These demons are sent to gather the whole world together for the *“the war of the great day of God”*. The demons will accomplish this by performing signs; i.e. miracles. The nations will be persuaded and will all come to the Valley of Megiddo also known as Armageddon. There they will fight Jesus Christ.

There is still a call in verse 15 to repent and believe the gospel. It is also a call to be on the alert. If a guard was caught sleeping on duty, his clothes would be taken away and he must walk around naked. The Greek word translated shame here was actually a euphemism for genitalia for the Jews.

16:17 The seventh poured out his bowl into the air. A loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” **16:18** There were lightnings, sounds, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men on the

earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty. **16:19** The great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. **16:20** Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. **16:21** Great hailstones, about the weight of a talent, came down out of the sky on people. People blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for this plague is exceedingly severe.

The seventh and final bowl judgment is poured out on the earth. A voice from Heaven declares that it is finished. Directly after this is the second coming of Jesus, but there is a little interlude in chapters 17 and 18 for finer detail of this judgment. It consists of the greatest earthquake in history, the three-way division of Jerusalem, “the great city”, a special attack upon Babylon, and massive hailstones. The hailstones weigh one talent which is about 130 pounds or 59 kilograms.

“The great city was divided into three parts” may be a reference to Zechariah 13:8. *“It shall happen that in all the land,” says Yahweh, “two parts in it will be cut off and die; but the third will be left in it.”* Zechariah indicates that Israel will be judged by God, but a remnant will be saved: Romans 11:5 and 11:26.

“The cities of the nations fell.” The entire Gentile world is judged as well and receives an even harsher punishment than Israel. Even the land is judged in Revelation 16:20. Babylon’s destruction is mentioned in detail in chapters 17 and 18. As seen in the fourth and fifth bowls, (verses 9 and 11 of Revelation 16) the people are still unrepentant and blasphemous.

The Destruction of Babylon Chapters 17-18

17:1 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here. I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters, **17:2** with whom the kings of the earth committed sexual immorality, and those who dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her sexual immorality.” **17:3** He carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness. I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. **17:4** The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of the sexual immorality of the earth. **17:5** And on her forehead a name was written, “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” **17:6** I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered with great amazement. **17:7** The angel said to me, “Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

“The great prostitute who sits on many waters” is Babylon. In verse 15 we see that the many waters are peoples and nations. Babylon is called a prostitute because it is a religious system that has not remained faithful to God. This is a common idea in the Bible as Israel is often accused of playing the harlot when they went astray and worshipped other gods. This false system will accrue all people but true believers (*many waters*). Babylon is also a city. Some believe Babylon to be Rome because in 1 Peter 5:13, Peter uses the name Babylon to secretly refer to Rome. There is also reason to believe that the city is actually Babylon in the land of Shinar where the Tower of Babel was built.

The prostitute is seen sitting on a beast “*full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns*”. This is the antichrist or the beast from Revelation 13:1. This indicates that Babylon has power over the antichrist at this point. The prostitute is seen wearing purple and scarlet. Those were royal colors in the Roman Empire and also harlot clothing. The kings and peoples have served and funded this apostate religious system well.

A “*mystery*” in the Bible refers to something that has not been revealed. It is not something that must be figured out. It is simply something that God will later reveal. In this case the interpretation comes in verses 8-18. (see 1 Corinthians 15:51)

Babylon is referred to as the mother of prostitutes of the earth. This seems to say that the Babylonian “religion” will encompass all the false religions on earth. This is the one-world religion that coincides with the one-world government that will eventually culminate in the antichrist being the focus of both. (see commentary on Revelation 6:2)

In verse 6, the woman is “*drunk with the blood of the saints*”. The apostate church will be responsible for the martyrdom of true believers. John wonders what this all means and in verse 7, the angel says that he will explain the mystery. The explanation is in verses 8-18.

17:8 The beast that you saw was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go into destruction. Those who dwell on the earth and whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel when they see that the beast was, and is not, and shall be present. **17:9** Here is the mind that has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits. **17:10** They are seven kings. Five have fallen, the one is, the other has not yet come. When he comes, he must continue a little while. **17:11** The beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goes to destruction. **17:12** The ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour. **17:13** These have one mind, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

The rest of the chapter is the explanation of the first part. In verse 8 we see that the beast *“was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss”*. This is evidently referring to the beast’s death in Revelation 13:3. He suffered a fatal wound and was healed. Here we see that he did die and went into the abyss. Satan then brings him back to life to simulate Christ’s death and resurrection. After seeing this miraculous event everyone *“whose names have not been written in the book of life”* i.e. those elected and saved by God, will marvel and worship the beast as God. These events occur right before the antichrist sets himself up as ruler of the world in the middle of the Tribulation period.

In verse 9 and following the angel explains the seven mountains. *“They are seven kings.”* A mountain refers to a kingdom. In Daniel 2:35 the statue of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is destroyed by a stone that becomes a great mountain. In verse 44 and 45, it is explained that the mountain is God’s eternal kingdom.

