

REVELATION

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This book reveals or unveils Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:1) as the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth (Revelation 1:5). Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, was covered in Revelation chapters one through three, Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead, was covered in chapters four and five, and Jesus Christ, ruler of kings on earth, started in chapter six and continues to the end of the book.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

REVELATION 1:1-3

- I. The author of Revelation is the Apostle John.
 - A. Revelation 1:1, 4, 9; 22:8 give the author's name as that of John.
 - B. The early church leaders including Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Methodius and the Muratorian fragment all attest to the Apostle John as the writer.
 - C. Internal evidence inside the book of Revelation compared with John's other writings (The Gospel of John, 1, 2, 3 John) show many similarities and few differences. Some examples are:
 1. The use of "The Word" (John 1:1, 1 John 1:1, Revelation 19:13).
 2. The use of "fellowship with" or "companion in: (1 John 1:3, 6, 7; Revelation 1:9, 18:4).
 3. The use from the quote from Zechariah 12:10 in exactly the same way (John 19:37, Revelation 1:7).
 - D. The Apostle John's five books show a rich and full dynamic of Yahweh's salvation found only in Jesus Christ.
 1. The Apostle John wrote the Gospel of John to give instruction on justification (believing in Christ) and sanctification (believers living out their life in Christ) (John 20:31).
 2. He wrote his letters of 1, 2, 3 John to the churches in Asia Minor concerning doctrinal issues (1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 7) and how to have real fellowship in Yahweh Father and Yahweh Jesus (sanctification, 1 John 1:3, 4).
 3. He wrote Revelation to reveal the glorified Christ to the churches of Asia Minor (sanctification, Revelation chapters 2 and 3) and to reveal Jesus judging this earth, setting up His Earthly and Eternal Kingdom reign, the bodily resurrection of the dead, and rewarding His faithful believers (glorification, Revelation chapters 1, 5-22).
 - E. The Apostle John became one of Jesus' closest disciples while ministering with Him. John reclined close to Jesus at the Lord's supper (John 13:23), He witnessed the transfiguration (Luke 9:28), and was entrusted with the care of Mary (the mother of Jesus, John 19:26-27).

Thought: How do we determine teaching and preaching credibility today in our churches?

II. A date for the writing of Revelation that is the most plausible and historically substantiated is around 95 A.D.

A. This date best agrees with the early church leaders who place John's exile to Patmos during the time of the Roman emperor Domitian (81-96 A.D.).

B. One possible scenario: John took care of Mary (Jesus' mother) after 33 A.D. where the apostles headquartered in Jerusalem. He might have become an evangelist-church planter in Asia Minor setting up his missionary headquarters in Ephesus. He might have written the Gospel of John at Ephesus (as per Irenaeus) between 48-52 A.D. to strengthen the seven churches when he moved back to Jerusalem. He participated in the Apostle Paul's concordat of missionary division around 48 A.D. (Galatians 2:1-10). At the time of the writing of 1 John (probably 64-65 A.D.), he seems to be back in Jerusalem with the other apostles (1 John 2:19). After the Jewish war (66 A.D.) broke out and the destruction of the Jewish temple (70 A.D.), he moved back to Ephesus and continued his ministry for another 25-30 years in Asia Minor. He is exiled to Patmos and writes Revelation around 95 A.D.

C. Some Bible scholars and commentators prefer an earlier date for the writing of Revelation under the Roman emperor Nero (54-68 A.D.). Many of these commentators see the events of Revelation as primarily historical and dealing with the things Christians struggled with under Nero. Primarily a futurist exegesis of Revelation is thought to follow the rules of the literal-historical-grammatical interpretation of prophecy and so will be used in this study. Mention will be made to those that have other persuasions.

III. The Apostle John was given a wonderful message by the God of the Universe (Yahweh) which he was instructed to write down and share with all of Yahweh's servants (Revelation 1:1-3).

A. It is called the revelation of Jesus Christ (verse 1).

1. The English word revelation comes from the Greek word "apokalypsis." The word has a prefix "apo" (away or take away) and the root "kalypsis" (a cover) bringing out the ideas of taking away a cover, an uncovering, or unveiling. Thus, revelation discloses or reveals something which has been concealed. It's amazing!

2. This message is specifically going to unveil the message and glory of Jesus Christ our Yeshua Ha Meshiach (Savior Messiah or Anointed Savior). We will be able to see Jesus in a whole new way!

B. It is going to speak of things that "must soon take place" or "must happen soon" which concerns future events (verse 1). The idea is probably a Scriptural fulfilling of already mentioned prophetic events (see the similar wording of Daniel 2:28, 29, 45; Mark 13:7; Revelation 4:1, 22:6). The idea of "soon" can be looked at from Yahweh's timetable (Luke 18:8; 2 Peter 3:8-13). It's important!

C. John assures his readers that the things he is writing about is the very “Word of God” and the very “testimony of Jesus Christ” (verse 2). It’s reliable!

D. It is a prophecy, which brings a blessing to those who will read it, hear it, and apply it (verse 3). It will bless you!

Thought: Let’s commit ourselves to reading, hearing, and applying this amazing, important, reliable, blessing producing book of Revelation!

THE GREETING AND THEME OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

REVELATION 1:4-8

- I. The amazingly deep greeting in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:4-6).
 - A. John writes to not just one church but to seven churches in Asia Minor (modern day western Turkey). This message of Revelation was very important and ultimately was for every local church for the last almost 2,000 years of church history (verse 4a).
 - B. As with most New Testament letters or books, it starts off with a greeting from the writer and a greeting from Yahweh (verses 4b-5a).
 1. Grace (Yahweh's unmerited favor) and peace (Yahweh's Shalom) bestowed upon the seven churches (and all future churches). These ultimately can be given only through belief in Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection (verse 4b; Romans 1:7, 5:1-5).
 2. This comes from Yahweh who has revealed Himself as Father, Spirit, and Son (verses 4c-6).
 - a. Yahweh Father is He who is, was, and is to come. This is very closely related to Yahweh's name (the "I am who I am") (Exodus 3:14).
 - b. Yahweh Spirit is represented as the seven spirits before the throne, a reference to the Holy Spirit from the book of Zechariah (Zechariah 4:1-10; Revelation 4:5).
 - c. Yahweh Son (Jesus Christ) is last in this list because the whole book is about Him including His work in redemption, His work among the churches, His judgments, and His coming in His glory to set up His earthly and eternal kingdom (verse 5a).
 - C. Jesus Christ is described for us with three of His titles and three of His works (verses 5b- 6).
 1. Title #1 - He is the faithful witness. He is the one who will faithfully speak out Yahweh's plans of redemption and kingdom for eternity (as the prophesied Messiah and Son of David (2 Samuel 7:8-16; Ps. 89:36, 37; Daniel 9:26a; Isaiah 52:13-53:12). This is a theme for Revelation chapters 1-3.
 2. Title #2 - He is the firstborn from the dead. He is the highest in preeminence (the Hebrew-Greek idea of firstborn) as well as the first to rise from the dead with a new body (Psalms 89:27; Acts 2:29-36; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 15:23). This is a theme for Revelation chapters 4-5.
 3. Title #3 - He is the ruler of the kings of the earth. He will ultimately prove Himself to be this earthly king and the eternal King! (Psalms 89:27; Daniel 7:13, 14; Revelation 19:16). This is a theme for Revelation chapters 6-22.
 4. Work #1 - He presently loves us as members of His church body (John 13:1, 17:20-26; Hebrews 13:5, 6, 8).

5. Work #2 – In the past, He has freed us from our sins by His blood (Romans 3:21-26).
6. Work #3 – He has made all of His believers part of His Kingdom and Priesthood now, but these will be fully realized at His second coming (Daniel 12:13, Exodus 19:6; Revelation 20:6).
7. Jesus Christ deserves to receive glory (“doxa”) from all of His creation but especially from His people (Isaiah 45:23; Philippians 2:10, 11). He deserves the authority and power to rule throughout all the ages (eternity) (Matthew 25:31-34). May the truth of this statement be affirmed! So be it! Amen (“be firm”)!

THOUGHT: Which title or work of Jesus Christ brought you deeper into Yahweh’s presence today? Let’s make sure and bring a fresh offering of praise to Him for this.

- II. The ultimate theme in the book of Revelation is the coming glorified Christ to rule and reign on this earth and throughout eternity (verses 7, 8).
 - A. The prophecy of verse 7 comes from a combination of two Old Testament Scriptures found in Daniel 7:13, 14 and Zechariah 12:10.
 - B. Besides these Old Testament passages, Jesus and the New Testament writers prophesied the same thing (Matthew 11:2, 24:3, 30, 31; Acts 1:3, 6, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 8).
 - C. There are seven places in the book of Revelation where Christ Himself tells of His coming (Revelation 2:5, 16; 3:11; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20).
 - D. Christ will return in the sky with the clouds. This could be real clouds or/and His Saints (Daniel 7:13, 18, 27; Revelation 19:14).
 - E. At His return, every eye will be able to see Him. This possibly implies both the living and the dead. Perhaps Yahweh will miraculously open each person’s eyes in visionary form if this is the case.
 - F. Those who pierced Him (the Apostle John used the Hebrew Text rather than the Septuagint here as in John 19:37) could be both the Jewish and Roman non-believers as were the original Christ crucifiers.
 - G. Both Zechariah 12:10-13 and Daniel 7:19-26 talk about a time of great mourning and tribulation that will come on the earth before Christ’s return. The book of Revelation will show the truthfulness of this prophecy.
 - H. An affirmation of the truthfulness of the statement of verse 7 is given by the Lord God (“Kurios ha Theos”) Himself in verse 8.
 1. In context, the best person of the Trinity to make this statement seems to be Yahweh Father since He is identified as this part of the Trinity in Revelation 1:4. However, the person of the Son says many of the same things in Revelation 21:12, 13 so there seems to be a handing over of authority between the Father and Son for a certain period of time. This follows the patterns of Daniel 7:9-14 as well as 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

2. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last letter.
Therefore, Yahweh Father is the great "I Am" (Exodus 3:14) who has existed for all eternity perfectly carrying out His will (Isaiah 41:4) as the Almighty Ruler of All.

THOUGHT: The second coming of Jesus Christ is a Scriptural certainty backed up by the guarantee of the truthfulness and word of Yahweh Himself.

THE COMMISSION OF THE APOSTLE JOHN'S WRITINGS AND THE VISION OF THE GLORIFIED CHRIST AND HIS PRESENCE IN THE MIDST OF HIS CHURCHES

REVELATION 1:9-20

- I. The Apostle John gives the historical setting as well as his commission to write the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:9-11)
 - A. John tells his Christian readers and hearers that he is their fellow brother (they are all in the same family of God in Christ). He also explains to them that they share fellowship together (Greek "koinonia") in three areas: 1) suffering (Greek "thlipsis," distress, ordeal); 2) kingdom (as believers we are now part of Christ's kingdom (Matthew 28:18-20; John 12:12-16) and await Christ's completed kingdom reign (Revelation 19:11-22:5); 3) patient endurance (Greek "hupomona," remaining under), as Christians we call upon Yahweh to help us to remain a faithful witness through the trials and temptations of this world we are in (1 Corinthians 10:13; Revelation 1:9a).
 - B. John had been exiled to the island of Patmos and writes Revelation from there (Revelation 1:9b).
 1. The historian Eusebius confirms that the Apostle John was banished to the island of Patmos in the fourteenth year of Roman Emperor Domitian's reign (95 A.D.).
 2. It was an island 10 miles long and 6 miles wide 37 miles off the coast of Miletus. It became a penal colony area for Rome but also had a decent population of citizens on the island, two gymnasia and a temple of Artemis.
 3. There is presently a cave near the top of the island marked off as a shrine where it is thought that John received his visions and wrote the book of Revelation. He probably did this while looking out on the deep blue waters of the Aegean Sea.
 4. He had been banished because of his teaching and preaching the Word of God and for being a witness of Jesus Christ.
 5. Emperor Domitian died in 96 A.D., a general amnesty for the exiles were given, and it is believed that John returned to Ephesus.

THOUGHT: Right now, we as believers share a life in Christ's Kingdom that has trouble and needs patient endurance. However, as we are faithful to our individual callings, Yahweh accomplishes His Kingdom purposes in and through us. Look at the example of the Apostle John!

- C. John explains how he received his calling and commission to write the book of Revelation in a manner similar to an Old Testament prophet (Revelation 1:10,11; Ezekiel 2:2, 3:12, 14, 24; Daniel 7:1,15).
 1. John's commission happened on the Lord's Day. Scripture and church history helps us to understand this as Sunday (John 20:19, 26; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20; 16:2).

2. John's commission happened while he was in the Spirit. This seems to be another way of saying that he was given the Holy Spirit's understanding in his spirit through supernatural means (Revelation 4:2, 17:3, 21:10).
3. John heard his commission from a loud voice (probably Christ's see also Revelation 1:19). It sounded to him like a trumpet which many times is used in Scripture to alert, warn, and prepare God's people (Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).
4. John was to write this book on a scroll to seven churches in Asia Minor which would now be in modern day Turkey.
 - a. This scroll would have been on a papyrus scroll and on completion might have spanned 17 feet rolled out.
 - b. The seven churches were probably selected because they were well known to the Apostle John, they were postal distribution centers, and they each showed important church issues (which churches for all time could relate to)
 - c. It seemed to be that the book would first go to Ephesus where it would be copied and then sent off to the next destination. After all seven churches copied their scroll, it was then probably sent to other Christian churches where it became widely known.

THOUGHT: Christianity is both supernatural and rational at the same time. The commission, writing, and distribution of Revelation shows both/and not either/or.

II. The Apostle John's vision of the glorified Christ (Revelation 1:12-20).

- A. Someone "like a son of man" is seen among or in the midst of seven golden lampstands which represent the seven churches (Revelation 1:12, 13a).
 1. The coming Messiah (anointed one) is prophesied in Daniel 7:13 as "someone like the son of man" and while on earth Jesus called Himself the "Son of Man" (Luke 5:24, 6:5, 17:22, 24, 26, 30). Now in Revelation, John picks up this theme for our glorified Jesus Christ.
 2. The seven lampstands might individually be like the golden seven- branched lampstand from the Old Testament. This lampstand is found in the Jewish Tabernacle and Temples (Exodus25:31-40) and from the prophet Zechariah (Zechariah 4:2 already used in Revelation 1:4 and will be used again in Revelation 11:4). The lampstand was the structure which supported the oil which could be lit and give light to an area. In the New Testament, Christ's church is Yahweh's light to this world (Matthew 5:14).

THOUGHT: It is interesting that the churches vision of the glorified Christ, after a time of over 60 years from the time of Acts, finds Jesus actively among His churches. We are not alone!

- B. John next describes features of the glorified Son of Man (Revelation 1:13b-16).

1. John describes Jesus' clothes, head and hair, eyes, feet, voice, right hand, mouth and face in which reveals the majesty of the King-Judge-Messiah of Isaiah 22:21, 22, Daniel 7:9-14, and Daniel 10:5, 6.
 2. A ruler or dignitary wore a long robe with a golden sash around the chest as opposed to a day laborer whose robe would have been tucked in with the sash around his waist (Revelation 15:6). The white hair and blazing eyes speaks of Christ's wisdom to judge (Daniel 7:9). The glowing feet show Christ's ability to conquer and purify (Ezekiel 1:13, 27). The voice of many waters demonstrates Christ's awesome power and glory (Ezekiel 43:2), His right hand held seven stars which are interpreted for us as seven angels evidently assigned to each of the seven churches (Revelation 1:20; Daniel 12:1; angels are always real angels in the rest of the book). His mouth with the double-edged sword expresses Christ's ability to conquer, judge, and rebuke by the power of His Words and faithfulness to His Father's will (Isaiah 11:4; Revelation 12:10, 11; 19:13-15). Finally, Christ's amazingly bright shining face reveals His divine splendor and glory (Matthew 17:2).
- C. This glorified Christ which the Apostle John has just seen is the very same one which was prophesied to come and the one who has accomplished the salvation of all who have and will believe (Revelation 1:17-20).
1. The Apostle John is strengthened by the glorified Christ after seeing this supernatural amazing sight (verse 17a; Matthew 17:6, 7).
 2. Jesus proclaims Himself as the First and the Last revealing Himself to be the prophesied Old Testament's King and Messiah (verse 17b; Isaiah 44:6).
 3. Jesus proclaims His own death, burial, and resurrection as the basis and power of His authority just as He has always done (verse 18a; John 5:19-30, 11:25; Matthew 28:18-20).
 4. Jesus proclaims that because of His faithfulness to this plan of redemption that He now possesses the keys to death and Hades (the place of the dead which was Sheol in the Old Testament) (verse 18b; Isaiah 53:4-12; John 5:38; Matthew 16:18, 19; John 5:38).
 5. The Apostle John is again told to write this message of the glorified Christ which will include the things which he has seen (visions and instructions) for both the current and future time periods (verses 19, 20).

YAHWEH JESUS IS IN THE MIDST OF HIS CHURCHES (PART 1)

REVELATION 2:1-11

I. Church #1: The Church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7).

A. A brief history of the city of Ephesus: Ephesus was one of the most important and largest cities in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) at the time of Revelation (95 A.D.). It was given “free city” status and, therefore, could be self governed. It was a major trade city for Rome and a “temple warden” city for the fertility goddess Artemis (Greek) or Diana (Roman version). In this city of over 200,000 people, the temple had thousands of priests and priestesses dedicated to prostitution. The Apostle Paul planted the church at Ephesus in about 52 A.D. (Acts 18:19-21), spent three years ministering there between 54-56 A.D. and wrote his Ephesian letter while imprisoned in Rome in 60 A.D. B. Christ’s attributes, assessments, and award for the congregation at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7).

1. Christ’s attributes for the church to meditate on are found in Revelation 2:1. He identifies Himself as the churches’ powerful protector (“holding the seven stars in His right hand”) as well as the one who has intimate knowledge of their activity (“walking in their midst”) (Revelation 2:1, 1:13, 20).

2. Christ’s assessment of the churches’ situation and problem (Revelation 2:2-6).

a. Christ knows that the Ephesian church has been faithful at discerning and calling out evil men who are false apostles (probably claiming special authority from God) (verse 2). These are probably the same as the Nicolaitanes of verse 6 (possibly followers of the deacon Nicolas Acts 6:5). From church history we know that this group seemed to be teaching their followers to overcome (“nike” Greek) the lusts of this world and their flesh by giving themselves over to licentious living. They probably believed their physical bodies didn’t matter since God is essentially Spirit. However, they were deceived since Christ took on human flesh (now has a glorified human body) and walked in purity, truth, and sinlessness (Revelation 2:2, 6; Colossians 3:5; 1 John 2:14- 20).

b. Christ knows that the Ephesian church has patiently endured hard conditions for Christ’s name and have not given up. This probably relates to being a church in such a pagan city (verse 3). c. Christ knows that the Ephesian church has forsaken or left their first love. The “first love” is like the passion and zeal of a new bride and groom for each other. Leaving the “first love” of Christ probably indicates a staleness or mediocrity with their individual and congregational witness of Christ’s love. If this church does not repent (change their minds or perspective), they could be removed as Christ’s light to this city (verse 4 and 5).