Of these seven kingdoms, five have fallen, one is, and one is yet to come. These are kingdoms that have impacted Israel throughout history. Assumedly the five kingdoms are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. *“One is”* is Rome and one that is yet to come is the new Roman Empire, a 10-nation confederacy. This kingdom will only last a little while. The antichrist will, at the midpoint of the Tribulation, dissolve the confederacy and declare himself to be God rule as such. He is the eighth kingdom, but he is one of the seven in that he comes out of the 10-nation confederacy. He goes to destruction when Jesus returns.

In verse 12 it is explained that the ten horns are ten kings. This is the 10-nation confederacy first hinted at in Daniel 2:41-42: a divided kingdom of ten rulers. Their only purpose is to give their power to the antichrist and allow him to become the world ruler.

17:14 These will war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and those who are with him are called, chosen, and faithful.” **17:15** He said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages. **17:16** The ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the prostitute, and will make her desolate, and will make her naked, and will eat her flesh, and will burn her utterly with fire. **17:17** For God has put in their hearts to do what he has in mind, and to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast,

until the words of God should be accomplished. **17:18** The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

In Revelation 19:19-21, we see the battle of Armageddon where the kings of the earth and the antichrist are defeated by Jesus. In Daniel 7:8 and 24 the beast that has ten horns grows another little horn (the antichrist). When the antichrist comes to power he rips out three of the ten horns. Apparently when the antichrist comes to power he will defeat and subdue three of the ten kings.

The Babylonian system comprises of a religious and political facet. The political aspect uses the religious part to gain control, but they hate it. The antichrist and the kings will utterly destroy the religious system for their own gain, but they are merely instruments of God to exact His judgment and vengeance. God will punish Babylon for deceiving the people and for the martyrdom of the saints. (see Revelation 17:6). After dismantling the false worship system, the antichrist will set up his own worship system with himself as the Messiah. Again, this takes place in the midpoint of the Tribulation.

18:1 After these things, I saw another angel coming down out of the sky, having great authority. The earth was illuminated with his glory. **18:2** He cried with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and she has become a habitation of demons, a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird! **18:3** For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her sexual immorality, the kings of the earth committed sexual immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from the abundance of her luxury.”

Babylon will be both a religious (as seen in chapter 17) and a commercial (chapter 18) system. Babylon will truly rule the world and will set the stage for the antichrist to come to rule both the religious and political aspects of the world. Commercial Babylon will most likely be centralized in the actual city of Babylon in the land of Shinar. Shinar is where the Tower of Babel was built and where the capitol of the Babylonian Empire was located. Evidence for this is found in Zechariah 5:5-11. Zechariah is shown a vision of a commercial system ruled by a woman called Wickedness in the last days. The capitol of this system is built in the land of Shinar.

Chapter 18 opens up with another proclamation of the destruction of Babylon. This angel is one of great authority as evident from his radiant glory. Satan, before he fell, was known as the Shining One or the Star of the Morning because of his glory and position in Heaven. Some give him the name Lucifer, but technically Lucifer is just Latin for shining one.

Babylon is a demonic system leading people away from the true God. It is a habitation and prison of demons and the kings and nations have used it to their own sordid gain and the merchants have grown rich from it. Again we see the phrase “*drunk with the wine of her immorality*” (see Revelation 17:2). The repetition of the word fallen in “*Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great*” is likely a reference to Isaiah 21:9 when Isaiah prophesies the destruction of Babylon.

18:4 I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, that you have no participation in her sins, and that you don’t receive of her plagues, **18:5** for her sins have reached to the sky, and God has remembered her iniquities. **18:6** Return to her just as she returned, and repay her double as she did, and according to her works. In the cup which she mixed, mix to her double. **18:7** However much she glorified herself, and grew wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning. For she says in her heart, ‘I sit a queen, and am no widow, and will in no way see mourning.’ **18:8** Therefore in one day her plagues will come: death, mourning, and famine; and she will be utterly burned with fire; for the Lord God who has judged her is strong.

Here God is calling believers to come out of Babylon and to not participate in the Babylonian system so as to not be a part of its judgment. God declares that He will repay Babylon double for all the sins she has committed. In Isaiah 46-48 Isaiah prophesies the destruction of Babylon. Isaiah 47:8-9 says, “Now therefore hear this, you who are given to pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, I am, and there is none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to you in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood”

This is seen again in verses 7 and 8 of Revelation 18. Babylon sits as a queen in that she makes love to the kings of the earth, but she will fall in one day and soon be a widow: desolate and ruined. The notion of one day or one hour is used several times in the chapter and Isaiah 47 so that is a pretty good indication that the destruction of Babylon and the establishment of the antichrist’s rule will actually occur in the span of a single day or one hour. Revelation 17:12 says that the 10 kings receive authority with the beast for one hour and that their purpose is solely to give their power and authority to the beast.