3. Christ’s award for the faithful Ephesians (Revelation 2:7).

a. There is a universal call to all of His churches then and now to this message. To repent, a person or congregation first needs to listen and obey (Greek “listen under”) (Isaiah 6:9, 10; Matthew 13:9-17).

- b. Christ's true overcomers will eat of the tree of life. In other words, they will come back to the full situation of life with Yahweh and even more so that Adam and Eve were banished from (Genesis 3:22-24; Revelation. 22:1-5). This seems to promise a deeper life of knowing Yahweh Father and Son now and throughout eternity (John 17:1-5).

THOUGHT: On a scale of 1 to 10 is our passion and love for Christ higher or lower than it was 3 months, 3 years, or 30 years ago? How about our church as a whole?

II. Church #2: The Church at Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11).

- A. A brief history of the city of Smyrna: Smyrna was a large (200,000 population) and beautiful seaport city located 35 miles north of Ephesus. In modern Turkey, it is now called Izmir and is known to be the birthplace of Homer. It was an educational center for the area, wealthy, and a center for imperial worship as well as the Greek temples of Cybele, Zeus, Apollo, Asclepius, and Aphrodite. Under the Roman Emperor Domitian (81-96 A.D.) emperor worship became compulsory. A Christian who refused to worship Caesar or any of the other numerous Greek gods risked societal alienation, persecution, and death.
- B. Christ's attributes, assessment, and award for the congregation at Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11).
 1. Christ's attributes for the church to meditate on are found in Revelation 2:8. He identifies Himself as the churches' promised Old Testament king and Messiah (Revelation 1:17; Isaiah 44:6) that has made and will make everything right in the end. Yahweh Jesus suffered, died, and rose again and He will supply strength for the believers in Smyrna to do the same.
 2. Christ's assessment of the situation without a rebuke (Revelation 2:9, 10).
 - a. Christ knows that the Smyrnan church has had suffering ("thlipsis," distress, ordeal) and economic hardship due to their stand for Christ. Evidently, Jewish non-believers have made matters worse for them by aggressively persecuting them and reporting Christian non-compliance (verse 9).
 - b. Christ knows that the Smyrnan church will still suffer some more specific things in the future and will experience a certain amount of fear. For a specific ten day period of time (same as Daniel 1:12-15), they would undergo very severe suffering and they are encouraged to remain faithful (verse 10a,b,c).
 3. Christ's award for the faithful Smyrnans (Revelation 2:10d, 11).

- a. Christ's faithful sufferers will receive a crown of life. The crown ("stephanos" Greek) was a reward given to the winner of the Olympic Games receiving a laurel wreathed (woven branched) crown. This seems to be a consistent specific reward for faithful suffering (James 1:12) which overcomers are rewarded with to lay before Christ's throne in worship (Revelation 4:10d).
- b. There is a universal call to all of His churches then and now to overcome and know that even though the first death hurts, the second death (being thrown into Hell, Revelation 20:6, 14, 15) will never hurt them (Revelation 6:11).

THOUGHT: Let's meditate on our Yahweh Jesus' attributes this week and receive His strength.

YAHWEH JESUS IS IN THE MIDST OF HIS CHURCHES (PART 2)

REVELATION 2:12-29

I. Church #3: The Church at Pergamum

A. A brief history of the city of Pergamum: Pergamum in 95 A.D. was a large (over 200,000 population) and important city located about 70 miles north of Smyrna and about 15 miles inland from the coast. It boasted itself as the capital city of Asia Minor (along with Ephesus and Smyrna), had the second largest library in Rome with over 200,000 volumes (Alexandria was first), and was known as a learning and medical community. It also was a multiple temple and shrine city with three temples dedicated to the worship of the Roman Emperor (represented by a Bull), and temples to Zeus, Athena, and the healing god Asclepius (represented by a snake). In modern Turkey today, the city is known as Bergama.

B. Christ's attributes, assessment, and award for the congregation at Pergamum (Revelation 2:12-17).

1. Christ's attribute for the church to meditate on is found in Revelation 2:12. He identifies Himself as the one who has the sharp two-edged sword and we know from Revelation 1:16 that it comes out of His mouth. This shows Yahweh Jesus as the one who conquers, judges, and rebukes by the power of His words and the one who perfectly carried out the words of prophecy (Isaiah 11:4; Revelation 12:10, 11; 19:13-15).
2. Christ's assessment of the churches situation and problem (Revelation 2:13-16).
 - a. Christ knows that the church at Pergamum is in a city that has given itself over to multiple forms of idol worship including Emperor worship (Satan's throne). In the midst of persecution, including one of their own being killed by the name of Antipas, the church has not denied Christ's name or their faith (verse 13).
 - b. Christ knows that there are some in their congregation who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans (like the Ephesian church Revelation 2:2, 6) which ends up leading people astray. From church history we know that this group taught their followers to overcome ("nike" Greek) the lusts of this world and their flesh by giving themselves to licentious living. They probably believed that their physical bodies didn't matter since God is essentially Spirit. Christ likens this teaching to that taught by the prophet Balaam. He advised the pagan King Balak on how to lure the Israelites into the sin of sacrificing to the false gods of the Moabites by seducing them by their women (verses 14, 15; Numbers 22:1-25:17, 31:16; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 1:11).
 - c. Christ knows that false teachers need to repent (change their mind and accept and do truth) and the church leaders need to repent and not allow these false teachers to teach and exercise authority. Without repentance the church could come under Yahweh Jesus' discipline (verse 16).

3. Christ's award for His faithful ones (Revelation 2:17). To His true overcomers who will listen and put His words into practice Christ will give two things: 1) Hidden manna - manna was the daily food given by Yahweh to the Israelites during their 40 years of wandering in the desert of which some of it was hidden in the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 16:31-34; Hebrews 9:4). This promises sustaining intimacy with Christ now and millennial and eternal intimate fellowship in His service in the future (John 6:48-51; Revelation 19:6-9); 2) A White Stone with a new name - In the Roman world, white stones were given for special feasts or banquets which were presented at the time of entrance into the event. Many times the name of the person was inscribed on the stone. Christ is going to give His overcomers a stone with a new name picked out specifically by Him (Christ also has a new name, Revelation 19:12).

THOUGHT: Believers today need to watch out for some of the same problems that influenced the church at Pergamum. The lust for other things (idols) and sexual immorality are all around us. Christ's word will speak to us and purify us if we let it!

II. Church #4: The Church at Thyatira

- A. A brief history of the city of Thyatira: Thyatira was a merchant city located 45 miles southeast of Pergamum. During 95 A.D. at the time of the writing of Revelation, the city had a multitude of trade guilds which supplied the Roman military (being one of its military outposts) as well as the other cities since it was on Asia Minor's major trade route. There were guilds (workers unions) for wool, linen, clothing, dyers, potters, bakers, leather, tanners, bronze smiths and slave traders. In the city were temples to Apollo, Artemis (Diana) and shrines to individual trade guild gods. Members of the trade guilds were expected to worship the god of that guild, participate in its feasts, and follow its social and sexual practices. Not participating in any of these could involve financial and social hardship. Lydia was from Thyatira as a "seller of purple" when the Apostle Paul witnesses Christ to her in Philippi (Acts 16:12-15).
- B. Christ's attributes, assessment, and award for the congregation of Thyatira (Revelation 2:18 -29).
 1. Christ's attributes for the church to meditate on are found in Revelation 2:18. He is the Son of God which is the only time it is used in the book. The Apostle John uses this term to show the divine side of the Messiah whom he described for us as the Son of Man earlier (Revelation 1:13; John 1:34, 49; 20:31). He is also the one with blazing fire eyes and glowing bronze feet. His eyes speak of His all-knowing ability to exercise wise judgment and His feet speak of His ability to purify and conquer. These came from Revelation 1:14, 15 and could particularly speak to trade workers.
 2. Christ's assessment of the churches situation and problem (Revelation 2:19-25).
 - a. Christ knows the Thyatiran church's ministry of love and faith, their endurance (the ability to "remain under" their situations), and commends them for doing more now than when they first started (verse 19).

- b. Christ knows that as a church, they are putting up with and giving a woman, who calls herself a prophetess, a platform to teach ideas that are not in conformity to the teaching of Christ and the apostles. Christ identifies her as similar to the Old Testament person Queen Jezebel. She was a Baal worshipping Canaanite who married Israel's King Ahab and brought idolatry and deception to Israel provoking Yahweh to anger (1 Kings 16:31-33; 2 Kings 9:22). This prophetess in Thyatira seemed to be teaching a form of Nicolaitan licentious living which has already been discussed in the churches of Ephesus and Pergamum (verse 20).
 - c. Christ has already confronted her with her error before this and has been waiting patiently for her and her followers to repent (change their mind and obey) (verse 21). If they choose to go their own way and not follow Christ's discipline which could include affliction and suffering ("thlipsis" Greek), sickness ("I will cast her on her bed"), and death (verse 22). When this happens, those in the seven churches will take Christ's discipline seriously (verse 23; 1 Corinthians 11:30-32; James 5:19, 20; 1 John 5:16, 17).
 - d. Christ speaks comfort for those in the church who refuse to accept this prophetesses teachings on "the deep things of Satan." This is probably the wrong view that Christians cannot be hurt by this world, and therefore can participate in it fully, because they are essentially spiritual beings. However, Christ says they should "hold fast" to His and the apostles true teaching until He comes. Christ took on human flesh (now has a glorified human body) and walked in purity and truth in His mortal body (verse 24, 25; Colossians 3:5; 1 John 2:14-20).
3. Christ's award for the faithful Thyatirans (Revelation 2:26-29).
- a. True overcomers in Christ are promised a co-reigning with Him in His Millennial Kingdom on this earth (verse 26, 27; Psalms 2:8, 9; Daniel 7:27; Romans 8:17; Revelation 20:4-6).
 - b. True overcomers in Christ (the Morning Star, Revelation 22:16) are given the glories and splendors of being with Christ forever. In new and glorified bodies, they can shine like the brightness of the heavens (verses 28, 29; Daniel 12:3).

THOUGHT: This is the center church (the fourth out of seven). Many times the main Hebrew and Greek message is found in the center of a writing. In this writing, the Son of God calls us to hold to the truth and to live for the Kingdom. This is also the message of the whole book!

YAHWEH JESUS IS IN THE MIDST OF HIS CHURCHES (PART 3)

REVELATION 3:1-13

- I. Church #5: The Church at Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6).
 - A. A brief history of the city of Sardis: Sardis was located 30 miles south of Thyatira and was located on the main Roman trade and military routes. As a result, it was a very wealthy city and was known as the old capital city of Persia in Asia Minor. It was located on an elevated area 1500 feet from the valley below and so was a perfect military fortress for the kingdoms of Lydia, Persia, Greece, and Rome. It had impressive structures built through hundreds of years of history including the acropolis (a well fortified military structure), temples to Artemis (Cybele, Diana) and the Emperor, and the necropolis (huge cemetery). Their main industry at 95 A.D. (the time of Revelation) was woolen goods and clothing. However, most of the city's wealth accumulated from its past history and so it had become prideful, lethargic, and morally compromised.
 - B. Christ's attributes, assessments, and award for the congregation at Sardis (Revelation 3:1- 6).
 1. Christ's attributes for the church to meditate on are found in Revelation 3:1b. He identifies Himself as the one who has the seven Spirits of God which communicates the Holy Spirit's blessing, anointing, and teaching (Revelation 1:4; Zechariah 4:1-10). He also identifies Himself as the churches' powerful protector and sovereign ruler as the one who has the seven stars (Revelation 1:16, 20). This church by thinking about these things should return to living a life in Yahweh's Spirit and power and stop relying on their own selves.
 2. Christ's assessment of the churches' situation and problem (Revelation 3:1c-4).
 - a. Christ does not commend this church for its work (only this one and Laodicea receive no commendation). This church is thought of by others and themselves to be spiritually alive but Christ says they are dead ("necros" Greek) (Revelation 3:1c).
 - b. Christ commands His congregation in Sardis to wake up and to watch constantly (present tense). Whatever this church was doing for Christ was not found to be done correctly (complete, to the full). This probably meant that there were either bad doctrine, personal boasting, immorality, or/and ulterior motives involved with the works (Revelation 3:2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:1-6; 1 John 2:16).
 - c. Christ commands His congregation in Sardis to correct the problem with a three-fold formula: 1) Remember! (what they have received from Christ and His teaching), 2) Keep it!, and 3) Repent! (change your mind and turn). If they refuse to do these things, Christ will come to them like a thief which probably means that He will remove them as one of His churches (Revelation 3:3, 2:5).
 - d. Christ does comfort a few in the church who have not soiled their clothes. The white clothes probably relate to the wedding and feast garments of the saints (Revelation 19:7, 8) or the victorious white garments worn after a battle victory in the Roman empire (Revelation 3:4).

3. Christ's award for the overcomers in Sardis (Revelation 3:5, 6).

- a. They are promised white clothes (verse 4) having their names stay in the book of life (all humans start out in the book but non-believers in Yahweh Christ's righteousness choosing instead self-righteousness get blotted out of the smaller Lamb's Book of Life, Daniel 12:1; Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 13:8, 17:8, 20:15, 21:27) and acknowledgement before Yahweh Father and the angels.
- b. There is a universal call to all of Christ's churches then and now to hear and obey this message.

THOUGHT: How do churches that were once alive become dead? What can we do to prevent dying as a church?

II. Church #6: The Church at Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13).

A. A brief history of the city of Philadelphia: Philadelphia was located 25 miles southeast of Sardis and 100 miles east of Smyrna. It was a wealthy city which traded in textile, leather, and wine. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 17 A.D. along with 10 other cities in the area but was rebuilt by Tiberias Caesar. In honor to Caesar, the city changed its name to Neocaesarea for over 30 years but by 95 A.D. (the time of Revelation) it went by the names of Philadelphia or Flavia. It had temples dedicated to emperor worship, Zeus, and shrines to pagan cults. There was also a large Jewish Synagogue in the city. Between the immorality of the culture and persecution, the church had many difficulties.

B. Christ's attributes, assessment, and award for the congregation at Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13).

1. Christ's attributes for the church to meditate on are found in Revelation 3:7. He identifies Himself as the Holy One ("set apart" for the Father's purposes, Isaiah 6:3), the True One (perfectly trustworthy, what He said and says He will do, as an example Isaiah 9:1, 2; Matthew 4:12-16), and the One who has the key of David. The key to King David's treasury (Isaiah 22:22) is given ultimately to the Holy True Messiah from David's line, Jesus Christ, which opens the door to His Kingdom (Matthew 16:19).
2. Christ's assessment of the situation without a rebuke (Revelation 3:8-11).
 - a. Christ knows that this congregation has been suffering (little strength) and persecuted but has kept His word and not denied His name. He continues to set before them this open door into the Kingdom blessings and possibly ministry (verse 8; Colossians 4:3; Revelation 21:25).
 - b. Christ knows that this congregation is being persecuted by the Jewish community. He tells this predominately Gentile church that His true Jews would receive their Messiah as the Philadelphian church has already done. Christ loves ("agapao" Greek) this church and all people will see this in His fulfilled Kingdom (vs. 9; Daniel 7:27; Philippians 2:10, 11).

- c. Christ knows that the Philadelphia congregation has kept His word through suffering times by enduring (“remaining under” Greek) in Christ’s strength (verse 10a). Since they were willing to endure now, they and future patient endurers will be kept from a future time of trial and tribulation which will come upon the whole earth (verse 10b, c). Most dispensationalists believe the rapture will take the church out of this world before the hour of trial or Day of Yahweh begins on this earth (Daniel 12:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:17 -5:5; Revelation 7:14). Most other groups see this as Christ’s preservation and strength to His believers through the great trials in this world (James 1:27).
 - d. Christ encourages His suffering Church with His soon coming. The idea of “soon” should be looked at from the perspective of wrapping up prophetic events and Yahweh’s grand timescale (Daniel 2:28, 45; Luke 18:8; 2 Peter 3:8-13; Revelation 1:12, 22:6). As they hold on (to the Holy True Messiah), they will keep their crown (reward) (verse 11; James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).
3. Christ’s award for the overcoming Philadelphians (Revelation 3:12, 13).
- a. They will be pillars in the Temple of God (probably relating to service in Christ’s kingdom being built properly on the apostles foundation, Revelation 21:14; Ephesians 2:20-22). They will be written on by Christ Himself which means intimacy and ownership. Overcomers receive on their new bodies the name of Yahweh Father, the new Jerusalem, and Yahweh Jesus’ new name (verse 12; Ezekiel 48:35; Revelation 19:12- 22:5).
 - b. There is a universal call to all of Christ’s churches then and now to hear and obey this message.

THOUGHT: Jesus promises future glories to those who will patiently trust, keep His word, endure, and follow Him now!

YAHWEH JESUS IN THE MIDST OF HIS CHURCHES (PART 4)

REVELATION 3:14-22

I. Church #7: The Church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22).

A. A brief history of the city of Laodicea: Laodicea was located 45 miles southeast of Philadelphia and about 100 miles east of Ephesus. It was a city that was at the crossroads of the major trade routes in Asia Minor and so had become wealthy. It was known for a soft, black wool made in the area and their famous medical school. An eye salve came from this school known as “Phygian powder” which brought the city fame and fortune. The city had temples to Zeus, Men Karou (also known as Asclepius, the god of healing) as well as shrines to many trade gods. The valley it was located in was prone to earthquakes and the city was severely damaged in both 17 A.D. and 60 A.D. The city had to bring its water in from an aqueduct system from six miles away and so was known to have lukewarm and many times bad tasting water. The cities and churches of Colosse and Hierapolis were very close to the city of Laodicea (Colosse was 10 miles east and Hierapolis was 6 miles north) forming a tri-city complex. It is believed that all three churches were evangelized and planted by Epaphras (Colossians 1:7, 2:1, 4:13) between 54- 56 A.D. B. Christ’s attributes, assessments, and award for the congregation at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22).