18:9 The kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived wantonly with her, will weep and wail over her, when they look at the smoke of her burning, **18:10** standing far away for the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For your judgment has come in one hour.’ **18:11** The merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore; **18:12** merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, all expensive wood, every vessel of ivory, every vessel made of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; **18:13** and cinnamon, incense, perfume, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, sheep, horses, chariots, and people’s bodies and souls. **18:14** The fruits which your soul lusted after have been lost to you, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous have perished from you, and you will find them no more at all. **18:15** The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, will stand far away for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning; **18:16** saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was dressed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls! **18:17** For in an hour such great riches are made desolate.’ Every ship master, and everyone who sails anywhere, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood far away, **18:18** and cried out as they looked at the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What is like the great city?’ **18:19** They cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had

their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her great wealth!’ For she is made desolate in one hour.

The city of Babylon is the commercial and financial capital of the world and when it is destroyed the people of earth start to lose heart. In verses 10, 17, and 19 the phrase “one hour” is repeated. The kings lament the loss of their power that was invested in Babylon and the merchants mourn the financial loss that comes with its collapse. It is obvious here that even during the Tribulation there is a good economy coming from the centralized political and religious system. Remember Revelation 13:17; no one can buy or sell without receiving the mark of the beast. It is implied here that those that do receive the antichrist’s mark and invest in his system will do well financially until God exacts His vengeance on Babylon.

The merchants deal in every facet of luxury items: gold, silver, ivory, silk etc. They will even be involved in human trafficking: “people’s bodies and souls”. These merchants will not be caught in the crossfire; they will be standing off afar watching for fear of Babylon’s torment. They did not see this coming and can’t believe it happened. Casting dust on one’s head was a symbol of mourning and sorrow. This is not the end of the world, (Armageddon has yet to happen) but this is a tough blow to empire. Note that there is no spiritual sorrow or repentance here. Like Revelation 16:21, the men on earth are not lacking evidence of God; they just lack a repentant heart.

18:20 “Rejoice over her, O heaven, you saints, apostles, and prophets; for God has judged your judgment on her.” **18:21** A mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down, and will be found no more at all. **18:22** The voice of harpists, minstrels, flute players, and trumpeters will be heard no more at all in you. No craftsman, of whatever craft, will be found any more at all in you. The sound of a mill will be heard no more at all in you. **18:23** The light of a lamp will shine no more at all in you. The voice of the bridegroom and of the bride will be heard no more at all in you; for your merchants were the princes of the earth; for with your sorcery all the nations were deceived. **18:24** In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on the earth.”

The believers are called to rejoice in verse 20 over the destruction of Babylon. The reason given here for the judgment is Babylon’s treatment of believers. In Revelation 17:7, Babylon is responsible for the martyr of the saints. This is repeated in 18:24. In Revelation 6:9-11 the saints plead for God to avenge their martyrdom and here in chapter 18, their requests are finally fulfilled. Saints rejoice because their hope is not in Satan’s world system; it is in God and His coming kingdom.

The millstone thrown into the sea represents a sudden, violent, and non-reversible destruction of Babylon. This passage has its root in Jeremiah 51:63-64, “It shall be, when you have finished reading this book, that you shall bind a stone to it, and cast it into the middle of the Euphrates: and you shall say, ‘Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise again because of the evil that I will bring on her’”. There will

be no music, no work, no joy at all in Babylon. The judgment will be quick and absolute.

The Second Coming of Christ

Chapters 19-22

19:1 After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Hallelujah! Salvation, power, and glory belong to our God: **19:2** for true and righteous are his judgments. For he has judged the great prostitute, who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality, and he has avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.” **19:3** A second said, “Hallelujah! Her smoke goes up forever and ever.” **19:4** The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne, saying, “Amen! Hallelujah!” **19:5** A voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, the small and the great!” **19:6** I heard something like the voice of a great multitude, and like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of mighty thunders, saying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns!”

After the vision of the destruction of Babylon, John hears praise from Heaven. This is presumably the response to the call of Revelation 18:20. The word hallelujah or alleluia literally means “praise Yahweh” or “praise Jehovah”. God is praised for His righteous judgment on Babylon. The praise is started by the saints and angels and then echoed by the 24 elders and the four living creatures. The voice from the throne is most likely an angel because he says, “our God”. Now that God has destroyed Satan’s final kingdom, it is only a matter of time before Christ will reign physically on earth.

19:7 Let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad, and let us give the glory to him. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife has made herself ready.” **19:8** It was given to her that she would array herself in bright, pure, fine linen: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. **19:9** He said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” He said to me, “These are true words of God.” **19:10** I fell down before his feet to worship him. He said to me, “Look! Don’t do that! I am a fellow bondservant with you and with your brothers who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.”

The marriage of the Lamb and His bride is a common theme in the New Testament referring to the union of Jesus Christ and His church at the end of the age. In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul writes, “For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. For I betrothed you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” In Ephesians 5 Paul writes about the roles of husbands and wives and likens it to Christ and the church. (see verses 24 and 32) Jesus refers to Himself as the bridegroom in Mark 2:19. The bride of Christ is the church. From the time of the cross to the rapture at the beginning of the Tribulation, believers have been betrothed to Christ and awaiting the marriage.