1. Christ’s attributes for the church to meditate on are found in Revelation 3:14. He identifies Himself as the churches’ Amen which means the words and actions of Jesus are firmly fixed, unchangeable, and true (Isaiah 65:16, He is the God of truth, in Hebrew “Elohim Aman”). He is the faithful and true witness and wants the Laodiceans to be like Him (2 Corinthians 1:20). He is also the ruler (chief, source, origin, beginner) of creation and therefore worthy to be listened to (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5, 22:13).
2. Christ’s assessment of the churches’ situation and problem (Revelation 3:15-20).
 - a. Christ knows that the Laodicean church, like their city water, is lukewarm and bad tasting. Out of the seven churches, they receive the worst report from Yahweh Jesus and receive only rebuke. None of the works of the Laodicean church are acceptable in Yahweh Jesus’ sight (verses 15, 16).
 - b. Christ knows that the Laodicean church is a congregation that boasts in their own wealth and self-sufficiency rather than their need and abandonment in Yahweh. This attitude never went well for Israel and it’s not going well for this church either (Deuteronomy 8:10-20; Jeremiah 9:23, 24). Christ describes this congregation in five words that are very much different from their self-evaluation. They are wretched (only other time used in Romans 7:24), miserable (only other time used in 1 Corinthians 15:19), poor, blind, and naked (verse 17).
 - c. Christ knows that the Laodicean church is prideful in three areas which are their gold, clothing, and eye medicine. He desires for their self- sufficiency to be reversed and therefore He instructs this congregation to “buy” into His true spiritual life instead (verse 18). If they will listen to His loving rebuke and repent (change their mind and turn) then Christ will open the door of His Kingdom blessings and personal fellowship to them (verses 19, 20; Matthew 24:33; John 14:23).

3. Christ's award for the faithful Laodiceans (Revelation 3:21, 22).

a. Christ's true overcomers will co-reign with Christ in His Millennial (1,000 year) Kingdom on this earth (verse 21; Daniel 7:27; Luke 22:28- 30; Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 20:6).

b. There is a universal call to all of Christ's churches then and now to overcome and listen to the true words of the Holy Spirit (verse 22).

THOUGHT: In what areas are you showing boastfulness in your family, resources, or ability without giving credit to Yahweh? How can you correct this? How can we as a church body be better at Hallelu-Yah (praising Yahweh)?

II. Two final teachings regarding the seven churches of Revelation.

A. Some teachers like to point out that there seems to be a possible chronological development of church history in the seven churches. They would possibly say that a scenario like this is represented in church history: Ephesus (approx. 30- 100 A.D., losing first love), Smyrna (approx. 100-312 A.D., severe persecution before Constantine), Pergamum (approx. 300-600 A.D., false doctrine), Thyatira (600-1517 A.D., immorality, false doctrine), Sardis (1517-1750 A.D., reformation, persecution), Philadelphia (1750-1950's A.D., revivals, great world wars), Laodicea (1950-now, the lukewarm church). Even though there are some interesting historical events that seem to line up with this view, there is not enough to give precise breaks to the next chronological development for my exegetical taste. A better exegesis is to see the seven churches representing possible church scenarios for all church time before Christ's rapture and/or return.

B. There seems to be a possible Hebraic chiasm in Christ's words to the seven churches of Revelation. The Greek letter chi looks like the English X. Therefore, a chiasm in the literature has similarities matching beginning and ending parts of the writing and has its main point in the middle (where the X crosses). Ephesus and Laodicea, Smyrna and Philadelphia, and Pergamum and Sardis all have similarities relating in order of passion for Christ, persecution in Christ, and participation in cultural immorality. Thyatira is the middle church, has the longest amount of writing, deals with doctrinal error and immorality, and is the only letter that quotes Scripture directly (Psalms 2:9). This deals with Christ's rule on this earth and His overcomers ruling with Him. This church seems to embody Christ's main theme to His churches for all time.

YAHWEH FATHER'S THRONE IN HEAVEN

REVELATION 4:1-11

- I. The revealing of the glory and awesomeness of Yahweh Father's throne in heaven (Revelation 4:1-6).
 - A. This is the start of a new section of prophecy that goes from Revelation 4:1-22:5. It starts with the sovereign throne of Yahweh and ends with the establishment of the New Heaven and New Earth. John seems to tie vision after vision together with words like "after this" or "after these things" which give primarily a futuristic idea (Revelation 1:19, 4:1, 7:1, 9, 9:12, 15:5, 18:1, 19:1, 20:3).
 - B. The Apostle John next sees a door that had been opened in heaven and hears the powerful trumpet voice of Yahweh Jesus inviting him into the open door for a look into future events (Revelation 4:1; Revelation 1:10, 19).
 1. Up until now John received his vision of the glorified Christ (Revelation 1:1-20) and Christ's message to the seven churches (Revelation 2:1 - 3:22) while probably in his cave on the isle of Patmos. Now he is given a vision which elevates him to the vantage point of heaven.
 2. Many believers see the rapture ("catching up" Greek "harpazo" 1 Thessalonians 4:17) of the church as occurring before (between Revelation 3:10-4:1) or at Revelation 4:1. Believers who hold to this position believe that Christ will rapture His church before the seven years of tribulation that will come on this earth as prophesied in Daniel 9:27, 12:1; Matthew 24:4-29; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10; and Revelation 6:1-19:10 and so are called pretribulational.
 - C. As John went through the open door of heaven (in the spirit, in his vision), he immediately was struck by the awesomeness of the throne of Yahweh Father! (Revelation 4:2; 1 Kings 22:19; Isaiah 6:1-4; Ezekiel 1:26-28). With the inspiration of Yahweh's Spirit, he describes it for us in Revelation 4:3-6. The concept of the throne of Yahweh is very important in Revelation.
 1. Out of the 22 chapters of Revelation, the throne is related to in 14 of the chapters. The word throne is used 13 times in Revelation 4:1-11 alone!
 2. Yahweh Father is described by John through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in terms of light in the color of three stones: jasper (probably like translucent diamond), carnelian (also called sardius which was fiery red), and emerald (covering a rainbow of shades of green encircling the throne). Brilliant splendor, glory, and unapproachable light give us a visual of our Yahweh Father (Revelation 4:3; Ezekiel 1:26-28; 1 Timothy 6:16).
 3. Around the Father's throne were 24 thrones occupied by 24 elders wearing white clothes and gold crowns (Revelation 4:4).
 - a. Many believe these to be human elders such as 12 chosen from Israel and 12 chosen from the church as in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:12-14).

- b. Many believe these to be a special elevated rank of angelic beings who have served Yahweh and His creation well. They point out that these 24 elders seem to be uniquely linked with the four living creatures that are for sure angelic, they are always distinguished from the saints (Revelation 5:8, 11:17-18, 19:1-4), and their place seems to center around the heavenly throne rather than any earthly thrones. This probably fits the context of the passage better.
- 4. From the throne came an awesome display of lightning, thundering sounds, and seven fire torches representing Yahweh's seven-fold (all- encompassing) Spirit. Each of these depict Yahweh's power to judge and purify by His Holy Spirit (Revelation 4:5, 8:5, 11:19, 16:18; Exodus 19:16; Matthew 3:11).
- 5. The throne was located on a large expanse of crystal glass that was like looking into the sea or ocean (this magnified Yahweh's transcendence, purity, and holiness). However, four six winged, supernatural angelic creatures, probably in the same order as seraphim and cherubim, who could see from any position (rich in Yahweh's will and knowledge), were right next to the throne and surrounding it (Revelation 4:6; Ezekiel 1:5-25, 10:1-22; Isaiah 6:1-3).

THOUGHT: Let's silently meditate on this awesome sight of Yahweh Father our Heavenly Father and give Him praise.

II. John next gives us more detail concerning these four living creatures (Revelation 4:7-8).

- A. They have faces like a lion, calf (ox), man, and flying eagle. Even though the early church fathers assigned these to the four gospels and others to tribes of Israel, the most probable explanation is that these highly ranked, supernaturally close order of angelic beings expressed Yahweh's heart in creation. They represent and bring continuous worship by acknowledging His power, strength, spiritual relationship, and soaring ability over this creation (verse 7; Ezekiel 1:10, 10:14).
- B. They each have six wings (Ezekiel chapters 1, 10; Isaiah 6:1-3) that can shield them from the awesome holiness of Yahweh and eyes that expressed their ability to see from any angle to discern Yahweh's bidding or will. They continuously say that Yahweh is beyond holy (repeated for emphasis, Isaiah 6:3, "set apart" from all else), that He is the only Ruler of All or Lord God Almighty (Adonai Yahweh Sabaoth " of Hosts" in Hebrew, Isaiah 6:3; Ezekiel 6:3), and that He is Yahweh the great I Am (was, is, and is to come Exodus 3:14).

III. John next gives us more detail concerning the 24 elders (Revelation 4:9-11).

- A. When the four living creatures worship Yahweh's attributes, His right to rule, and return thanks for who He is, the 24 elders worship by prostrating themselves and placing their crowns toward the throne (verses 9, 10).
- B. The 24 elders then join in the praise by saying their own chorus and adding aspects of Yahweh's creation, will, and sovereignty (verse 11).

IV. Some helpful terminology and definitions.

A. Millennium comes from two Latin words “mille-1,000” and “annum-year”. Therefore, the word refers to the 1,000 year reign of Christ found in Revelation 20:1-8 (chiliasm is derived from the Greek word for 1,000).

1. A person who believes that Christ will return to this literal earth “before” setting up and reigning 1,000 years on this earth is called a Premillennialist.
2. An Amillennialist is a person who believes that the 1,000 year time period is not literal but symbolic. Many believe that if there is a millennial reign of Christ, it is already happening during this present time of the church.
3. A Postmillennialist is a person who believes that the church will usher in the restoration and millennial reign of Christ on this earth under Christ’s invisible direction. Christ will then return visibly after this millennial work on earth to judge the wicked and set up His New Heaven and New Earth.

B. Tribulation is suffering or affliction and the word taken in a prophetic sense means the seven year period of suffering (that starts the day of the Lord) that is to come on the earth according to Daniel 9:27, 12:1; Matthew 24:4-29; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10; Revelation 4:1 – 19:10). The Tribulation Period is usually seven years and the most intense suffering happens in the last three and a half years of the seven and is called the Great Tribulation (Daniel 9:27b; Matthew 24:21).

1. A person who believes that the church will be raptured before the seven year Tribulation starts is pretribulational.
2. A person who believes that the church will be raptured in the middle of the seven year Tribulation but before the three and a half year Great Tribulation is midtribulational.
3. A person who believes that the church will be raptured before the wrath of the Lamb is pre-wrath tribulational (usually after the middle).
4. A person who believes that the church will be raptured after the seven year Tribulation Period is posttribulational.

FOUR HEAVENLY SCENES SHOW YAHWEH JESUS AS THE RIGHTFUL RULER OVER THIS EARTH AND ALL OF CREATION

REVELATION 5:1-13

The Apostle John divides this section up into four scenes with the words “and I saw” (kai eidon – Greek) used in verses 1, 2, 6, and 11.

- I. Scene One: Yahweh Father and the seven-sealed scroll (Revelation 5:1).
 - A. Yahweh Father, who is still on His throne that was described in chapter 4, is now seen balancing a scroll on His right palm.
 - B. The scroll has been written on both sides and sealed with seven seals.
 1. The scroll was probably made of papyrus strips that were glued together and then rolled. The writing on front and back of papyrus scrolls was usually reserved for documents, divorce settlements, and contract deeds (verse 1, Ezekiel 2:9, 10)
 2. Important Roman documents of the time such as wills were sealed seven times to make them authentic. Seals were usually made of clay or wax and then an impression or signature carved in it. Only an authorized person could open a document that had been sealed (verse 1, Isaiah 29:11, 12; Daniel 8:26, 12:4, 9).
 3. The seals could have either been on the side of the scroll (so that each time a seal was opened more of the scroll could be read) or all seven on the top of the scroll (with the events of Revelation not being read but depicted).
 4. By looking at the things contained in Revelation chapters 6 through 22, Ezekiel 2:9 through 3:1; Daniel 7:8-28, 8:26, 9:27, 12:1-13 as well as every passage in the Old Testament dealing with the Day of Yahweh and every New Testament passage on Christ’s return, we can surmise what the scroll contains. It is the end of this world as we know it that concludes with Yahweh’s judgment of unrighteousness and unbelief, the establishing of Yahweh Jesus’ Kingdom, the reward for the saints, and the New Heaven and New Earth.
- II. Scene Two: Yahweh Jesus the Messiah (Christ) is the only One who can open the scroll (Revelation 5:2-5).
 - A. A worthy (axios – Greek, meaning of proper weight as in a scale) individual is looked for in all of creation to open the scroll. However, no one was found who was, as the word worthy became, competent enough, sufficient enough, or fit enough to do the job (verses 2-4).
 - B. One of the 24 elders informs the weeping John that it is none other than Yahweh Jesus who is worthy to do this (verse 5).
 1. He is the prophesied Messiah who is called the Lion of Judah (verse 5; Genesis 49:9-12).
 2. He is the prophesied Messiah who is called the Root of David (verse 5; Isaiah 11:1, 10; Jeremiah 23:5, 6; 33:15, 16; Romans 15:12).

THOUGHT: The way Yahweh set it up, only Jesus the unique One, who was 100% Yahweh and 100% human, could judge, rule, and reign with His people. This prophesied Christ has come and will come again!

III. Scene Three: Yahweh Jesus is the Old Testament's prophesied Lion as well as its prophesied slain Lamb who takes the scroll, redeems believers, and brings about His reign on this earth with His saints! (verses 6-10)

A. John next sees Jesus as the slain Passover Lamb in the midst of Yahweh Father's throne, probably at His right hand (verse 6; Psalms 110:1; Colossians. 3:1; Revelation 3:21). Evidently Jesus bore the marks of His suffering on the cross (which He bears throughout all eternity in His new body, Luke 24:39) and He can morph in the vision depicting various forms. The Passover Lamb was a definite depiction for Jesus' death as paying for the sins of the world and freeing all those who would apply His blood to the doorpost of their lives through belief (verse 6; Exodus 12:3-11; Isaiah 53:6, 7; John 1:29; 19:14, 31-36).

B. The Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes. The Biblical number seven is the perfect number symbolizing fullness or completeness. The horns represent the fullness of His power and strength (verse 6, Deuteronomy 33:17; 2 Samuel 22:3) and the eyes represent His ability to discern and purify this world through the power of His Holy Spirit (verse 6, Zechariah 3:9, 4:10; Revelation 1:4, 3:1).

C. The Lamb evidently switches positions, probably moves to the front of Yahweh Father, and takes the scroll from the Father's right hand. At this event, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fall down before the Lamb in worship to celebrate the magnitude of the occasion. At this time, each of these 28 beings has a harp (usually 10 or 12 strings were commonly used in temple worship - 1 Chron. 25:1, 6) and a golden incense bowl (containing the petitions of the saints for true justice and the Kingdom of Jesus - Psalms 141:2; Luke 18:7, 8; Revelation 8:3-5) (verses 7, 8).

D. The new song (like Isaiah 42:10) these 28 beings sing and say relates to glorifying Yahweh Jesus for His redemptive sacrifice, His reward for His saints, and His coming Kingdom (verses 9, 10).

IV. Scene 4: The praising and glorifying of Yahweh Jesus expands to an innumerable number of angels as well as all of creation (Revelation 5:11-14).

A. The transfer of authority for the judgment and rulership of this world from Yahweh Father to Yahweh Jesus in Revelation 5 is very similar to that of the Ancient of Days to the Son of Man found in Daniel 7:9-14, 26. In both Biblical accounts, an innumerable number of angels surround the heavenly throne proclaiming His attributes and praise (verses 11, 12; 1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Revelation 7:12).

B. Every living creature is seen giving praise to Yahweh Jesus, no matter their location, and no matter what kind or type of creation. All of creation will worship and glorify the Lamb! (verse 13; Isaiah 45:23; Romans 8:18-25; Philippians. 2:10, 11; Revelation 19:11-22:21).

C. The four living creatures add their Amen (so be it, the things being done and said are true) and the 24 elders once again fall down and worship the eternal ruler! (verse 14)

THOUGHT: Let us add our Amen and our worship for our awesome Lamb, Lion, and King! He alone has the power to open the seals and do the things He has promised. Our hope is only in Him!

YAHWEH JESUS THE LAMB OPENS THE SEVEN SEALS (PART 1)

REVELATION 6:1-4

- I. There is a certain amount of background information that is needed before a proper exegesis (drawing the meaning out of the text) of Revelation chapter 6 through 19 can occur.
 - A. First we need to know when these events are occurring.
 1. The timetable of the events of Revelation chapters 6-19 are going to occur during a 7 year period in the future which culminates in Christ's return. This is called the futurists view and will be our primary mode of interpretation.
 - a. This view awaits the fulfillment of Daniel's 70th week of seven years as prophesied in Daniel 9:27.
 - b. This view awaits the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Day of Yahweh where His wrath is outpoured on the entire earth (Isa 13:6-13; Amos 5:18; Joel 1:15, 2:2, 11; Zechariah 14:1-11).
 - c. This view awaits the prophecies of Christ that explain the events leading up to His return (Matthew 24:2-35; Mark 13:2-31; Luke 21:6-33).
 - d. This view awaits the prophecies of the Apostles that explain the events leading up to His return (Romans 2:8-11, 12:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 2 Peter 3:4 -9).
 2. Two other methods of interpretation are common among our fellow believers and so will be mentioned briefly.
 - a. The historical (preterist) view usually interprets all these events as having already occurred around 70 A.D. (Jerusalem's fall) although some include events throughout church history.
 - b. The idealist (allegorical, symbolic) view interprets all these events according to apocalyptic genre that is primarily symbolic. They would say that "when" these events happen are not important as long as the church receives strength to follow Yahweh better and endure persecution.
 - B. Second we need to know how these chapters are organized. There are three main judgments of seven which are seven seals (Revelation 6:1-8:1), seven trumpets (Revelation 8:2-14:20) and seven bowls (Revelation 15:1-19:10). There are two main ways of organizing these from a futuristic approach.
 1. The dovetailing or telescopic way to organize these chapters has the seventh seal (Revelation 8:1) contain the seven trumpets and the seven trumpets (Revelation 11:15) contain the seven bowls. In other words, all of the judgments (possibly 19 to 21 depending on if the seventh seal and seventh trumpet are counted as judgments) happen in order with a relationship between the seventh seal and the rest of the judgments. This view is the main view we will use and points out the many differences in execution and intensity of the judgments.

2. The recapitulation or cyclical way to organize these chapters has seven judgments consisting of seals, trumpets, and bowls repeated three different ways for emphasis. This view points out that there are many similarities between the judgments as they are compared.

II. The opening of the first two seals by Yahweh Jesus, the Lamb (Revelation 6:1-4).

A. The first seal of judgment (Revelation 6:1, 2)

1. John saw the Lamb open the seal and then heard the noise of thunder (usually associated with judgment or power, Exodus 20:18; John 12:28, 29) from one of the four living creatures. The opening of the seal produced the calling forth of the first rider of the apocalypse (verse 1).
2. The white horse is probably a symbol of purity or righteousness. The person had a bow (military strength without using arrows), a crown (authoritative power), and the ability to conquer (evidently in a somewhat peaceful way) (verse 2).
 - a. There were four horsemen in the Old Testament that brought about judgment on Israel's enemies for the purpose of establishing real peace (Zechariah 1:8, 6:1-8). The colors of the horses were different as well as the scope and span of their purpose.
 - b. There are wide and varied views as to the identity of this first rider including the Roman emperor, the Word of God, the gospel, Roman invaders, and the Jewish Messiah. However, even though Jesus is going to ride in on a white horse in Revelation 19:11, He cannot be on this horse because He is opening the seals and judging the earth. The best choice seems to be the false antichrists or Antichrist that has a deceptive righteousness and starts conquering in peace (verse 2; Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:5, 24; Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8).