In a traditional Jewish wedding, a man would enter negotiations to be married and they would become betrothed for a period of one year. During the betrothal period, the man and woman are considered married in all aspects except that of consummation. Because of this, they were still allowed to get a divorce. In

Matthew 1:18-19 Mary is betrothed to Joseph and is found to be pregnant. Obviously this is a scandal because they had not slept together, and Joseph is able to divorce her without bringing more shame upon them. He doesn't, of course, and ends up marrying Mary and adopting Jesus. But this is what the church-age, the time between the cross and the rapture, is: a betrothal period for the church.

During the betrothal period the husband prepares a house for his wife: usually a room added onto his father's house. In **John 14:2-3** Jesus says that He will go to His Father's house and prepare a mansion for us. He will then come back to bring us there. That will be the rapture. At that point the wedding feast starts and lasts for 7 days. The bride and groom are not actually there for that week. They stay secluded together for seven days like a honeymoon period. After the week is up, the bride and groom join the wedding feast. The 70th week of Daniel, the Tribulation, lasts for seven years just as a Jewish wedding lasts for seven days.

Now that the week is up, Christ and His bride, the church, return to conclude the wedding and join the feast. The bride is adorned with the fine linen which is the righteous acts of the saints. Christ promises this in **Revelation 3:5**. In verse 9 of chapter 19 it says, "*Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.*" There will be people who are not the church, but are still blessed and invited to the marriage supper. These are Old Testament believers and Tribulation saints that do not die during the Tribulation. All of the former believers and most of the latter will be the nation of Israel. John the Baptist said in **John 3:28-29** that he was not the Christ but he was a friend of the bridegroom.

In verse 10 John is so awed by what he hears and sees that he goes to worship the angel speaking. The angel rebukes him because he, also, is just a servant of God. Angels are very powerful and important beings and currently they are superior to us in rank, but like us any glory that have is merely a reflection of God's glory and all worship should be given to God alone.

19:11 I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it is called Faithful and True. In righteousness he judges and makes war. **19:12** His eyes are a flame of fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has names written and a name written which no one knows but he himself. **19:13** He is clothed in a garment sprinkled with blood. His name is called "The Word of God." **19:14** The armies which are in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in white, pure, fine linen. **19:15** Out of his mouth proceeds a sharp, double-edged sword, that with it he should strike the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He treads the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. **19:16** He has on his garment and on his thigh a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

This is the second coming of Jesus Christ. The first coming of Christ, as a baby in Bethlehem, was one of humility and servitude. In the second coming, Christ will *make war* and judge in righteousness. He is seen riding a white horse like the antichrist in **Revelation 6:1** and the armies of Heaven in verse 14 of this chapter. The white horse symbolizes conquest and victory as seen in **Revelation 6:1**. John again notices Jesus eyes are like a flame of fire (see **Revelation 1:14**). "*On His head are many crowns.*" This refers to Christ's sovereignty as the King of the kingdom

that He will establish. The name written that no one else knows is simple: we don't know it. The names may be written on His robe and His thigh as in verse 16 of this chapter.

His garment is sprinkled with blood referring to the war He will wage: the infamous Battle of Armageddon in verses 17-21 of Revelation 19. "*His name is called 'The Word of God.'*" This title is interesting because it is only ever used by John. (see John 1:1) Also the word of God is the sword that proceeds from Christ's mouth in verse 15 and again in verse 21. The armies of Heaven are assumedly the church since they come with Christ back to earth in the last section. Also they are seen in the same clothing. (see Revelation 19:8) The army of saints will not actually fight in the Battle of Armageddon; Jesus will simply speak and kill the armies of the earth. "*He will rule them with an iron rod.*" Refer to the commentary on Revelation 12:5. Jesus will, finally here, tread the winepress of the wrath of God. The winepress is mentioned in Revelation 14:19-20. Refer to the commentary on that section. Christ is the supreme ruler. This title is used of Him in Revelation 17:14 and 1 Timothy 6:15.

19:17 I saw an angel standing in the sun. He cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the sky, "Come! Be gathered together to the great supper of God, **19:18** that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, and small and great." **19:19** I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him who sat on the horse, and against his army. **19:20** The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet who worked the signs in his sight, with which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. **19:21** The rest were killed with the sword of him who sat on the horse, the sword which came out of his mouth. All the birds were filled with their flesh.

This is the great Battle of Armageddon. It's almost anticlimactic. The kings of the earth gather together in the valley of Armageddon to wage war against Israel and destroy her in Revelation 16:16. Jesus returns with the church to fight for Israel in Revelation 19:11-16. And in just speaking, Christ fells the entire army. The battle is over before it begins as seen in the angel calling the birds to come and feast on the flesh of the fallen enemies of God.