B. The second seal of judgment (Revelation 6:3, 4)

1. Yahweh Jesus opens the second seal and a second living creature (angel from the throne) calls forth the second horse and horseman of the Apocalypse (verse 3).
2. This horse's color was fiery red signifying great bloodshed due to civil unrest and war. This could be the same type of situation that Jesus prophesied as "wars and rumors of wars" and "nation against nation" (Matthew 24:6, 7; Mark 13:7, 8 and Luke 21:9, 10). The rider "was given" the ability to take away a certain amount of peace (shalom) out of the earth and he "was given" a great sword (a judgment executor).

THOUGHT: All activity is still under the control of Yahweh Jesus from the heavenly throne. He is the only rightful ruler of this world as well as the rightful judge and redeemer! Praise Yahweh Jesus!

YAHWEH JESUS THE LAMB OPENS THE SEVEN SEALS (PART 2)

REVELATION 6:5-11

I. Reviewing the first two seals (Revelation 6:1-4).

A. The first seal of judgment is carried out by a rider on a white horse. The best explanation for this first judgment seems to be the false antichrists or Antichrist that will have a deceptive righteousness and start to conquer in peace. This ties in well with the “beginning of birth pains” (Matthew 24:8) that marks the beginning of seven years of tribulation on this earth before Christ’s second coming (verses 1, 2; Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:5, 24; Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8).

B. The second seal of judgment is carried out by a rider on a fiery red horse. This second judgment brings great bloodshed due to civil unrest and war. The rider “was given” the ability to take away a certain amount of peace out of the earth and the ability to execute judgment (verses 3, 4; Matthew 24:6, 7; Mark 13:7, 8; Luke 21:9, 10).

II. The third seal of judgment (Revelation 6:5, 6).

A. John saw the Lamb open the third seal and a third living creature (angel from the throne) calls forth the third horse and horseman of the Apocalypse (Revelation 6:5a)

B. The horse’s color was black signifying sorrow, mourning, and hardship due to the ravages of the wars of the second seal (Isaiah 50:3; Jeremiah 4:27-29; Lamentations 4:8 - 5:10). One of the ravages of war is famine due to the destruction of crops and the depletion of the work force. During famine, food is scarce and costly. Therefore it needs to be weighed and rationed out (on a scale, Revelation 6: 5b; Proverbs 16:11; Ezekiel 4:16, 17; Matthew 24:7b).

C. John next hears something like a voice probably coming from Yahweh Father or Yahweh Jesus. He says that a choinix (a little less than a quart) of wheat will cost a denarius (an average days wage) or you can get three choinix of the cheaper, less nutritious barley. These amounts have been calculated to sustain an average person’s appetite for about one day and were about ten to twelve times the rate of regular times. He also says that olive oil and wine (which are considered luxury items) would not be harmed. This probably means that at this stage in the tribulation (first 3 ½ years), there are more poor people being directly effected than the wealthy elite. Another possibility is that the oil and wine represents Yahweh’s special protection over the things and people of His Spirit since the oil and wine are used in the Jewish Temple (anointing, sacrifices) as well as the church (anointing, communion) (verse 6).

III. The fourth seal of judgment (Revelation 6:7, 8).

A. John saw the Lamb open the fourth seal and a fourth living creature (angel from the throne) calls forth the fourth horse and horseman of the Apocalypse (Revelation 6:7).

B. The horse's color was yellowish green (chloros – Greek) which is the color of vegetation and most sickly and dead people. For the first time we are given the rider's name which is Death. Another by the name of Hades (the Greek word for the place of the departed dead which is Sheol in Hebrew) followed him in some way. They "were given" at this time a power to kill a fourth of the earth's population (over a billion and a half people today) through the use of the sword (human wars or violence), intensified famines, various forms of death probably by sickness, plagues, and by causing animals to turn on humans (Revelation 6:8; Ezekiel 14:12-23).

C. Some premillennialists believe the middle of the seven year tribulation period occurs during the time of the fourth horseman due to its severity, because it is the last of the horsemen that precedes the next events of judgment, and how Christ's words in Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, and Luke 21:20 line up timing wise. Therefore, this is one place where the Antichrist could break his covenant with Israel and set up an idol in the Jewish Temple (Daniel 9:27). Others see the middle before the seventh seal (Revelation 8:1) or somewhere in the days of the seventh trumpet (Revelation 10:7-14:20).

IV. The fifth seal of judgment (Revelation 6:9-11).

A. John saw the Lamb open the fifth seal and instead of seeing any more horsemen, he now sees a scene in heaven where people that have been killed for their faith cry out for Yahweh to execute His plan of justice. People that have studied Yahweh's word in all different generations have realized that He has been delaying His justice until the time of the end or the Day of Yahweh. This is where He will make everything right by judging this earth and setting up a true Kingdom of righteousness forever and ever (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:9). John sees these people crying out either underneath the altar of incense (the usual place for prayer and petition) or the altar of sacrifice in heaven (verse 9, see also Revelation 8:3-5, 14:18, 16:7).

B. As servants who are owned by Yahweh the Most High God, they call Him their holy and true Master (despotas – Greek). They recognize that He alone controls the time of His judgment and His ultimate kingdom rule and cry out the prophetic prayer of "how long!" (Psalms 13:1, 2; Psalms 35:17). Their ultimate hope is in the truth of His word and character, the holiness of His being which demands perfect and impartial justice that can only be delayed or forgiven by His mercy (verse 10; Luke 18:7, 8).

C. Rather than getting immediate justice, the martyred saints are told by Yahweh to rest and wait in a special white robe (symbolic of righteousness and victory) which they "were given." There are still more believers which will suffer and be killed for their faith during the fifth, sixth, and seventh seals (including the trumpets and bowls) before all will be completed (verse 11).

THOUGHT: "Wait for Yahweh and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off." Psalms 37:34

YAHWEH JESUS THE LAMB OPENS THE SEVEN SEALS (PART 3)

REVELATION 6:12-17

I. Reviewing the first five seals (Revelation 6:1-11).

A. Almost all “futurist” exegetes (those believing that the events of Revelation chapters 6 through 22 will take place in the future from now) view the seven seals as revealing the time of the seven year tribulation in chronological order. B. Most “futurists” believe the first three seals take place in the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation.

1. The first seal brings increased antichrists and probably the Antichrist leader on the world stage as a powerful leader who deceptively looks peaceful and righteous. He begins to put together some leadership structure and increases in power (Revelation 6:1, 2).
2. The second seal brings increasing civil unrest, war, and bloodshed. The Antichrist begins to cast his dictatorial power over a greater portion of the earth bringing more unrest and violence (Revelation 6:3, 4).
3. The third seal brings increasing famine and hardship to the poorer inhabitants of the earth. However, those with power and money are not as affected. Yahweh possibly gives special protection to His people during this time (Revelation 6:5, 6).

B. Many “futurists” see the fourth seal as lining up with the events of the middle of the seven year tribulation. However, some do not see the middle until Revelation 8:1 or Revelation 10:7-14:20. The middle of the tribulation was prophesied by Daniel (Daniel 9:27), Christ (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20), and Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:3-5) as the time where the Antichrist sets up an idol (possibly of himself) in the Jewish Temple. At this point, the tribulation increases for the next 3 ½ years into an intense great tribulation (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21) with the Antichrist breaking his covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27) and dictatorially ruling the world (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

1. The fourth seal brings the revealing of the Antichrist (Death), the increase of his power to kill a fourth of the population of the earth, the last of the horsemen of the Apocalypse (signaling a next phase in the tribulation), and a lining up of Christ’s words on Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, and Luke 21:20 (Revelation 6:7, 8).
2. The fifth seal brings a prayer from the existing saints in heaven who have suffered greatly and have been killed for their faith on earth for Yahweh to execute His plan of justice and ultimately set up His rulership on this earth. They are comforted by Yahweh and told to rest and wait for a little while longer (Revelation 6:9-11).

II. The sixth seal of judgment (Revelation 6:12-17).

A. If the fourth seal brings the events leading up to and after the mid point of the tribulation period, then the events of the sixth seal occur sometime after the mid point and before Christ’s return to the earth recorded in Revelation 19:11. In other words, the sixth seal would occur in the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation called the great tribulation (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 9:21).

B. The opening of the sixth seal brings amazing and cataclysmic changes in the earth and heavens that have not been experienced in any of the previous five seals (verses 12-14). Also, these catastrophic events seem to be world wide, strike terror in the hearts of the inhabitants of the earth, and allow them to understand that the great day of God's wrath was upon them (verses 15-17).

1. The sixth seal begins with a great shaking or convulsion (seismos - Greek) that starts on the earth but also affects the sky and heavens. While the earth and heavens convulse, various visible things can be seen and felt by those of the earth:
 - a. The sun becomes black as a "sackcloth of hair" which is a course garment worn for mourning (Isaiah 50:3). In other words, Yahweh shows by the sign of the darkened sun that the world is in mourning (verse 12; Matthew 24:29a).
 - b. The whole moon becomes red like blood. In other words, Yahweh gives the sign of a total eclipse of the moon probably viewed through very dusty atmospheric conditions (verse 12; Matthew 24:29b).
 - c. The asteroids, meteors, comets (asteres - Greek, can mean stars or objects moving through space) of heaven fell to the earth. In other words, more asteroids, meteors, and comets were being seen than at any other time in earth's history. Many of these were impacting the earth (verse 13; Matthew 24:29c). This would look like a large fig tree dropping its figs on top of you if you were underneath it. The fig tree is many times used to illustrate Israel and the things happening to Israel as well (verse 13; Matthew 24:32-35).
 - d. The shaking will be so thorough that mountains and islands will be moved out of place and the placement of the things of heaven will be changed and feel like everything is coming undone (verse 14; Matthew 24:29d).
2. The judgment happening on the earth at this time now includes everybody. It is universal, equal, and nondiscriminatory of wealth, class, or rank unlike the third seal judgment. The sad part is the world still does not respond in repentance but rather fear, hiding, and cursing (verse 15, 16a). The mountains at the very end will not even be around to hide behind (Revelation 16:20).
3. It is interesting to know that the prophesied Day of Yahweh (which starts out with universal judgment and ends with Yahweh's eternal reign) starts out with a world wide shaking as well as many of these signs (Isaiah 2:6-22, 29:6; Joel 2:1-11; Haggai 2:6, 7). Could this be the start of the Day of Yahweh (verse 16b, 17)? The Pre-Wrath tribulational rapture position takes this approach with the rapture taking place in the parenthetical chapter 7 before the Day of Yahweh's wrath takes place in the trumpet and bowl judgments.

**THOUGHT: "Great are the works of Yahweh, studied by all who delight in them."
Psalm 111:2**

YAHWEH JESUS THE LAMB OPENS THE SEVEN SEALS (PART 4)

REVELATION 7:1-8:1

- I. In Revelation 7:1 through 8:1, Yahweh gives John two vision scenes which will help explain for him and us the two important events which take place possibly sometime between the start of the sixth seal and the opening of the seventh seal. Let us review some of the previous seal timing clues.
 - A. Seals one, two, three, and part of four probably are the first three and a half years of the seven year tribulation period. During this time, the Antichrist begins his deception and increases in power and the world increases in civil unrest, wars, and famine (Revelation 6:1-11).
 - B. During the fourth seal, the Antichrist probably breaks his covenant with Israel and sets up an idol of himself in the Jewish Temple which is prophesied as the abomination of desolation. This signals the beginning of the great tribulation where one fourth of the world's population is killed (Revelation 6:7, 8). This also prompts the opening of the fifth seal prayer of the suffering and martyred saints. They pray for Yahweh to wrap up His plan of justice and start His full Kingdom rule on this earth. At this time, they are told to rest and wait (Revelation 6:9-11).
 - C. This sixth seal opens with cataclysmic signs upon the earth and heaven. There is a long protracted violent shaking that seems to begin the prophesied Day of Yahweh sometime during this sixth seal. The Day of Yahweh brings about His wrath on this earth and prepares the earth for His future rule and reign (Revelation 6:12-17).
 - D. It is after the description of these first six seals that John gives us the two important vision scenes of chapter 7 and right before the opening of the seventh seal in Revelation 8:1 (which includes the rest of the trumpet and bowl judgment). We are given two vision scenes concerning Yahweh's people on earth (Revelation 7:1-8) and Yahweh's people in heaven (Revelation 7:9-17).
- II. Scene 1: During this time of great tribulation and the beginning of the Day of Yahweh, 144,000 chosen Jewish believers are sealed for their protection (Revelation 7:1-8).
 - A. Chapter 7 is called a parenthetical section because it is describing something in more detail that is a break from the natural narrative. The narrative picks up again in Revelation 8:1 with the opening of the seventh seal. John uses the phrase "after these things" (metatauto) in 7:1, 9 just as he did in 4:1 to describe a change of thought or fuller description of something with a little different tone.
 - B. From his vantage point in heaven John sees four angels controlling Yahweh's power over the entire earth from every direction (the four corners was used for the four directions of a compass during John's day). As he sees this sight, another angel comes from his east (the rising of the sun, probably over Israel) commanding them to hold off their destruction until 144,000 believing Israelites have been sealed, 12,000 believing Israelites from 12 specific tribes (Revelation 7:1-8).

1. The sealing was going to be on the foreheads of these 144,000 believers to give them some form of protection from Yahweh's wrath. We don't know what type of seal it was but we know that Yahweh would recognize it as His. They will undergo suffering but Yahweh will be with them and guide them in contrast with those who take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:15-14:5).
2. There are two main views concerning the 144,000: a) One view takes this figuratively as the whole church consisting of all believers who are Jews or Gentiles and the number 12 (number of administration) or 12 x 12 x 1,000 (number of completion) as Yahweh's work in and among His people during persecution. Most post-tribulationists, idealists, and preterists see it this way; b) The other view takes this literally as Yahweh turning again to selected Jewish believers as His chosen vessels on this earth (like they used to be before the church age) after the rapture of the church to heaven. Most pre-, mid-, and pre-wrath - tribulationists would hold this view. This view is the one which seems to exegete prophetic literature more accurately.
3. There are 29 lists of the tribes of Israel throughout the Bible and 19 of these differ from one another (Genesis 29-35, 46, 49; Exodus 1; Numbers 1, 2, 13, 26, 34; Deuteronomy 27, 33; Joshua 13; Judges 5; 1 Chronicles 2, 12, 27; Ezekiel 48). The writers of Scripture changed the order or omitted certain tribes depending on the purpose for which they were writing or what was going on in the history of the tribe.
 - a. Even though current historical records might struggle in placing the whereabouts of all 12 tribes, Yahweh knows where they are. It also could be that new undiscovered records will turn up.
 - b. James and Peter both seemed to recognize the existence of 12 tribes of Israel (James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1).
 - c. Judah is listed first out of respect for Christ who came from that line (Genesis 49:10). Dan is omitted probably due to idolatry (Genesis 49:17; Judges 18:1-31) but will be included in the millennium (Ezekiel 48:1). Ephraim was omitted because they allied themselves against Judah (Isaiah 7:2, 5; Hosea 5:3) but was probably included as part of his father Joseph. Manasseh was added with Joseph for being faithful sons (Genesis 37:3; Joshua 17:16-17).

THOUGHT: Yahweh remembers and rewards your faithfulness toward the things of His Kingdom. You and your families faithfulness will have lasting effects for a long time!

III. Scene 2: The multitude of redeemed believers in heaven who came out of the great tribulation (Revelation 7:9-17).

- A. There is a distinction between the numbered, Jewish believers on the earth and the multitude, from every people group in heaven (verse 9a).
- B. They were before Yahweh Father's and Yahweh Son's throne in white robes (purity, victory) and palm branches (used for festivals such as the Feast of Tabernacles Zechariah 14:16) in their hands (verse 9b).

C. They proclaim their salvation through Yahweh alone and the angels around the throne fall down in worship and praise Him! (verses 10-12).

D. They are the ones who came out of the great tribulation by their belief in the blood of the Lamb and therefore have been given an abundant life of service, fellowship, reward, care, and shalom with Yahweh forever! (verses 13-17; Revelation 22:3-5). Could this be the raptured church in heaven?

IV. The seventh seal of judgment is opened by Yahweh Jesus. There was complete silence in heaven over the awesomeness of what was about to happen (Revelation 8:1).

THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPET JUDGMENTS OF THE DAY OF YAHWEH

REVELATION 8:2-13

- I. Yahweh's delayed judgment Day and promised return has begun in response to the prayers of all the saints (Revelation 8:2-6).
 - A. The Day of Yahweh had come (probably during the sixth seal) and now from Revelation 8:2 through Revelation 20:15 will bring about the time of the prophesied judgment and renewal upon this earth (Daniel 2:34-44, 7:17-28; Joel 2:28-3:2; Zephaniah 1:14-2:3).
 - B. Trumpets were used in Israel for assembling people for special events and war (Numbers 10:9, 10), feasts (1 Chron. 15:24), warning of the coming Day of Yahweh (Joel 2:1; Zephaniah 1:14-16), and New Testament resurrection events (Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16). Some post-tribulationists believe the last trump and seventh trumpet add to their argument. However, there are other explanations.
 - C. Seven angels who stand (and continue to stand - Greek perfect tense) before Yahweh's throne in heaven are given seven trumpets. Evidently these seven have had key positions with Yahweh through the years over the affairs of the earth (verse 2).
 - D. Another angel which served in the heavenly temple, like the Jewish priests served in the earthly tabernacle and the earthly temple, performed a sacred act before Yahweh. He was given a golden tray (censer) which was filled with incense and offered with the prayer of the saints (Revelation 5:8, 6:10) before Yahweh's altar (probably of incense, Exodus 30:7-9). This filled the area around Yahweh with a sweet smelling aroma. The angel then took coals from this altar of incense in his golden tray and cast it to the earth which brought about earthly and atmospheric warning signs of this next series of judgments (verses 3-5). The seven angels readied themselves for their awesome task (verse 6).

THOUGHT: The prayers of the saints are always heard by our great God Yahweh. They are all answered according to His timing and will (Joel 2:32; Romans 10:12, 13; 1 John 5:14, 15). Let's boldly call upon His name today! (Hebrews 4:16).

- II. The first four trumpet judgments of the Day of Yahweh show some similarities to the plagues of Egypt that delivered Israel from a land of idolatry and slavery (Revelation 8:7-13).
 - A. The first trumpet judgment brings hail and fire mixed with blood to the earth. In this judgment, one third of the earth's trees and all the earth's grass will be burned up (verse 7).
 1. The seventh plague of Egypt (Exodus 9:13-35) was a plague of hail that damaged humans and livestock as well. This plague in Revelation 8:7 only damages trees, vegetation, and grass but more extensive in area. One can only imagine what this amount of destruction would do to the food supply, air quality, and general living conditions on the earth.