In verse 19 the antichrist and the kings of the earth under him are ready for a final showdown with Christ. Satan is noticeably absent from this battle. And even before the battle begins Christ takes the antichrist and the false prophet and throws them alive into the lake of fire, or Hell. These two are the first to be thrown into the lake of fire. They will be there alone until Satan joins them 1000 years later (see Revelation 20:10) and soon afterwards the unrighteous dead are cast there for an eternity of judgment.

He then goes on to speak and kill the rest of the armies, and the birds then eat their flesh. In Revelation 14:20 it speaks of the carnage of the Battle of Armageddon. The blood of the horses and men will run for 1600 furlongs (200

miles) which is about the length of the valley of Megiddo. The blood will also rise up to the horses' bridles (about 4.5 feet).

20:1 I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. **20:2** He seized the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited earth, and bound him for a thousand years, **20:3** and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years were finished. After this, he must be freed for a short time.

After the Battle of Armageddon, the Kingdom of God begins. The first part of this kingdom lasts for 1000 years. It is referred to as the Millennial Kingdom. Satan is locked up in the abyss for the duration of the Millennial Kingdom so that he would not deceive the nations for that time. After the thousand years are up, he will be released to rally the unbelievers against Christ one last time.

The Kingdom is mentioned in many prophetic books, Isaiah being a major one. Isaiah 2:2-4 is a famous passage on the Kingdom. *"It shall happen in the latter days, that the mountain (mountain refers to kingdom) of Yahweh's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many peoples shall go and say, 'Come, let's go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.' For out of Zion the law shall go out, and Yahweh's word from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."*

Isaiah 65:20 says, *"There shall be no more there an infant of days, nor an old man who has not filled his days; for the child shall die at one hundred years old, and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred shall be accursed."* And Isaiah 11:8 records, *"The nursing child will play near a cobra's hole, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den."*

As seen in these passages from Isaiah, the Kingdom of God will be a time of great peace and prosperity. Jesus Christ will rule as king of the earth, but there will be nations and rulers under Him. Revelation 1:6 says that the saints will rule with Christ. There won't be any war and there will not be a curse, at least among the animal kingdom. Verse 6 of Isaiah 11 says, *"The wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat; the calf, the young lion, and the fattened calf together; and a little child will lead them."*

There will also be babies being born. The church which was raptured at the beginning of the Tribulation and the Old Testament saints who died long ago will receive a glorified body in which Jesus says they will not be married or given in marriage (see Matthew 22:30). But the Tribulation saints, those that believed during the Tribulation and do not suffer martyrdom will not be given glorified bodies so they will continue to be married and have children. According to Isaiah there will be no miscarriages or infant deaths and people will live a long time. Someone 100 years

old will still be considered a child and if someone dies young, it will be a result of sin.

At the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom, everyone going into it will be a believer. All the unrighteous were killed in the Battle of Armageddon. It will also be a time of revelation. Isaiah 2 says people will all know and see God and learn from Him directly. But despite all of the evidence for the goodness of God and the beauty of the Kingdom people will be born sinners and they must still come to salvation. And many don't. This is evidence that even in wonderful Godly circumstances man's heart is still sinful. The effects of sin will be tamed greatly in the Millennium, and Satan will not be present to tempt people, but there will still be rebellious sinners who will one day choose to follow Satan rather than Jesus (see Revelation 20:7-9). In spite of this, the Millennium will be paradise for the believer.

20:4 I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as didn't worship the beast nor his image, and didn't receive the mark on their forehead and on their hand. They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. **20:5** The rest of the dead didn't rise until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. **20:6** Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over these, the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him one thousand years.

This is the judgment of the righteous. It is most likely the judgment of the Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints as Revelation 19:8 seems to imply that the church had already been judged and rewarded for their righteous deeds. This judgment is often called the Bema Seat Judgment and is mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:10. The "They" that sat on the thrones are probably also the church. In 1 Corinthians 6:2 Paul says that the church will judge the world.

This judgment probably takes place in the time mentioned in Daniel 12:11-13. *"From the time that the continual burnt offering shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate set up, there shall be 1290 days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the 1335 days. But go you your way until the end; for you shall rest, and shall stand in your lot, at the end of the days."* The abomination of desolation happens at the midpoint of the Tribulation, or 1260 days (3 ½ years) before the end of the Tribulation. This passage gives an extra period of 30 days then 45 days. God told Daniel that he will be raised at this time to be judged so it seems that this time of 75 days is set aside for the judgment of the Old Testament and Tribulation saints before the Millennial Kingdom starts.

The saints will be rewarded for their righteous deeds and will be granted a place of authority in the Millennial Kingdom. This is the first resurrection. *"The rest of the dead"*, the unbelieving dead are not raised at this time. They will be raised after the thousand years are up and will stand before God in the Great White Throne Judgment (see Revelation 20:11-5) and be sentenced to the lake of fire, or the second death. The second death has no power over the saints, who will be raised in the first resurrection. The two resurrections are mentioned by Jesus in John 5:29.