2. This could be produced by increased volcanic activity, a combination of volcanic activity, hail, and blood red rain from volcanic dust or a supernatural “fiery bloody hail.” These are probably the best way to understand the text rather than moving to purely symbolic interpretations of the text such as the earth, grass, and trees being used to represent nations and people.
- B. The second trumpet judgment turns one third of the sea (salt water areas including oceans) into blood or a blood red color killing off one third of all salt water life and destroying one third of the ships (verses 8, 9).
1. The first plague of Egypt (Exodus 7:14-21) was the plague of turning the Nile into blood. This trumpet judgment is much more extensive.
 2. This could be produced by massive volcanic activity, a fiery meteor or asteroid or some type of supernatural exploding mountain that has previously never been seen. Symbolic interpreters prefer viewing the mountain as wicked nations like Rome or Babylon.
- C. The third trumpet judgment brings bitterness and probably non-drinkability to one third of the fresh water supply of the earth including rivers and springs (verses 10, 11).
1. Again this is similar to the first plague of Egypt (Exodus 7:14-21) only much more extensive.
 2. This could be produced by an asteroid or meteor that breaks apart polluting everything it touches that is fresh water. It was named “Wormwood” which is a bitter-tasting shrub (Proverbs 5:4) and in the Old Testament was a word that illustrated idolatry and judgment (Deuteronomy 29:18; Jeremiah 9:15, 23:15).
- D. The fourth trumpet brings increased darkness to this earth. The result seems to bring total darkness for one third of a day for an extended period of time (verse 12).
1. This is similar to the ninth plague of Egypt (Exodus 10:21-23) only much more extensive and debilitating (three days compared to probably years).
 2. John is not told of a method by which Yahweh accomplishes this and so we only can marvel at His power and ability. The Day of Yahweh is prophesied to be dark and gloomy during its beginning phase (Isaiah 13:10; Joel 2:2, 10; Zephaniah 1:15).
- E. The fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets are announced by a flying eagle which could easily be seen and heard by everyone. The flying eagle gives the next three judgments as woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth (verse 13). The knowledge that the woes are coming was supposed to help people to repent and turn to Yahweh but most still refuse (Revelation 9:21).

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPET JUDGMENTS OF THE DAY OF YAHWEH

REVELATION 9:1-21

- I. The fifth trumpet (woe 1) brings a swarm of stinging demonic locusts that terrorize the earth for five months (Revelation 9:1-12).
 - A. At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, a star (most likely an angel in this context, see also Judges 5:20, Job 38:7, and Revelation 20:1) descends from heaven onto the earth with a key to the Abyss or bottomless pit. This angel was given the key by Yahweh's authority just like the one in Revelation 20:1 and, therefore, does not seem to be Satan. The bottomless pit seems to be a prison for many of the fallen angels (Luke 8:31; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6) while events on this earth unfold (vs 1).
 - B. As the angel with the key opened the bottomless pit, smoke came out darkening the sun and the air. Out of the smoke came a massive swarm of demonic locusts to the earth. The authority given to them by Yahweh was to sting non-believers for a period of five months to the point where people will feel like giving up on life itself (but are unable to). However, they did not have any authority to hurt the vegetation of the earth as the first trumpet did. The 144,000 (Revelation 7:4) Jewish believers (as well as probably any new believers) with God's seal were not harmed by this judgment (verses 2-6).
 1. The eighth plague of Egypt (Exodus 10:1-20) was a plague of actual locusts that brought misery to the land of idolatry and slavery. The fifth trumpet brings misery to the people of idolatry and slavery on the whole earth for five months (the life span of a natural locust or the time of the early and latter rains which is April to August).
 2. There are many parallels to the Day of Yahweh found in Joel 1:4-3:21 to these trumpet judgments.
 - C. John next describes in detail the appearance of these demonic locusts (vs 7-11).
 1. For the Bible expositors who teach this as primarily symbolic and historical (idealists and preterists), the interpretation of these locusts are usually either the iron clad Roman armies, the long-haired Parthians to the east of Rome, or the turban wearing Muslims.
 2. For futurist expositors, some try to bring in modern warfare but most believe these to be actual mutated-in-form locusts under demonic control. Evidently from a sight sound and touch standpoint, they were designed to bring fear and pain.
 3. This demonic swarm seems to be intelligent and well organized with the name of its leader-king being "Destroyer" (Abaddon in Hebrew and Apollyon in Greek). This might be another name for Satan but probably is a high ranking fallen angel in Satan's army who is in charge of the Abyss (this is not one of the names listed for Satan in Revelation 12:9). By the way, regular locust swarms "have no king," Proverbs 30:27.

- D. The fifth trumpet judgment is the same as the first woe. Trumpets six and seven are the same as the next two woes (verse 12).
- II. The sixth trumpet judgment (woe 2) brings a demonic cavalry with the authority to kill one-third of the earth's population (Revelation 9:13-19).
- A. At a specified and predetermined exact time, Yahweh gives the word through the same angel from Revelation 8:3-5 who attended to the heavenly altar of incense and the prayers of the saints (verse 13). The altar angel gave the word to the sixth trumpet angel to loose four specially created angels (probably fallen since they were bound) who were bound at the Euphrates River. The Euphrates River is the eastern border of Israel (Genesis 15:18), is now running through modern Iraq, is the starting point of many of Israel's historical invasions (Isaiah 8:5-8), and the possible area of the fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14) (verses 13-15).
- B. A 200 million strong demonic cavalry were possibly assembled or led by the four angels or the four angels transformed themselves into this cavalry. The characteristics of this cavalry goes way beyond the description of a normal cavalry relegating this to the realm of the supernatural demonic cavalry (verses 16-19).
1. The riders (and possibly horses) had breastplate armor on consisting of three colors (which might have been mixed or separated out into three color groups) fiery red, dark blue, and light yellow.
 2. The heads of the horses looked like the heads of lions with the ability to open their mouths and breath out fire, bluish smoke, and sulphur. It was by these three substances that could be breathed out by the horses in which a third of humanity will be killed in the sixth trumpet. The horses tails can also strike and wound people.
 3. The tenth plague of Egypt (Exodus 11:4-6, 29, 30) killed all the firstborn. This plague during the Day of Yahweh kills one third of humanity (possibly 1 to 1 1/2 billion people by today's count—after already taking out around 2 billion people due to deaths in Revelation 6:4, 8; 8:11 and the possible rapture of the church).
- III. Yahweh's judgment is seen during His Day but also His tender heart of mercy. Just as in Egypt, He desired for people to repent of their idolatry and self-imposed slavery to demons. He ultimately desires for people to believe that He alone is their only hope. Yet people still harden their hearts and refuse to repent, believe, and be saved (Revelation 9:20, 21). One day it will be too late (Revelation 22:13-15). "The great Day of Yahweh is near, near, and hastening fast; the sound of the Day of Yahweh is bitter. The mighty man cries aloud there..." Zephaniah1:14 "Seek Yahweh all you humble of the land...perhaps you may be hidden on the Day of the anger of Yahweh." Zephaniah2:3

BETWEEN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH TRUMPET JUDGMENTS THE APOSTLE JOHN EATS A LITTLE SCROLL

REVELATION 10:1-11

- I. John is visited by another mighty angel with a specific message after the sixth trumpet judgment is finished (Revelation 10:1-7).
 - A. John was first visited by a mighty or strong angel in Revelation 5:2 and receives another visit in Revelation 18:21. Daniel received mighty angel visits in Daniel 10:5-6 and Daniel 12:5-7. It seems like “mighty angel” visits bring information to Yahweh’s prophets in the form of new revelation and were also sent to protect Yahweh’s people (verse 1).
 - B. John describes the mighty angels clothes, head, face, and feet as radiating color and light which should clue us in that the message he brings comes from Yahweh’s throne (verse 1, Revelation 1:14, 15, Revelation 4:3-5).
 - C. The mighty angel seemed large and powerful to the Apostle John placing his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth. This probably represented Yahweh’s authority to rule and judge everything in, on, or above the earth as has been shown already in the previous seal and trumpet judgments. In his right hand he had a little open scroll which was different from the previous closed scroll in Revelation 5:1, 2 (verse 2).
 - D. The mighty angel cried out with a loud lion-like voice and as he did, John heard a message of seven thunders which he was not permitted to write for some reason (verses 3, 4; 2 Corinthians 12:4). Maybe when we meet him we are supposed to ask what these were as a special blessing to us for studying Revelation!
 - E. The mighty angel then gives a message which he swears comes from the very throne of Yahweh by raising one hand (verse 6a, b). The angel in Daniel 12:7 lifted both hands in a sworn oath. The Israelites were told to swear their oaths by the name of Yahweh (Deuteronomy 6:13, 10:20), however, Christ found abuse in oath taking (Matthew 5:33-37, 23:16-22) and so instructed His believers to simply speak the truth and do it (Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12).
 - F. The sworn message was “that there will no longer be delay” (verse 6c).
 1. Some in the early church translated this “that there will no longer be time” which is a possible translation if you can support it contextually. Since there are time events still to come in Revelation chapters 11-22, the context does not support this reading.
 2. This seems to be an answered prayer to the persecuted martyrs, saints, and prophets for Yahweh to judge this earth and establish His Kingdom as in Revelation 6:9-11 (also see Daniel 12:7).
 - G. The sworn message goes on to say that the “mystery of God” will be finished during the days of the seventh trumpet judgment and probably during the beginning of it when the angel is “about to” sound (verse 7).

1. The “mystery of God” is interpreted by most expositors as a secret that is revealed by God.
 2. Many pre, mid, and post tribulation rapturists would view this as Yahweh finishing up His judgment of this earth during the seventh trumpet (which includes the seven bowl judgments) before establishing His Kingdom on earth.
 3. Most pre-wrath tribulation rapturists view this “mystery of God” with the definition the Apostle Paul used in Colossians 1:24-2:3; Ephesians 1:9, 10; 3:1-10 (possibly 1 Corinthians 2:1). In these texts, the Apostle Paul defined the mystery of God as a time period where God has determined to bring salvation to many Gentiles while Israel (as a nation) rejects Christ. When the full number of Gentiles are brought salvation, Yahweh then turns His Kingdom program back to national Israel and their salvation (Daniel 12:7; Acts 15:14-16; Romans 11:25b-26).
- II. John is instructed to take the little scroll from the angel and eat it (Revelation 10:8-11).
- A. Ezekiel in the Old Testament had a similar experience (Ezekiel 2:8-3:3). Prophets in the Old and New Testaments received Yahweh’s message, digested it, and delivered it to the people (verses 8-9a).
 - B. The message of the little open scroll was sweet to John’s mouth (probably the overall message of Christ’s ultimate rule) but bitter to his stomach (probably the message of judgment and suffering) (verses 9b-10).
 - C. This prophetic message would go out to all the people of the world involving judgment and the wrapping up of all things (verse 11; Revelation chapters 11-22).

THOUGHT: Read Psalm 2:1-12 this week and give Yahweh Father and Yahweh Jesus all the praise and all the glory! Hallelu-Yah!

A REVIEW OF THE EVENTS IN JERUSALEM DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION (FINAL 3 1/2 YEARS)

REVELATION 11:1-14

- I. The Jewish Jerusalem Temple will be rebuilt and re-established before or during the seven year Tribulation Period but during the last 3 1/2 years it will be trampled by the Gentile nations (Revelation 11:1, 2).
 - A. John is told (probably by the mighty angel speaking for Yahweh) to measure the temple, the altar, and the worshippers (probably get a count) (verses 1, 2).
 1. This is the temple on earth because the mighty angel came from heaven to earth in Revelation 10:1, 2. Also, Revelation 11:19 distinguishes this from the temple in heaven.
 2. The prophet Ezekiel was given a similar assignment in Ezekiel 40:3, 4.
 3. John received a hollow reed probably similar to Ezekiel's for the purpose of measuring. Ezekiel's was six cubits or nine feet in length (Ezekiel 40:5).
 4. When Yahweh instructs His prophets to measure something, it means that He has prophetic plans for those being measured and, therefore, is guaranteeing that His work will be accomplished and preserved (Jeremiah 31:39; Ezekiel 40:2-43:12; Zechariah 2:1- 8).
 5. John measures from the Holy of Holies, to the brazen altar, to the worshippers. In other words, from the inside out (verse 1).
 6. In Herod's temple (at the time of Christ), the court of the Gentiles was separated from the inner court by a low wall. John is told not to measure this because in this future temple, the Gentiles will be in charge for 3 1/2 years (42 months) trampling the temple area (verse 2).
 - a. This is the same amount of time which Daniel prophesies about in three places. He reveals that sometime in the future, the people of Israel will have 3 1/2 years of severe trial and suffering before Yahweh sets up His Kingdom (Daniel 7:25, 9:27, 12:1, 7).
 - b. This is the same time period which Jesus and the Apostle Paul prophesied about (Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).
 - c. This time period will be repeated several times in the book of Revelation (Revelation 11:3, 12:6, 12:14, 13:5).

THOUGHT: Yahweh has purposed to set His King on His Holy Hill even though the nations have raged and will rage! Psalm 2:1-6

- II. There will be two Jewish witnesses (prophets) during the 3 1/2 year Great Tribulation in Israel before Yahweh Jesus takes His rightful throne (Revelation 11:3-14).
- A. These two prophets will prophesy (probably about believing in Jesus and Yahweh's coming Kingdom) for 3 1/2 years while wearing sackcloth (coarse animal clothing that are signs of mourning and distress) (verse 3; Daniel 9:3).
 - B. These two prophets are identified with Zechariah's prophecy in Zechariah 4:2-14. As Joshua and Zerubbabel were anointed in leading Israel to restoration from Babylon, even so these two witnesses are anointed in leading Israel through their time of distress, the finishing of the mystery of God (Revelation 10:7), and the return of Israel to Yahweh Jesus (verse 4).
 - C. These two prophets are given special anointing during this time to kill their enemies with mouth fire, make it not rain, and bring any and all plagues whenever they want (verses 5, 6).
 - 1. The identities of these two prophets are usually associated with Elijah, Moses, or Enoch because of some of the similarities to their previous ministries.
 - 2. Many in the early church thought these were Enoch and Elijah because nothing is recorded that they ever died (Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11). However, there will be many at Christ's coming who will never die (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
 - 3. The two most likely candidates are Elijah and Moses. Elijah's ministry of calling down fire from heaven and making it not rain (1 Kings 17:1; 2 Kings 1:10; James 5:17) as well as the prophecy that he will return before the Day of Yahweh (Malachi 4:5) tie him into Revelation 11:5-6a. Moses' ministry of the ten plagues (Exodus 7:14-11:10) tie him into Revelation 11:6b. Also, both of them appeared with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3; Mark 9:4; Luke 9:30).
 - 4. These two prophets might actually be Elijah or Moses or two sovereignly chosen prophets with similar ministry styles.
 - D. If the pre-wrath tribulation timing is correct, then these two witnesses would have started their ministry after seal 4 (Revelation 6:8), would have been active during the rapture of the church and sealing of the 144,000 Jews (Revelation 6:12-7:17), possibly called down the Trumpet judgments (Revelation 8:1-9:21), and will be protected until the 3 1/2 year ministry is ended.
 - E. At the end of their 3 1/2 year ministry, Yahweh will allow them to be killed by the beast (the first mention of this word for the Antichrist ruler of Revelation 6) who is possessed by satanic power from the Abyss (verse 7, 2 Thessalonians 2:9).
 - F. Their dead bodies will remain unburied in Jerusalem for 3 1/2 days while the world rejoices over their deaths but they will be raised from the dead and ascend to heaven while their enemies watch (verses 8-12).

- G. In the same hour that the two witnesses go to heaven in a cloud (like Jesus in Acts 1:9), Jerusalem has a large earthquake destroying a tenth of the city, 7,000 men will be killed and the rest become terrified and give glory to the God of heaven (possibly many believe at this time in Jerusalem) (verse 13).
- H. Evidently all this happened between the beginning of the Great Tribulation and the end of the sixth trumpet judgment (second woe) and before the seventh trumpet judgment (third woe) (verse 14).

THE BLOWING OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

REVELATION 11:15-19

- I. At the blowing of the seventh trumpet, Yahweh Father and His Messiah, Yahweh Jesus, begin the process of taking back Satan's earthly hold and power (Revelation 11:15-19).
 - A. Loud voices in heaven include the 24 elders (angels) surrounding Yahweh's throne (Revelation 4:4), probably the innumerable angels in heaven (Revelation 5:11) and probably the redeemed and raptured saints (Revelation 7:9-17) (verse 15).
 - B. Jesus Christ is Yahweh's designated ruler of this world. He is the prophesied King from the line of David (2 Samuel 7:7-16; Psalm 2:1-12; Psalm 89:3, 4) and the promised Messiah (Isaiah 49:1-7; Luke 2:26; Luke 9:20; Acts 1:6, 4:24-26) (verse 15).
 - C. The 24 elders (angels) once again fall on their faces in worship before Yahweh's throne and proclaim several things that happen at this time (verses 16-18).
 1. The prophesied time of Yahweh, Almighty God's (Kurios ha Theos ha Pantokrator), The Eternal One's reign begins in the invisible realm (spiritual reality with physical ramifications on earth such as the coming Bowl Judgments (Revelation 15:1-16:21) and becomes visible reality at Christ's inauguration and reign (Revelation 19:11-20:6) (verses 16, 17).
 - a. Most pre-trib, mid-trib, and post-tribulation positions view this passage as a general preview of a time where the Seventh Trumpet sounding looks forward to its ending which is the setting up of Christ's rule. This could be a period of several years.
 - b. If the pre-wrath tribulation view is correct, this time from the Seventh Trumpet sounding through Christ's inauguration will take place in a period of 30 to 75 days (Daniel 12:11, 12). This is a time period after the Great Tribulation (last 3 1/2 years) has ended which was after the events of the Sixth Trumpet (Revelation 9:21) and the finished prophesying of the two witnesses (Revelation 11:7-13).

THOUGHT: The Future reign of Yahweh's Messiah (Christ) in Israel and Jerusalem on this earth is a major event in prophecy. Read what the Scriptures have to say about this momentous event in Psalm 2:1-12, Isaiah 9:6, 7; 61:2-62:12, Jeremiah 31:23-40, Daniel 7:9-27, and Matthew 24:31-34!

2. The Gentile nations were enraged at the thought of this Jewish Messiah reigning over them especially during Daniel's 70th week (7 years) and even more especially during the last 3 1/2 years of it (verse 18a; Psalm 2:1, 2; Rev 6:1-19:21).
3. Yahweh's wrath came to this earth after the Sixth Seal was opened and the Day of Yahweh began (verse 18b; Revelation 6:17).

4. It appears as if the judging of the saints for reward or lack of reward happens in heaven after the blowing of the Seventh Trumpet (verse 18c, d; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10). The judgment of unbelievers happens 1,000 years later after Christ's reign finishes on this earth and before the New Heaven and New Earth begins (Revelation 20:11-15).
 5. After the blowing of the Seventh Trumpet, Yahweh will "destroy the destroyers of the earth" by pouring out the Seven Bowl Judgments (Revelation 15:1-16:21). This will happen as a precursor to inaugurating King Jesus as a cleansing process before His arrival (verse 18e).
- II. The opened heavenly temple of Yahweh explains for us that Yahweh Father is getting ready to transfer His heavenly reign of the earth to the reign of His earthly Messiah (Christ) (Revelation 11:19).
- A. In line with the proclamation of the 24 elders (angels) in Revelation 11:17, Yahweh Jesus Christ is beginning the process to reign. The opened temple in heaven might show a movement from His throne in heaven towards the earth since an open door means someone is going in or out.
 - B. As the door of the temple in heaven is opened, the heavenly Ark of the Covenant is seen. The Ark of the Covenant was also called the Ark of the Presence of God (Yahweh). It had great significance for the nation of Israel and showed them that Yahweh was with them in a special way (1 Samuel 5:1-6:21; 2 Samuel 6:1-17).
 - C. All the judgments that come to the earth during the Day of Yahweh come with heavenly throne and temple command. The coming earth cleansing Seven Bowl Judgment will not be any exception (Revelation 6:12-17; 8:1-5; 11:19; 15:4-6).

PART 1: SATAN'S ANGER TOWARDS THE PROPHESED CHRIST AND SATAN'S EXPULSION FROM HEAVEN

REVELATION 12:1-17

- I. Revelation chapters 12 through 19 seem to form one unit of thought which gives details of the last 3 1/2 years of Daniel's 70th week (Great Tribulation) through the return of Christ to rule and reign on this earth.
 - A. Revelation chapters 12-14 provides the diligent reader with parenthetical information on Satan's wrath toward Christ and Christ's people (chapter 12), the beast's (Antichrist's) satanic empowerment and cruel reign (chapter 13), and Yahweh's triumph over the forces of Satan's in the final harvest of evil (chapter 14).
 - B. Revelation chapters 15, 16 chronologically moves history forward past the blowing of the seventh trumpet (Revelation 11:15) to the final seven bowls of judgment. These will finish Yahweh's wrath on the earth and are specifically designed to purge evil and those who persist in choosing Satan over Yahweh from this earth.
 - C. Revelation chapters 17-19 provides the diligent reader with parenthetical information on the fall of the beast's (Antichrist's) capital city and therefore the final fall of satanically influenced leaders forever. It also unveils for us the marriage supper of the Lamb and the return of Christ with His saints.
 - D. The events of the final harvest of evil (Revelation 14:19, 20), the seventh bowl massive judgment (Revelation 16:17-21), and the return of Christ in judgment (Revelation 19:11-21) seem to occur approximately at the same time. These things will prepare the way for Christ's prophesied millennial reign on this earth in Revelation 20:1-6.
 - E. According to the pre-wrath rapture view, the ending of the events in Revelation 14:19, 20; 16:17-21; and 19:11-21 occurs sometime between 30 and 75 days after the ending of the Great Tribulation (last 3 1/2 years) (Daniel 12:11, 12).
- II. To understand the events that are going on during the Great Tribulation and beyond, we need to go deeper than the surface of things and move into the spiritual realm (Revelation 12:1-6).
 - A. John is going to tell us about two great signs in Revelation 12:1 and 3 and then another sign in Revelation 15:1. These three signs reveal to the diligent reader the spiritual battle behind the physical chaos of the Great Tribulation and beyond.
 1. In verse 1, the word for sign (smaon-Greek) means a wonder or miracle that is beyond the usual course of nature. In this case, we need to look at the spiritual significance as to what the sign is pointing to by looking into God's Scriptures for the answer.

2. The best place to start finding the identity of the woman is in Genesis 37:9, 10. Joseph had a dream given to him by Yahweh which had “the sun (Jacob), the moon (Rachel), and eleven stars (his eleven brothers) bowing down to him.” This passage would put into the Hebrew mind that the nation of Israel or probably the remnant in the nation of Israel who will believe (look at verses 6, 13-17) could be the woman who is in child birth. Other passages that could be referenced are Isaiah 26:17-18; 66:7-9; Jeremiah 4:31; Jeremiah 13:21; Micah 4:10; 5:3 (verse 1, 2).
 3. The great red dragon is probably the plan of Satan through the seven countries of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece, and Rome to thwart the birth of the future unique male child Jesus Christ throughout history (verses 3, 4; Daniel chapters 2, 7). The reference to Christ is very specific in verse 5 (Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 19:15).
 - a. The great dragon is identified as Satan in verse 9 and the “third part of the stars” might refer to his and other angels who departed from Yahweh’s rule before humanity (Isaiah 14:11-14 possibly).
 - b. The child (Christ) ascended (“was caught up”) to the Father’s throne (Acts 1:9; Colossians 3:1).
- B. During the Great Tribulation (1,260 days, the last 3 1/2 years, according to a 30 day Jewish month, of Daniel’s 70th week of 7 years), God has prepared a special place of protection for the woman (Israel’s remnant of future believers)(verse 6).
- III. The reason why remnant Israel needed Yahweh’s protection during the Great Tribulation is because Satan was denied anymore access to Yahweh’s throne. He was thrown out of heaven forever! (Revelation 11:7-17)
- A. Michael is Israel’s specially assigned protector angel (Daniel 12:1) and is an angel in charge of other angels called an archangel (Jude 9). Up until the Great Tribulation on earth, Satan and at least some of his angels have access to Yahweh’s throne (1 Kings 22:19-22; Job 1:6-12; Zechariah 3:1). At the point of the Great Tribulation on earth, Satan and his angels are thrown out of heaven permanently. This is good news for heaven but bad news for earth because Satan is wrathful and knows he has a short time (verses 7-12).
1. The Devel (Diabolos–Greek) and Satan (Hebrew) both mean slanderer or accuser. He is the accuser of the brethren and the deceiver of the whole earth! (verses 9, 10)
 2. Believers throughout history overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, their testimony, and being willing to die for their faith! (verse 11).
- B. Satan pursues remnant Israel during the Great Tribulation but Yahweh protects and feeds them like He did with Israel leaving Egypt. In miraculous ways, Yahweh once again delivers them on eagles wings (Deuteronomy 32:10-14; Exodus 19:4). As Satan realizes that he can’t harm this group of Israel’s remnant (possibly the sealed 144,000), he goes after other believers on the earth (verses 13-17).

PART 2: THE ANTICHRIST'S SATANICALLY EMPOWERED RULE, THE FALSE PROPHET, AND THE PERSECUTION OF THE SAINTS

REVELATION 13:1-18

- I. During the Great Tribulation (the last 3 1/2 years of Daniel's 70th week of 7 years), the prophesied Revived Roman Empire with its Antichrist king devours the whole earth, blasphemes Yahweh, and wears out the saints (Revelation 13:1-10).
 - A. A ten nation Revived Roman Empire has evidently risen to power before the Great Tribulation which was blasphemous against the true God Yahweh (verse 1).
 1. This was prophesied about in detail in Daniel 2:40-45 and 7:7-25 which was written around 530 B.C.!
 2. The idea that it came out of the sea (verse 1) comes from the same idea as Daniel 7:3 and should be a context clue for the diligent reader. In the Old Testament and Hebrew mind, when the sea is used figuratively (according to context), it has to do with special satanic activity against Yahweh (Job 26:12, 13; Psalm 89:9, 10; Isaiah 27:1, 51:9-11).
 3. Satan was unsuccessful in preventing Yahweh's Christ from being born in history and accomplishing His mission (Revelation 12:1-5) through the seven dominant nations (heads) of the world (Revelation 12:3, 13:1). These nations were probably Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece, and Rome. His plan during the last days and specifically during the Great Tribulation, where he has at that time been thrown out of heavenly access (Revelation 12:8), is to exert his power through the kings (horns) of this revived Roman group (Revelation 12:3; 13:1).
 4. Evidently each of these ten kings did not believe in the true God, Yahweh, because they were characterized as blasphemous (in this context, words to cause injury or harm to Yahweh).
 - B. This ten nation empire was like a leopard (swift), a bear (strong), and a lion (ferocious). They also were like some of the characteristics of the three nations of Greece (leopard), Medo-Persia (bear), and Babylon (lion) found in Daniel 7:1-6 which was described before Rome and Revived Rome in Daniel 7:7, 8. This ten nation empire was satanically empowered and its eventual ruler, the Antichrist, was in possession (as well as satanically possessed) of all of Satan's usurped authority of wickedness (verses 2).
 - C. The ten nation kingdom starts out being called a beast or the beast (verses 1, 2) but then it takes on the personification of its leader who seemed to be mortally wounded and then healed through Satan's deceit. This person is known in the New Testament as the Antichrist (1 John 2:22, 23; 1 John 4:3), the man of lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:3) or the beast (Revelation 13:3).
 1. The people on the earth at the Great Tribulation will worship Satan (the dragon, Revelation 12:9) and the beast (Antichrist) who personifies this end time Revived Roman Empire (verses 4).

2. Daniel 7:8 and 7:20 tell us that the Antichrist comes up after the ten nations (kings) are established in power. Revelation 17:12, 13 tell us that these ten kings willingly turned their power and authority over to the Antichrist. Then the same Daniel passages tell us that because of this “one from among them” three of the original ten fell and were plucked up by the roots. This would possibly leave seven or eight kings during the Great Tribulation.
 3. The Antichrist (beast) was allowed by Yahweh to blaspheme Yahweh Himself, Yahweh’s heavenly creation, as well as make war on Yahweh’s earthly saints for 3 1/2 years (the Great Tribulation, Daniel 7:25, 9:27, 12:7; Matthew 24:15-25; 2 Thessalonians 2:4-12; Revelation 11:3, 12:6, 14) (verses 5-10).
 - a. Daniel 7:20-25 and 1 Thessalonians 2:3-12 correlate this prophecy perfectly.
 - b. During this time, many Christian saints will be taken captive (as prisoners) or killed by the world government probably by being beheaded (Revelation 20:4, the “sword” is the symbol of death by the ruling power or nation, Romans 13:4). According to the pre-wrath view, some (all true believers at this time) will have this time shortened by rapture (Matthew 24:22-31; Revelation 7:9-17) probably one to two years into it. Either way it calls for endurance and faith on the part of the saints.
- II. During the Great Tribulation there will be a False Prophet whose goal is to proclaim the glories of Satan and the Antichrist (Revelation 13:11-18).
- A. The False Prophet (beast) rose out of the earth (instead of the sea like the Antichrist). This probably implies that this man started out as a fairly normal human being having nothing originally to do with the ten nation empire or the Antichrist. However, he gradually let himself be swayed satanically by his choices. The two horns (probably power over many people) made him influential in deceiving people with what appeared to be a message of peace (lamb) and yet it was straight from Satan (dragon). He is called the False Prophet in Revelation 19:20 (verse 11).
 - B. His satanically driven goal is to bring the world into worshipping the Antichrist by a sophisticated form of deception and trickery (verses 12).
 1. He convinces most of the world to believe that the Antichrist is God because of a supposed healing and miracles in the Antichrist’s presence. However, 2 Thessalonians 2:9 -12 tells us that these are false signs and wonders (verses 13, 14a; Revelation 19:20).
 2. He is instrumental in getting the Antichrist’s image set up in the Jerusalem Temple to be worshipped and somehow caused it to speak. This might be the abomination of desolation marking the beginning of the Great Tribulation (verses 14a, 15; Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4).
 3. He causes there to be economic consequences and hardship to anyone not getting the Antichrist’s name or number on the right hand or forehead. The number which will be recognizable in the Great Tribulation is 666 (verses 16-18).

PART 3: THREE EARTHLY SCENES SHOW YAHWEH JESUS AS THE FAITHFUL ONE, THE GRACIOUS ONE, AND THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

REVELATION 14:1-20

BACKGROUND: The Apostle John divides this section up into three scenes with the words “and I saw” (kai eidon–Greek) used in verses 1, 6, and 14. After discussing Satan (Revelation 12), the Antichrist, his rise to power and his persecution of Christ’s saints (Revelation 13), John now turns to Yahweh’s assured victory over all opposing forces of evil in this chapter.

- I. Scene One–Yahweh Jesus (the Lamb) will be victorious over evil and will faithfully bring His saints through the difficulties of this world and into the promised inheritance (Revelation 14:1-5).
 - A. Mount Zion can be found in the Old Testament as being Israel, Jerusalem, or the Temple Mount. It is the prophesied area on this earth where Yahweh Father sets up Yahweh Jesus to rule and reign (Psalm 2:6, 48:1-14; Isaiah 24:23; Joel 2:32-3:21; Obad. 17, 21; Mic. 4:1, 7; Zechariah 14:9-11). It also can refer to a heavenly mountain or city where Yahweh, the angels, and the heavenly saints live right now (Hebrews 12:22) (verse 1a).
 - B. The 144,000 Jewish believers from Revelation 7:2-8 which were sealed before the Day of Yahweh are shown on Mount Zion with Yahweh Jesus the Lamb (verse 1b).
 1. The seal which they receive back in Revelation 7:2-8 is revealed now as the Lamb’s name and Father’s name written on their foreheads.
 2. In contrast to this Yahweh seal on the 144,000 is the previously mentioned Antichrist (Beast) mark given to Satan and Antichrist worshippers during this time frame in Revelation 13:16-18.
 - C. The scene pictures the 144,000 Jewish believers successfully making it through to the other side of this horrendous, traumatic time of Satan’s anger and Yahweh’s wrath with their testimony intact and morally blameless (verses 2-5).
 1. We are not told whether the 144,000 were put in captivity, were killed, or possibly came out alive during this time. However, we do know that whatever they went through was worthy of a new song composition before Yahweh’s throne in heaven similar to Revelation 5:9, 10. Probably some of the unique victories of Yahweh’s power over Satan, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and the Ten Kings will be included in it! (verses 2, 3).

2. These 144,000 male Jewish believers will voluntarily abstain from sex and marriage because of their commitment to Yahweh Jesus during this time. Even though the marriage bed is undefiled according to Hebrews 13:4, there are times when some believers are led to voluntarily not partake in it for the Kingdom of God's sake (Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 7:1, 32). They were a firstfruit offering (aparche-Greek) for God and the Lamb.
3. The 144,000 Jewish believers will not be deceived by Satan's and the Antichrist's lies during this time because they walk so close to the Lamb in true discipleship (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 13:7-18).

THOUGHT: How is our discipleship with Yahweh Jesus right now? Are we following Him and offering ourselves to Him alone?

- II. Scene Two-Yahweh's grace is seen during the Great Tribulation because He sends three angelic messengers to bring the Gospel and warn the world of impending judgment (Revelation 14:6-13).
 - A. The first angel of this scene is flying in mid-heaven (evidently visible and able to be heard by those on earth) giving out the Gospel (good news) to everyone on the earth. He was "another angel" to differentiate from either the mid-heaven voice of Revelation 8:13 or the last angel John talked about which was Michael in Revelation 12:7. His message involved fearing (reverencing) God, giving Him glory (involving respect and repentance Revelation 11:13), and worship (belief and praise). This could be Matthew's whole world gospel found in Matthew 24:14 (verses 6, 7).
 - B. The second angel of the scene prophesies the destruction of the Satanically influenced world system (Babylon the Great) and specifically the Antichrist's capital city. This will be discussed in detail in Revelation 17:1-19:21 (verse 8).
 - C. The third angel of the scene warns the people on the earth not to take the mark of the beast (Antichrist) because all who do will face judgment and eternal separation from Yahweh in hell (verses 9-11) (Revelation 20:11-15).
 - D. The saints in the midst of the Great Tribulation are encouraged to endure and be faithful in order to receive their full reward even if it involves death (verses 12, 13).
- III. Scene Three-Yahweh Jesus is the prophesied King and judge who will fulfill His word concerning the harvest of this earth (Revelation 14:14-20).
 - A. Yahweh Jesus is both the coming King and the coming Judge of this earth. He is identified as the "Son of Man" coming on the "clouds of heaven" as King in Daniel 7:13, 14. He is also identified as the coming judge in Daniel 7:26, Joel 3:1-16, Matthew 13:30, and John 5:27-29. John identifies Jesus scripturally without naming Him as the "golden crowned" King and the "sickle handed" Judge (verse 14).

- B. Earthly judgment throughout the book of Revelation has come from the throne and temple of Yahweh in heaven. The angel at the appropriate time gives the word from the Father for Jesus to reap the “fully ripe” crop and He does His part of the reaping in one swipe. This is the judgment symbolizing the wheat harvest. Up until this time, Jesus has been letting believers and unbelievers live together (Matthew 13:24-30). According to the pre-wrath view, verses 15 and 16 seem to coincide with the rapture of the Church found in Revelation 7:9 at the time that the Day of Yahweh begins during the Great Tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 6:17). Only Father Yahweh knows the timing of this event (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32). After the Great Tribulation, Jesus will start the separation process with the bowl judgments (Revelation 15:1-16:20) and the sharp sword from His mouth (Revelation 19:15) (verses 15, 16).
- C. After Jesus starts the judgment, the angels take over (Matthew 13:30) and execute the trumpet judgments found in Revelation 8:1 through 9:21. They do the judgments symbolizing the grape harvest. To harvest grapes, they need to be trampled in a wine press (trough) to get the juice to flow out. The end time judgment of this world is going to produce a massive crop because so many people will still refuse to believe (verses 17-20) (Joel 3:1-16; Revelation 16:16, 19:17).

PART 4: THE HEAVENLY CEREMONY OF THE BOWL JUDGMENTS

REVELATION 15:1-8

- I. Seven angels bring the seven last plagues from the heavenly temple which will finish up God's wrath (Revelation 15:1).
 - A. This is a summary statement which reveals the ultimate purpose of the three heavenly signs given in Revelation 12:1, 3 and 15:1. The purpose of Yahweh's three heavenly signs is the finishing up of Yahweh's promised wrath on earth before Yahweh Jesus returns to rule and reign.
 1. Yahweh's work in this world has been carried out through His plans with believing Israel (the first sign, woman of Revelation 12:1), her male child the Messiah (Revelation 12:5), and His persecuted followers (Revelation 12:6-17, 13:5-10, 14:12, 13).
 2. Satan's work in deceiving this world and its empires (the second sign, great red dragon, Revelation 12:3) has relentlessly persecuted believing Israel, the Messiah, and the Messiah's followers. Before and during the Great Tribulation (the last 3 1/2 years of Daniel's 70th week of 7 years) Satan formed a ten nation powerful confederacy. With the Antichrist as this confederacy's leader, he would seek world domination and try to annihilate Yahweh's name from off this earth (Revelation chapters 12 and 13).
 3. The seven angels with the seven last plagues (the third sign, Revelation 15:1) brings an end to the war that has been happening on this earth due to Satan's deceit, lies, and accusations. These seven angels finish Yahweh's wrath on the earth.
 - B. The coming seven plagues finish up the wrath of Yahweh which was started between the 6th and 7th seal (Revelation 6:16, first time the term is used) and has already included all of the trumpet judgments (Revelation 8:1-9:20; 14:17-20). The plagues seem to be specific to the trumpet and bowl judgments (Revelation 9:20, 15:1, 22:18).
 - C. The Pre-wrath tribulation position sees the seven bowl judgments taking place after the Great Tribulation has finished (since Revelation 11-14 is primarily dealing with this time period and Revelation 15:2 discusses overcoming the beast in the past tense due to "standing" being a perfect participle). Therefore, these seven bowls would be poured out between the 30 and 75 days after the Great Tribulation and before Christ sets up His earthly kingdom (Daniel 12:11, 12).