20:7 And after the thousand years, Satan will be released from his prison, **20:8** and he will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. **20:9** They went up over the width of the earth, and surrounded the camp of the saints, and the beloved city. Fire came down out of heaven from God, and devoured them. **20:10** The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet are also. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

After the thousand years are up, Satan will be set free to deceive the peoples. And there are many that flock to him as opposed to Christ. After 1000 years and given that people will live very long lives, there are naturally a huge number of people on the earth at this time. Many of them will believe in Jesus, but there will also be many who resent Him. They will show outward obedience as to not incur punishment, but they will have never truly had a change of heart. The number of these people will be as the “sands of the sea.” It’s sad that even in an almost perfect world people would rather follow the devil than God.

Satan will gather followers from throughout the earth. “Gog and Magog” is a fairly well known phrase and are mentioned in the book of Ezekiel. Gog is the ruler of the land of Magog. A prophetic battle with Gog and Magog is recorded in Ezekiel 38-39, but it is not this battle here. Magog and mentioned with it, Rosh, is what is now modern day Russia. Historically no country has been more anti-Semitic than Russia. Satan will lead his army up against Jerusalem like in the Battle of Armageddon, and like that battle, it will be completely one-sided. Fire instantly comes down from heaven and consumes the multitudes, and Satan is cast into the lake of fire to join the beast and the false prophet. This fulfills what Jesus said in Matthew 25:41. That Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels.

20:11 I saw a great white throne, and him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. There was found no place for them. **20:12** I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and they opened books. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. **20:13** The sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. They were judged, each one according to his works. **20:14** Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. **20:15** If anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

This is the Great White Throne Judgment. This is the judgment of the unbelievers: those who never believed in Jesus death and resurrection to pay for their sins. Because these people never trusted Jesus to pay for their sins, they must pay for their own sins. That is what is written in the books: everything they’ve ever done, said, or thought. Jesus said in Matthew 12:36, “every idle word that men speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.” People often say that they believe the good they do will outweigh the bad, but Isaiah 64:6 says that “all our righteous acts are like filthy rags” apart from the righteousness of God. Even if man could be

good apart from God, the penalty for sin is not good deeds, it is death (see Romans 6:23). No one is sent to Hell for merely not believing in Jesus, They are sent to hell and judged for their sin. There are two options for sin. Believe that Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sin and that He rose again proving that His death was acceptable, or pay for your sin yourself for eternity in Hell.

This is the second resurrection implied in Revelation 20:6. All of the unrighteous dead throughout history including Satan's final battle will be raised at this point. Hades is often considered Hell. It is like the lake of fire: A prison of fiery punishment, but it is temporary and will give up its dead to be sentenced at this time. The book of life is where the names of believers are written. None of the names of these men and women are found in the book of life and they are thrown into the lake of fire to join the devil, the beast, and the false prophet forever. This is the second death. This passage seems to show that not all sins are equal. They are all deserving of Hell, but men are judged by their works so it seems a "worse sinner" will be given a more severe punishment.

21:1 I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and the sea is no more. **21:2** I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. **21:3** I heard a loud voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with people, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **21:4** He will wipe away from them every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; neither will there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more. The first things have passed away."

After all sin is dealt with at the Great White Throne Judgment, the heavens and earth are made new. This begins the eternal kingdom of God. 2 Peter 3:12-13 says, "*The heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat. But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.*" The promise of this is found in Isaiah 65:17 and Isaiah 66:22. The old heavens and earth are destroyed with fire and out of that God creates new heavens and earth not affected by the curse of sin. Interesting to note that there is no more sea.

John then sees the New Jerusalem coming out of Heaven. Jerusalem will be the capitol of the world and coming out of Heaven along with verse 3 indicate that God is now making His abode on earth. The eternal state of creation will be very much like the intended purpose of the Garden of Eden. God and man will commune directly and perfectly. Also there will be no sin and thus no pain, or suffering, or death. 1 Corinthians 15:26 says, "*The last enemy that will be abolished is death.*"

21:5 He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." He said, "Write, for these words of God are faithful and true." **21:6** He said to me, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give freely to him who is thirsty from the spring of the water of life. **21:7** He who overcomes, I will give him these things. I will be his God, and he will be my son. **21:8** But for the cowardly, unbelieving, sinners,

abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their part is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

This passage is more of a call to salvation than a chronological proclamation, but it fits as a parenthesis to the eternal Kingdom. Again Jesus is called the Alpha and Omega and He offers freely from the water of life. This is a metaphor for salvation and can be seen used in John 4:13-14: “Jesus answered her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst again; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life’”

Verse 7 is reminiscent of Jeremiah 31:33. “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Verse 8 is a good reminder that all sin is deserving of death. Not just murders, idolaters, and adulterers, but even all liars will have their part in the lake of fire if they don’t come to Jesus for grace.

21:9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were loaded with the seven last plagues came, and he spoke with me, saying, “Come here. I will show you the wife, the Lamb’s bride.” **21:10** He carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, **21:11** having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, as if it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal; **21:12** having a great and high wall; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. **21:13** On the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. **21:14** The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.

One of the Angels who poured out the bowl judgments takes John to see the New Jerusalem on Mount Zion. This is the city of God in contrast to Revelation 17:3 when the same angel takes him to the wilderness to see the city of Babylon, the city of Satan. The New Jerusalem shines with the Glory of God and there is no need for a sun (see Revelation 21:23). This is the place which Christ promised to prepare for us in John 14:2. The color of jasper is not agreed upon. It can come in many forms and colors, but God is described as looking like jasper in Revelation 4:3. Here the Glory of the city is that of God Himself: like jasper.

The City is prophesied about earlier in Ezekiel 36-48. The city has a great wall and twelve gates, named for the twelve tribes of Israel, with twelve angels guarding them. The city is a cube with three gates on each side. There are also twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles. Israel and the Church are mentioned and distinguished in the New Jerusalem.

21:15 He who spoke with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, its gates, and its walls. **21:16** The city is square, and its length is as great as its width. He measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, width, and height are equal. **21:17** Its wall is one hundred forty-four cubits, by the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. **21:18** The construction of its wall was jasper. The city was pure gold, like

pure glass. **21:19** The foundations of the city's wall were adorned with all kinds of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; **21:20** the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprasus; the eleventh, jacinth; and the twelfth, amethyst. **21:21** The twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each one of the gates was made of one pearl. The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

The New Jerusalem is a cube measuring 12,000 furlongs or 1500 miles on each side. This is 3,375,000,000 cubic miles. A 2-dimensional cross section of this city (1500 miles * 1500 miles) is a little more than half the area of the united states. Add in a third dimension and there is enough space to house 100 billion, 1 trillion people maybe? And this is just Jerusalem; here is an entire new earth. The wall is 144 cubits or about 65 meters. And these measurements are the measurements of man so these measurements are literal distances.

The wall is made of pure jasper, again likening it to the glory of God. The city itself and its single street are made of gold so pure it was like glass. This is similar to the sea of glass in Heaven. The gates in the foundations are each one gigantic pearl. This is where we get the imagery of "streets of gold" and the "pearly gates". Each foundation is decorated with a specific precious stone. Whether the stones are specific to a certain apostle is unknown. Either way the New Jerusalem will be the most beautiful paradise ever imagined.

21:22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. **21:23** The city has no need for the sun, neither of the moon, to shine, for the very glory of God illuminated it, and its lamp is the Lamb. **21:24** The nations will walk in its light. The kings of the earth bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. **21:25** Its gates will in no way be shut by day (for there will be no night there), **21:26** and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it so that they may enter. **21:27** There will in no way enter into it anything profane, or one who causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This city has no temple because its inhabitants are able to commune directly with God. The purpose of the temple in Old Testament times was a place where God manifested His glory. In the tabernacle and later in the temple, Even though God is omnipresent, His presence was centralized in the Holy of Holies behind the veil. The High Priest was only able to traverse the veil into the Holy of Holies once per year on the Day of Atonement to perform sacrifice for the nation. When Jesus died on the cross, the veil was ripped clean through to show that now there is nothing separating us from God. Now everyone has access to God through Jesus Christ. In the New Jerusalem, in the Kingdom, we will have a physical access to God because of Jesus Christ, the Lamb.

The Glory of God is bright enough to illuminate the entire city so there is no need for the sun or the moon. There probably will be a sun because the heavens are also made new not just the earth. There may not be a moon since there is no night

(see Revelation 21:25) and no sea (see Revelation 21:1). Since the two purposes of the moon are no longer there, there may not be a moon.

There will still be other nations on the new earth as seen in Isaiah 2:2-4: *“...Come, let’s go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths...”* There is a whole world outside of the New Jerusalem and many peoples will come through the gates. The city is most likely for the Church and Israel whereas the Tribulation saints and their children will constitute the other nations of the world.

It seems to say that, like the Millennial Kingdom, there will still be non-glorified saints marrying and having children. Since it never mentions another mass glorification, like at the rapture, it would seem that these saints will continue to be born, marry, and have children for all eternity. This seems to be the plan because the Kingdom is supposed to be like how the creation was meant to be before Adam sinned. The obvious question is, “After an eternity of reproduction, won’t the earth be overpopulated?” To that question my only answer is, “Nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

Verse 27 says that no sinner shall enter into the city. That is true but that is not to say that there will be sin on the earth. All sinners have been judged already at the Great White Throne Judgment and Satan has been vanquished in the lake of fire. Even death has been defeated and death is only a result of sin. This verse and Revelation 22:15 are just saying that sinners will miss out on the reward of this Heavenly city.

22:1 He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, **22:2** in the middle of its street. On this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruits, yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. **22:3** There will be no curse any more. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants serve him. **22:4** They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. **22:5** There will be no night, and they need no lamp light; for the Lord God will illuminate them. They will reign forever and ever.