THOUGHT: Christ's work of redemption for this world was finished at the cross (John 19:30). Christ's work of wrath for this world will be finished after the seventh bowl judgment (Revelation 15:1, 16:17). Read Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:18-20 and see how long Yahweh is willing to delay the execution of his wrath between Isaiah 61:2a and Isaiah 61:2b.

- II. The song of the overcoming saints after the Great Tribulation (Revelation 15:2-4).

- A. The overcoming saints of the Great Tribulation stand before Yahweh's throne in heaven in all its splendor and majesty (sea of glass, also Ezekiel 1:22, Revelation 4:6) and because of these and the previous saints sufferings, the sea of glass is this time mingled with fire (the image of judgment Revelation 14:10, 19:20) (verse 2a).
- B. The overcoming ones (Greek-Nikontas, from Nike meaning victorious or conquering ones) had been standing and continue to stand before Yahweh's throne because they walked close to Him through it all (Revelation 11:2, 7; 12:6, 11, 17; Revelation 13:10; 14:1-5, 12, 13). They did not take part with the beast, his image, or his number as found (verse 2b; Revelation 13:1-18; 14:9-13).
- C. The overcoming ones now receive their reward in heaven with the rest of the saints (verse 2b-4).
 - 1. They are given their share of what they have overcome (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12,21).
 - 2. They are given their reward at Christ's judgment seat in heaven at the sounding of the seventh trumpet which is the beginning of the bowl judgments (Revelation 11:18; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
 - 3. They are given harps of God to sing songs to Yahweh (verse 2b).
 - a. They especially like to sing a song called "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." The song of Moses deals with Yahweh's rescuing and redeeming His saints of Israel (Exodus 15:1-19; Deuteronomy 31:30 -32:43; Psalm 90). The song of the Lamb probably has to do with the ultimate rescuing and redeeming of both church and Israel saints from the time of the church through the Great Tribulation. Faithful service to Yahweh probably is also one of its themes (part of this song could be what's recorded in Revelation 15:3b-4).
 - b. They sing of Yahweh Elohai Sabaoth's (Lord God of Hosts or Almighty) (Amos 4:13; Revelation 1:8, 4:8, 11:17) great and amazing deeds, just and true ways, and the fact that He is the King of the Nations (verse 3b, Psalm 2:10-12, 22:28, 47:8, 96:10, 110:5-7; Jeremiah 10:7).
 - c. They sing of the fear (reverential awe) and glory (respect and praise for His attributes) of His holiness (set apartness, transcendence, wholly otherness) and the fact that all nations will bow the knee to Yahweh Jesus (verse 4; Philippians 2:9, 10; Revelation 20:4, 21:22-27).
- III. The ceremony of the seven angels with the seven bowls coming out of the temple in heaven (Revelation 15:5-8).

- A. The seven angels are dressed in pure, bright linen (showing righteous purity) and golden sashes (sent by Yahweh's kingly authority) and emerge from a part of the Heavenly Temple called the "tent of witness" or "tabernacle of testimony." This seems to be similar to Revelation 11:19 and in the same place chronologically. The idea seems to be that humanity has fallen short of Yahweh's law (located in the ark of Yahweh's covenant or Testimony in the Holy of Holies), refuses Yahweh's grace, and therefore will receive Yahweh's perfect justice (verses 5, 6; Exodus 16:34, 25:16, 21, 27:21; Lev. 16:13; Deuteronomy 10:1, 2).
- B. The seven angels were commissioned by one of the four living creatures by giving each their golden bowl (Exodus 27:3; 2 Chronicles 4:8) of Yahweh's wrath. During this time of wrath, Yahweh's glory cloud was so thick inside the Temple that no one could enter it probably due to the awesomeness of the situation (verses 7, 8; Exodus 40:34, 35; 1 Kings 8:10-12; Isaiah 6:1-4; Ezekiel 10:2-4).

PART 5: THE FIRST FOUR BOWL JUDGMENTS OF YAHWEH'S FINAL WRATH

REVELATION 16:1-9

- I. The seven angels are commanded by Yahweh Himself to pour out their seven bowl judgments (Revelation 16:1).
 - A. The Day of Yahweh has been prophesied in Scripture for thousands of years (Joel 2:28-3:2; Zephaniah 1:14-2:3). The Day of Yahweh starts with wrath and ends with King Jesus bringing peace and restoration (Joel 3:1-21; Zechariah 14:1-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Revelation 6:16-22:21). The wrath of Yahweh starts after the sixth seal judgment (Revelation 6:16) and ends after the seventh bowl judgment (Revelation 15:1; Revelation 16:17).
 - B. Yahweh Himself gives the sacred and holy order to have these bowls poured out which finishes His wrath that has been delayed until this very moment in time (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19). He is the only one left in the Heavenly Temple at this time due to the power of His glory! (Revelation 15:8)
 - C. At the time of the seven bowl judgments, the Great Tribulation (last 3 1/2 years of Daniel's 70th week) appears to be over and so these are poured out between the 30 and 75 days before Christ sets up His earthly Kingdom (Daniel 12:11, 12; Revelation 11:1-14:13).

THOUGHT: Have we lost the ability in our day and age to be in thankful awe at Yahweh's perfect justice and perfect wrath? The messages of sin, evil, depravity, Christ's work, the believer's purchased righteousness and Yahweh Jesus' earthly and eternal reigns depend on it.

- II. The first four bowl judgments are poured out upon the beast-marked, image worshipping, blasphemers on this earth (Revelation 16:2-9).
 - A. The first bowl judgment brings harmful and painful sores to the people who refused Yahweh's long-suffering warnings. They had been warned by the two witnesses (Revelation 11:3), saints of Jesus (Revelation 12:11, 17, 13:8), and angelic messengers (Revelation 14:6-11) but refused to believe in truth. This is similar to what happened during the sixth plague of Egypt in Exodus 9:9-11 (Revelation 16:2).
 - B. The second bowl judgment brings complete destruction of all salt water life. This bowl turned the sea into something like "the blood of a corpse" and, therefore, it could no longer support life itself. This worldwide plague is much more extensive than the first plague of Egypt in Exodus 7:14-21 or the second trumpet judgment in Revelation 8:8, 9 (Revelation 16:3).
 - C. The third bowl judgment turns all the fresh water areas on the earth into blood (Revelation 16:4-7).
 1. This is similar to the first plague of Egypt (Exodus 7:14-21) and the third trumpet judgment (Revelation 8:10, 11) but much more extensive since it is global in scope

2. The “angel of the waters” is either the third angel who poured the bowl out or another angel with some authority over water who was sent to proclaim this message of Yahweh’s righteous judgment (verses 5-7).
 - a. Yahweh is perfectly righteous (acts rightly according to a perfect standard), as the only eternal being, in His judgment (verse 5; Revelation 1:4, 8, 4:8).
 - b. The judgment is right and fair because these unbelievers have shed the blood of Yahweh’s saints and prophets (verse 6; Revelation 11:18, 12:11, 17). Since they shed blood, they will drink blood instead of pure water (verse 6; Isaiah 34:1-8; Revelation 11:18, 12:11, 17, 13:10, 14:13).
 - c. The heavenly altar, which has received every prayer of Old and New Testament saints, adds its witness as to Yahweh’s true and righteous judgments. This message has been confirmed by three sets of witnesses: The saints in heaven (Revelation 6:9-11, 11:17, 18, 15:3, 4), an angelic being (Revelation 16:5, 6), and now the heavenly altar itself (verse 7; Revelation 5:8, 8:3-5).
- D. The fourth bowl judgment intensifies the heat of the sun which scorches with fire. Rather than repenting and giving Yahweh glory (respecting and acknowledging His right to rule and reign), they were blaspheming (cursing or defaming) His name (verses 8, 9; Revelation 9:20, 21; 16:11, 21).

THOUGHT: “Yahweh has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” Isaiah 52:10 “Seek Yahweh all you humble of the land... perhaps you may be hidden on the Day of the anger of Yahweh.” Zephaniah 2:3

THE FIFTH, SIXTH, AND SEVENTH BOWL JUDGMENTS FINISH YAHWEH'S FINAL WRATH

REVELATION 16:10-21

- I. The fifth bowl judgment brings total darkness to the throne and kingdom of the beast (Revelation 16:10, 11).
 - A. Yahweh's wrath is specifically being poured out on the throne and kingdom of the beast (Antichrist). Those who willingly have chosen to follow and worship the beast, who is under Satan's authority, instead of the true God and His Christ receive these judgments. These judgments originate from Yahweh's throne and temple (Revelation 8:2-5, 11:18, 19, 15:1, 2, 8, 16:1, 17) and are delivered to the beast's throne and kingdom (verse 10; Revelation 13:4-18, 16:2).
 - B. This is similar to the ninth Egyptian plague (Exodus 10:21-29) as well as the fourth trumpet judgment (Revelation 8:12), however, more intensive and extensive. The Egyptian plague lasted for three days only in Egypt with an intense "darkness to be felt" (Exodus 10:21-23). The fourth trumpet judgment brought total darkness (no moon, stars, or sun shining) to the entire earth for one-third of every 24 hour day for what was probably months (Revelation 8:12).
 - C. During this plague, total darkness came to the area of the beast's throne and kingdom. This would have been most of the world since the bowl judgments are being given after the Antichrist's reign has been in full force throughout the 3 1/2 year Great Tribulation (verse 10; Revelation 11:1- 14:13).
 1. This total darkness was probably for a number of days during the 30 to 75 days after the ending of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 12:11, 12).
 2. This total darkness brings great anguish to its recipients to the point where they "gnawed their tongues" from the pain caused by this plague, the other plagues, and especially the sores on their bodies. However, instead of repenting and recognizing their powerlessness, they chose to blaspheme (curse) the God of heaven (verse 10c, 11).

THOUGHT: The "God of heaven" is a phrase found in Scripture which implies supreme rulership over everything and commands deep respect and awe. Even Nebuchadnezzar learned to praise and extol the only God of heaven (Daniel 2:18, 19, 37, 44; 4:1-3, 34-37; See also Revelation 11:13).

- II. The sixth bowl judgment prepares the area around Israel for the final battle of Armageddon which will happen right before Christ's return to rule and reign (Revelation 16:12-16).
 - A. This bowl first stops the flow of the great Euphrates River so the eastern kings can join the battle in Israel (verse 12a).
 1. This river flows through modern Iraq (ancient Babylon) and marked the eastern boundary of Israel's Promised Land from Yahweh (Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7, 8; Josh. 1:4) as well as the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire at the time of the writing of the book of Revelation.

2. During this time of the sixth bowl judgment, right before Christ returns to rule and reign, demonic spirits will convince kings from the whole earth (areas that are now Russia, Iran, India, China, etc.) to come to a great battle in Israel (verses 12b-14).

a. Through the mouths of the dragon (Satan, Revelation 12:9), the beast (Antichrist, Revelation 13:5) and the false prophet (the Antichrist's prophet, Revelation 13:12), demons convince these leaders through various deceits and false wonders to come to Israel to a great battle. The frog was an "unclean" creature in the Jewish dietary laws (Leviticus 11:10-11) and, therefore, the message by the demons was an unclean message of deceit and falsehood (verses 13, 14).

b. This is going to be the prophesied, Scriptural event called "the battle or war on the great day of God the Almighty" (verse 14) or the "battle of Armageddon" (verse 16). Some of the Scriptures that seem to prophecy this event include Ezekiel 38:1 - 39:29, Daniel 11:36-12:1, Joel 2:11, 3:1-16, Zechariah 12:1-14:15, and 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

B. Yahweh Jesus encourages his saints during this time to stay awake and fully clothed (similar to Ezekiel 16:36-39; Revelation 3:2, 3; 3:18). Christ's return is now only days to a month or so away and they should stay on guard so as not to be ashamed. Those that are believers are very close to entering their reward (verse 15; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 19:8). This is the third beatitude or blessing out of seven in Revelation (Revelation 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 14).

C. These kings will be assembled at a place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon (verse 16).

1. The most natural reading of this Greek transliterated word from Hebrew is mountain or hill (Hebrew-"har") of Megiddo (Hebrew-"Megiddon"). The area of Megiddo would be well known to Hebrew readers of the Old Testament. It is found as the battlefield with Barak in Judges 4-5, Gideon in Judges 7, and was where King Saul, his sons, and Josiah fell to their deaths (1 Samuel 31:1; 2 Chronicles 35:22). It is found in a key prophetic passage in Zechariah 12:11 right next to the Apostle John's theme verse of Zechariah 12:10 (Revelation 1:7).

2. The main problem in the minds of Bible students and teachers is that there is no identification of a Mount Megiddo. Megiddo is really a plain or valley approximately 15 miles wide and 20 miles long. It is close to Mount Carmel and part of the Esdraelon Valley and is approximately 60 miles northwest of Jerusalem. Since the Hebrew word "har" can also mean "hill country" or the fact that Megiddo has mountains like Carmel and Gilboa around it, the apostle seemed to be identifying this particular geographical area.

3. More than likely, given all the prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, and Zechariah (and others), this was only one of the areas of the final war, although a major one. Scripture identifies specific events in and around Jerusalem itself in other prophecies at Christ's return (Zechariah 14:1-5).

III. The seventh bowl judgment finishes the wrath of Yahweh on this earth bringing a great earthquake and great hailstones (Revelation 16:17-21).

A. Yahweh's message from His throne is that after this is poured out, His wrath is officially done. This is a momentous event in the history of eternity! (verse 17) A great earthquake larger than at anytime in history wraps up the wrath of Yahweh (verses 18-20). Jerusalem, the great city, was divided into three parts (verse 19a; Revelation 11:8; Zechariah 14:1-5). Whole cities in Gentile nations fell (verse 19b).

1. Babylon the great (the Antichrist's national headquarters and capital city) was judged by this earthquake as well as many other plagues. This will be discussed in more detail in Revelation chapters 17 through 19.
2. The topography of the earth substantially changed. Every island fled (which means either totally disappeared or moved substantially) and mountains were substantially changed (some not found any longer) (verse 20).

B. Great hailstones of approximately 100 pounds fell from heaven bringing blasphemy (cursing) from the beast's followers and an end to Yahweh's wrath (verse 21).

BABYLON THE GREAT, THE ANTICHRIST'S CAPITAL CITY, WILL BE JUDGED BECAUSE OF ITS FALSE RELIGION

REVELATION 17:1-18

- I. The false religion at the time of the Antichrist's rule and reign comes out of the same strain of satanically motivated anti-Yahweh and anti-Messiah religions from all time (Revelation 17:1 -6a).
 - A. The Apostle John receives this message from one of the seven angels that have just delivered the seven bowl judgments to give added information. The wrath of Yahweh had to be poured out (Revelation 14:8, 16:19) on the satanically corrupted religious system (great prostitute controlling most of the world population Revelation 17:15) in order for Yahweh's ultimate pure system to finally be established in Revelation 21:9 (verse 1).
 1. The kings of the earth have committed "sexual immorality" with her by believing her message instead of Yahweh's (verse 2a; Isaiah 23:15-17; Jeremiah 2:20-31).
 2. The "wine" of her sexual immorality (Revelation 14:8) is judged by the "wine" of the fury of Yahweh's wrath (Revelation 16:19). The wine can be the finished product of evil as well as good (verse 2a; Matthew 26:29; Jeremiah 51:7-14).
 - B. The Apostle John is carried away (in the Spirit) to a wilderness to receive the vision of the prostitute and the corrupt city of Babylon, whereas, he is carried to a high mountain in Revelation 21:10 to receive the glorious vision of the holy city Jerusalem (verses 3-5).
 1. The wilderness or desert in this context is prophesying the dryness of the prostitutes influence which will lead to Babylon the Great's destruction (much like Isaiah did with the previous nation of Babylon in Isaiah 21:1-10) (verse 3a).
 2. The prostitute is sitting on the same beast of Revelation 12:3 only this time we are told that it is scarlet colored (probably representing sin, Isaiah 1:18) or blood (Revelation 16:6). The beast represents the seven-headed satanically influenced world empires that have opposed Yahweh's believers throughout history (probably Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece, and Rome) as well as the ten-horned (ten kinged) revived Roman Empire at the time of the Antichrist. Each of these empires had and will have false religious systems that oppose Yahweh blaspheming (cursing) His name (verse 3b).
 3. The prostitute deceives the nations by her appealing outer beauty and her promises of wealth and fulfillment. However, what she really offers are abominations which are detestable in Yahweh's sight and provoke His wrath (verse 4; 1 Samuel 16:7; Jeremiah 13:27; Ezekiel 5:9).

4. There are three main views of how to understand the use of Babylon in the book of Revelation: 1) It is symbolic of the Roman Empire of John's day (1 Peter 5:13); 2) It is rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates River during the time of the Antichrist; 3) It is symbolic of all false religion and proud human society that has tried to live without Yahweh or His help throughout time (Genesis 11:1-9, Daniel 4:30). I would see Babylon as a Revived Roman Empire that is still future from now (some of #1) with a capital city that reflects the glory of a rebuilt city of Babylon (not necessarily on the Euphrates, part of #2) and a false religion incorporating Satan's full deceit and demonic schemes (all of #3) (verse 5).
5. Throughout time Satan's false religions have brought suffering and persecution to those who seek to acknowledge Israel's Yahweh as their God and believe in Messiah Jesus (verse 6a; Daniel 7:25; Matthew 24:21; Revelation 13:10).

THOUGHT: False religion comes from satanic influence on peoples minds and can bring destructive thoughts, wrong living, physical death, and spiritual death (John 10:10). This will all be judged by Yahweh Jesus soon (Revelation 19:11-20:15).

- II. The mystery of the woman and the beast is revealed by the angel as ultimately being conquered by the Lamb and His saints (Revelation 17:6b-14).
 - A. The Apostle John was marveling with great wonder at the sight of the prostitute riding the beast. He was either perplexed, distressed, and/or questioning if she could be overcome. The context seems to imply all three (verses 6b, 7; Daniel 7:28, 8:27, 10:7, 8, 12:8).
 - B. The coming Antichrist is now revealed to the Apostle John as the person who will rise out of these seven nations and rule over these ten kings to make war against Yahweh (verses 8 -14).
 1. Just like Revelation chapter 12 and 13 moves from the seven empire beast to the personal Antichrist beast, so does Revelation 17:1-7 (seven empire beast) move to the personal Antichrist beast in Revelation 17:8. Yahweh Jesus "is and was and is to come" (Revelation 1:4, 8) but the Antichrist "was and is not"...and (will) "go to destruction." Therefore, truth, salvation, and eternal life lie with the true Christ and not the Antichrist (verse 8).
 - a. The beast "was" could be either a type of the beast ruler found in Daniel 7 and/or the antichrists that have come against Israel and the church throughout history (1 John 2:22). Some teachers have thought the Antichrist might believe himself to be a reincarnated emperor.
 - b. The Antichrist "was not" alive at the time of the writing of Revelation.
 - c. The Antichrist appears to the world to have died and been reincarnated (Revelation 13:3) but in reality he became possessed by Satan or one of the demons (Revelation 11:7, 13:4).
 - d. The Antichrist will "go to destruction." (Revelation 19:20).