In the center of the city is God’s throne and out from there flows a river through the center of the golden street. As seen in Revelation 21:6, from God and Christ flow a spring of the water of life. On each side of the river by the side of the street is the tree of life. This is akin to the Garden of Eden. Sin and death have already been done away with (Revelation 22:3) so the tree of life is not necessary to keep the inhabitants alive. It seems that the fruit is more for communion with God and a confirmation of holiness of the saints.

The trees bear 12 different variations of its fruit according to the seasons. This verse shows that time will still exist in eternity. Time does not stop being relevant; it simply just extends forever, but time will pass. The curse is of course no more and we will be able to see God’s face, something that no one was able to do before. In Exodus 33 Moses asked to see God’s glory and God granted him a glance, but said in verse 20, *“You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”*

Revelation 22:4 says that the inhabitants will have God's name on their foreheads. It is previously said in Revelation that the 144000 saints from Israel will have His name on their foreheads. Also In Revelation 3:12 Jesus says that He will write His name on the church. Again, there is no night and no need for illumination in the city.

22:6 He said to me, "These words are faithful and true. The Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent his angel to show to his bondservants the things which must happen soon."
22:7 "Behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."
22:8 Now I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who had shown me these things.
22:9 He said to me, "See you don't do it! I am a fellow bondservant with you and with your brothers, the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

This is not just a story nor is it just allegorical. "These words are faithful and true" and the things witnessed "must happen soon". Jesus has affirmed it, These things will actually happen. Jesus is coming again and "is not slow concerning his promise, as some count slowness; but is patient with us, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (see 2 Peter 3:9)

As mentioned in Revelation 1:3, those who believe and heed the words of this prophecy will be blessed. John reaffirms himself as the author and witness to this great prophecy. Again John is overcome with awe and accidentally worships the angel showing him these things and is again rebuked. (see Revelation 19:10)

22:10 He said to me, "Don't seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. **20:11** He who acts unjustly, let him act unjustly still. He who is filthy, let him be filthy still. He who is righteous, let him do righteousness still. He who is holy, let him be holy still." **22:12** "Behold, I come quickly. My reward is with me, to repay to each man according to his work. **22:13** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. **22:14** Blessed are those who do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. **22:15** Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. **22:16** I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify these things to you for the assemblies. I am the root and the offspring of David; the Bright and Morning Star." **22:17** The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" He who hears, let him say, "Come!" He who is thirsty, let him come. He who desires, let him take the water of life freely.

John is told here to not seal up this prophesy this is a contrast to Daniel 12:4 where God tells Daniel to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end". This prophetic book is meant to be heard and understood and blessed are those who do read and understand it for Jesus is coming quickly and His reward is coming with Him. In verse 16 Jesus verifies that He did indeed send His angel to deliver this message; we can be assured it is true.

Verse 11 implies that there will be no change of heart or chance for repentance after the final judgment, but as of right now there is still time to trust Christ. The righteous will be rewarded as heirs to an eternal kingdom on a new earth with no more death and suffering. As verse 17 says, Jesus is offering this freely to anyone who will take it. God says in Isaiah 55:1, *“Come, everyone who thirsts, to the waters! Come, he who has no money, buy, and eat! Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”* There is no price to pay for the love of Jesus; He is offering it to you for free. We, the bride, also implore those to come and take advantage of God’s free gift of salvation.

22:18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone adds to them, may God add to him the plagues which are written in this book. **22:19** If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, may God take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book. **2:20** He who testifies these things says, “Yes, I come quickly.” Amen! Yes, come, Lord Jesus. **22:21** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints. Amen.

We have seen many times that this is a very important book and that its readers are blessed for heading it. Because this is a very important book, and also because it is the Word of God, it may not be altered. This passage refers to the book of Revelation specifically, but because it is the last book of the Bible and the last word on the subject of time and eternity, it is fair to say that man is not allowed to add to or take away from any portion of the Bible.

Moses says in Deuteronomy 4:2, *“You shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your God which I command you.”* Proverbs 30:6 says, *“Don’t you add to his words, lest he reprove you, and you be found a liar.”* In Revelation 22:19 God says if you take away from this book, He will take away your part from the tree of life. Editing God’s word is grounds for eternal destruction in Hell. God takes His word very seriously.

Again, Jesus says He’s coming quickly, and John response is, *“Amen! Yes, come, Lord Jesus.”* May that be our prayer as well. Do you yearn for the Lord’s coming? Or are you more interested in the here and now? I must confess I too often fall into the thinking of “Please Lord, wait until I get married or until I can enjoy children.”

I thank you for reading this far, and I pray that after having read the final chapter in God’s plan for history you can say whole heartedly, *“Amen! Yes, come, Lord Jesus.”* John ends this book with, *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints. Amen.”* And if you are reading this and are not truly a child of God, I pray that you would repent of your sins and come humbly to Jesus and ask for forgiveness. Please *“take the water of life freely”* God does not disappoint (Romans 5:5).