2. The seven mountains and kings that become an eighth take spiritual wisdom and discernment to figure out (verses 9-11). There are two main possibilities for the futurist interpretation:

a. They are seven real Roman kings (Rome was said to be built on seven hills), five that existed before John (that have died or been killed), one that is (Domitian or Nero if a person adopts an earlier date), one that will come for a short time and then the Antichrist at the end. However, it is hard for the timing of the Roman kings to fit properly. A list of the Roman Emperors is as follows: Julius Caesar (44 B.C.), Augustus (27 B.C. - 14 A.D.), Tiberius (14-37 A.D.), Caligula (37-41 A.D.), Claudius (41-54 A.D.), Nero (54-68 A.D.) Galba, Otho, Vitellius (68-69 A.D.), Vespasian (69-79 A.D.), Titus (79 -81 A.D.), Domitian (81-96 A.D.), Nerva (96-98 A.D.), and Trajan (98-117 A.D.).

b. They are seven empires (mountains are used for empires in Scripture in Psalm 30:7, Psalm 68:15, 16; Isaiah 2:2, 41:15; Jeremiah 51:25; Daniel 2:35; Zechariah 4:7) that are probably Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Revived Roman Empire. Of these, the first five have fallen, Rome exists at the time of Revelation, the ten-nation revived Roman Empire will exist for a short time, and the Antichrist's kingdom will be the eighth. This seems to best fit the Scriptures of Daniel 7:1-28, Revelation 12:3, and 13:1. However, it does take combining the empires of Media and Persia, as Daniel does, to make it work.

3. The ten kings rule a major part of the earth for a short time but when the Antichrist comes on the scene, they choose to hand their power over to him (Daniel 7:19-22). Together they make war against Yahweh's people (although three of the original kings fall) but are finally conquered by the Lamb and His saints (verses 12-14; Daniel 7:20-28; Revelation 19:11-16).

III. Yahweh's judgment on the prostitute (the satanic religion during the time of the ten kings and Antichrist) is ironically partly carried out by the ten-kinged kingdom led by the Antichrist (Revelation 17:15-18).

A. The false religion of Satan controls the world during the time of the ten-kinged kingdom and the Antichrist from the great city Babylon (verses 15, 18; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Revelation 13:5-18).

B. Yahweh exalts Himself and shows His power over the kingdom of darkness by putting a plan inside the hearts of the demonically controlled kings and Antichrist to turn against the prostitute. In so doing, Satan's power and supposed kingdom divides against itself as Jesus predicted (Mark 3:23-26; John 10:7-21). Evidently, the end time city called Babylon the great which ruled the world through its false religion gets conquered and burned up by its own people (verses 16, 17).

BABYLON THE GREAT, THE ANTICHRIST'S CAPITAL CITY, WILL BE JUDGED BECAUSE OF ITS PRIDE, GREED, AND HATRED TOWARD YAHWEH'S TRUTH AND HIS PEOPLE

REVELATION 18:1-19:5

- I. From the courts of heaven, an authoritative angel is sent to explain Yahweh's reasons for Babylon the Great's final judgment (Revelation 18:1-8).
 - A. After seeing the future destruction of the Antichrist's false religion in Revelation 17:16 as well as the future start of the Antichrist's capital city's internal collapse of power in Revelation 17:12-18, the Apostle John is now shown the future annihilation of the city itself (Revelation 18:1-3).
 1. He is given this information by an angel who has been heavenly authorized, is so bright that it lightens the earth, and who speaks with a mighty voice (verses 1, 2a).
 2. The angel pronounces judgment on the city of Babylon the Great which was similar to Old Testament prophecies found in Isaiah 21:9 and Isaiah 13:20-22. Just like the Babylon of the Old Testament which worshipped foreign idols and demons was destroyed in 539 B.C. so will the future capital city of the Antichrist be destroyed (verse 2).
 3. Babylon the Great has led the nations into sexual immorality with its false religion (Revelation 13:11-18, Revelation 17:1-8), has led the kings of the earth into immorality with her (Revelation 16:12-16, Revelation 17:12-14), and has led the merchants of the earth into its greedy ways (verse 3).
 - B. Another voice from heaven calls Yahweh's people out of the Antichrist's capital city before its final judgment and exposes the city's prideful heart (Revelation 18:4-8).
 1. We know that the angels found in Revelation 14:8-11 had a similar message as this earlier in the Great Tribulation (last 3 1/2 years of Daniel's 70th week). Also, other Old Testament passages found in Isaiah 48:20, 52:11; Jeremiah 50:8, 51:6-45 and Zechariah 2:6-7 have similar messages of Yahweh calling out His people for their protection. This could either be a pre-wrath church rapture passage similar to Revelation 7:9-17 and Revelation 14:14-16 or a call to the new tribulation believers after the rapture to leave the Antichrist's capital city of Babylon similar to Revelation 16:14-16 (verse 4).
 2. The sins of Babylon the Great are heaped high as heaven (Jeremiah 51:9) and the transgressions are now remembered (instead of delayed because of mercy) by judgment (Psalm 25:7, 137:7). Sins of blatant greed, deceit, and non-repentance many times demanded double payment in the Old Testament (Exodus 22:4-9, Isaiah 40:2, Jeremiah 16:18) (verses 5, 6).
 3. Babylon the Great glorified herself instead of Yahweh, lived in luxury, and had an overall prideful and arrogant attitude and so will be judged to the full by Yahweh. The plagues of the trumpet and bowl judgments will be released during the Great Tribulation to fulfill this (verses 7, 8; Isaiah 47:7-11, Revelation 8:6-19:21).

THOUGHT: Are we allowing ourselves as Christians to be captured by the same attitudes or sins as Babylon the Great? Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 with the insights that you have been given in Revelation 18:1-8.

II. The kings of the earth, the merchants of the earth, and those whose trade is from the sea mourn or lament the loss of Babylon the Great. They are at places away from the city but see it burning up with large amounts of smoke (Revelation 18:9-19).

A. A “lament” is a style of writing which complains or mourns the loss of something. It can be a poem, a song, or dirge and its main goal is to express emotion as well as information. The Old Testament contains many writings of lament including many of the Psalms and the book of Lamentations. This section of Revelation 18:9-19 has many similarities to the lament for Tyre found in Ezekiel 27:1-28:19.

B. The kings of the earth include the ten kings which gave their authority to the Antichrist (Revelation 17:12) as well as the kings from the east that were summoned by demonic spirits for the great battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:12-16). They partnered with the capital city’s false religion of the Antichrist and made each of them rich because it demanded a mark allowing buying and selling of goods (Revelation 13:11-18). Evidently, the capital city was the base of operations for all of this (verses 9, 10; Ezekiel 27:35).

C. The merchants of the earth were able to sell and trade the most high-priced goods in the capital city of Babylon the Great. These included precious metals and stones (gold, silver, jewels, and pearls), high- priced cloth (fine linen, purple cloth, silk, and scarlet cloth), high- priced artistic and building supplies (scented wood, ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble), spices and perfumes (cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense), food items (wine, oil, fine flour, wheat), and finally farm goods and services (cattle, sheep, horses, chariots, and human slaves). Evidently, luxury at any cost (even increasing human slavery) will be the norm for the time of the Great Tribulation (verses 11-17a; Ezekiel 27:27, 36).

D. The traders from the sea grew rich by their trade with the capital city and seem the most grieved out of the bunch by mourning with dust on their head (verse 17b; Ezekiel 27:29).

THOUGHT: Meditate on Christ’s beatitudes found in Matthew 5:2-11 in light of the things and people of Babylon the Great in Revelation 18:9-19.

III. The saints, apostles, and prophets in heaven are urged to rejoice over Yahweh’s perfect justice being fulfilled and the knowledge that this will quickly bring restoration and Christ’s return to this earth (Revelation 18:20-19:5).

A. This is the only place in the book of Revelation where the word “apostles” is used except Revelation 21:14. Saints seem to include believers in Yahweh in the Old, New, and Tribulation time periods (Revelation 11:18, 14:12), apostles usually are those sent by Jesus to start the church (Luke 11:49; Ephesians 2:20; 2 Peter 3:2), and prophets could include Old, New, and Tribulation time period spokespeople for Yahweh (Luke 8:19; Romans 12:6; Ephesians 3:5). Each group is encouraged to rejoice over Yahweh’s true justice that has been delayed up until now (verse 20; Romans 12:19; Revelation 6:10, 11).

- B. The third and last mighty angel of Revelation (Revelation 5:2, 10:1, 2) throws a large (thousands of pounds, Mark 9:42) millstone into the sea. This symbolized Babylon the Great's final destruction never to rise to power again (similar to Jeremiah 51:63, 64). No music, productive activity, or regular life will ever come from her again because they deceived nations through demonic activity (magic potions) and killed Yahweh's servants (verses 21-24).
- C. The Hallelu-Yah chorus is heard in heaven! The only place in the New Testament where the Old Testament Hebrew word Hallelu-Yah (Praise Yahweh) is used is in Revelation 19:1-6. It is used extensively in Psalm 113-118 and 146-150. The only other occurrence of the great multitude is found in Revelation 7:9 which according to the pre-wrath rapture view are the raptured New Testament saints in heaven along with the redeemed believers of all time! The great multitude cries out Hallelu-Yah twice and the 24 elders (angels) and the 4 living creatures surrounding Yahweh's throne cry out Amen! (so be it!) Hallelu-Yah! (Revelation 19:1-5).

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB, THE RETURN OF KING JESUS TO RULE THIS EARTH, AND THE ANTICHRIST'S END

REVELATION 19:6-21

- I. The Hallelu-Yah chorus in heaven increases in loudness as the events of the marriage and marriage supper of the Lamb are contemplated (Revelation 19:6-10).
 - A. The great multitude are the raptured New Testament saints in heaven along with the redeemed believers of all time according to the pre-wrath rapture view (Revelation 7:9, 19:1). This great multitude now cries out with an even louder voice than in Revelation 19:1 which is now likened to the loudness of a mighty river or waterfall and mighty thunder. They shout out Hallelu-Yah (Praise Yahweh!) for the Lord our God the Almighty reigns! In other words, King Yahweh Jesus is about to take His rightful place as Yahweh's anointed ruler of this earth along with His saints! (verse 6; Daniel 7:13, 14, 27; Amos 7:14, 9:8-15; Revelation 1:8; 4:8, 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 14; 19:15; Revelation 21:22)
 - B. The great multitude spur themselves on to offer rejoicing and gladness at the thought that the event they have been longing and waiting for is finally here! They desire for all the glory to go to Yahweh alone even though they are the Lamb's wife, have clothed themselves with His righteous deeds, and are included in the marriage supper (verses 7- 9).
 1. The Jewish marriage at the time of the writing of Revelation consisted of three main parts: 1) the marriage contract, 2) the marriage ceremony, and 3) the marriage supper. The marriage contract was signed by the parents with the giving of the dowry (by the bride's side) legalizing the marriage many times while the boy and girl were very young (Luke 1:27). The marriage ceremony took place many times years later. At the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, would go to the bride's house, get the bride, and escort her back to his house (Matthew 25:1-13). The marriage supper would then take place at the groom's house with guests invited and could last for several days (John 2:1-11).
 2. The relationship between Yahweh and His people is illustrated with the metaphor of marriage in both the Old and New Testament (Isaiah 62:4; Hosea 2:16-20; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-33; Revelation 21:2). The three phases of the Jewish marriage ceremony seem to be perfectly represented by the events of Christ. Phase 1 - the legal contract was represented in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 3:1-30). Phase 2 - the marriage ceremony will be represented in the rapture of the church. Christ comes to get His believers, takes them to His home, and clothes them with their new bodies (John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, 11:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 7:9-17). Phase 3—the marriage supper (long feast) seems to take place on earth at Christ's return with His Bride (resurrected saints).
 - a. The marriage of the Bride to the Lamb (Phases 1 and 2) has already happened before Christ's return to this earth (verse 7b).

b. The Bride has made herself ready by already being clothed in her new resurrected bodies (1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) and by putting on those bodies the fine linen which appears to be part of the rewards for faithful service while living for Yahweh Jesus on this earth (verses 7c, 8; Daniel 12:10, Matthew 22:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Revelation 3:5; Revelation 6:11, 11:18).

c. The angel (either 17:1 or 18:1) gives John the fourth of seven blessings in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:9, 14). There is a special blessing given to an individual invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. If this takes place on earth, then the invited guests would be the remaining people on earth that have not taken the mark of the beast at the time of Christ's return and receive Jesus as their Savior and King (verse 9; Daniel 12:12; Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 1:7).

C. John is so overwhelmed and awestruck by the events that he has just witnessed that he falls down to worship the angel and is rebuked. Worship belongs to God alone, Yahweh who has prophesied all these things and will accomplish His word through His servant Jesus (verse 10; Exodus 20:3-5; Isaiah 42:8, Revelation 22:8, 9).

THOUGHT: Take a moment to thank Yahweh for the glorious future He has planned for us in Christ. Pray that we as His believers and disciples will faithfully accomplish His work and will on this earth.

II. King Jesus, in all His glory, returns to this earth to rule, reign, and put an end to the false rule of the Antichrist (Revelation 19:11-21).

A. The true King Jesus comes on His white horse (at the end of the Great Tribulation) to conquer the unrighteousness of the Antichrist (false Christ) who came on another white horse at the beginning of the seven year period known as Daniel's 70th week (verses 11-16; Daniel 9:27; Revelation 6:1, 2).

1. As the seven years have unfolded, more and more of Yahweh's authority from heaven is exerted on the earth "to bring in everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24)." We saw an open heavenly temple (Revelation 11:19), an open heavenly holy of holies along with the ark (Revelation 15:5), and now a completely open heaven (Revelation 19:11a).

2. Jesus is the One called Faithful and True (Revelation 3:14), the righteous judge and righteous warrior (Psalm 2:1-12; John 5:27), the pure discerner with flaming eyes (Revelation 1:14), the true king who bears a name beyond His creation (1 Timothy 6:15, 16) (verses 11, 12).

3. Jesus is the One with a robe dipped in blood (Isaiah 63:1-3; Joel 2:12-3:21; Revelation 14:14-20) called The Word of God (John 1:1, 14) with the armies of heaven following Him (Daniel 7:13, 14; Zechariah 14:1-5; Matthew 25:31, 32) (verses 13, 14).

4. Jesus is the One who fulfills Psalm 2 and will conquer the nations opposed to Him by the sword of His mouth (like a javelin or long throwing sword), rule them with an iron rod (strong, unthwarted), and fulfill Yahweh's righteous judgment (Isaiah 63:1-3; 65:8-16; Revelation 14:14-20) as the only King of kings and Lord of lords (supreme ruler, Daniel 4:25, Daniel 4:34-37; Revelation 17:14) (verses 15, 16).
- B. An angel standing in direct alignment with the sun calls out with a loud voice for the birds of the air to gather for the great end time supper judgment of God (verses 17-21).
1. This is the very end of the Great Tribulation and probably during the 30-75 days after the Great Tribulation spoken by Daniel in Daniel 12:11, 12. The Great Tribulation has been discussed in detail in Revelation chapters 12 - 19 and Christ's return in glory correlates in a general way with Revelation 11:15-19 and in a specific way with Revelation 16:12-21 and Revelation 18:21-24. At Christ's return, all remaining evil is judged and only believers will be allowed into Jesus' Kingdom (verses 17, 18; Zechariah 14:1-21; Matthew 25:31-34).
 2. The Antichrist (beast) and false prophet are captured and eternally judged first because of their satanically inspired deception on the earth (verses 19, 20; Revelation 13:1-18, 17:14). They will be the first people thrown into the eternal lake of fire judgment of Yahweh (verse 20). The rest of Antichrist's kings, armies, supporters, and beast-marked people were killed by Jesus' mouth sword and His heavenly armies and sent to Hades where they will be eternally judged after King Jesus' 1,000 year (millennial) reign on this earth (verse 21; Revelation 20:13-15).

SATAN IS BOUND AND KING JESUS BEGINS HIS 1,000 YEAR REIGN UPON THIS EARTH

REVELATION 20:1-6

- I. Satan is bound in the Abyss for most of the 1,000 year reign of King Jesus on this earth (Rev 20:1-3).
 - A. The most natural reading of the book of Revelation places the binding of Satan and the Millennial reign (1,000 years) of Christ after the events of the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments (Revelation 6:1-19:21) and before the New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21:1-22:5).
 1. This was the accepted method of interpreting the book of Revelation by the early church for greater than the first 300 years of church history. The Greek word for 1,000 is “chilia” and people that believed in a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ were called Chiliasts. The Latin word for 1,000 is “mille” and the Latin word for year is “annum” so the 1,000 years of Christ’s reign became known as the Millennium.
 - a. A person who believes that Christ will return to this earth “before” setting up and reigning 1,000 years literally and physically on this earth is called a Premillennialist.
 - b. An Amillennialist is a person who believes that the 1,000 year time period is not literal but symbolic. Many of them believe that if there is a millennial reign of Christ, it is already happening during this present time of the church. They also would believe that Satan was bound at the time of Christ’s death and resurrection and, therefore, Satan’s power in this world was very much reduced (see if you agree with this—Acts 5:3; 1 Corinthians 5:5, 7:5; 2 Corinthians 2:11, 11:14, 12:7; 1 Timothy 1:20).
 - c. A Postmillennialist is a person who believes that the church will usher in the restoration and millennial reign of Christ on this earth under Christ’s invisible direction. Christ will then return visibly after this millennial work on earth (by the church) to judge the wicked and set up His New Heaven and New Earth (see if you agree with this – Matthew 24:1-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 2 Timothy 3:1-13).
 - B. After King Jesus has returned with His armies to this earth (Revelation 19:1-14), conquered the armies of the Antichrist (Revelation 19:15-19), and judged the Antichrist and False Prophet (Revelation 19:20, 21), He now turns His attention to Satan himself before setting up His earthly kingdom (verse 1).
 - C. An angel comes down from heaven (like Revelation 10:1, 18:1) having the key to the Abyss (the demonic or fallen angels prison Revelation 9:1) and a great chain in his hand. Satan had been thrown out of heaven about 3 1/2 years earlier (verse 1; Revelation 12:9).

D. This angel laid hold of Satan (“adversary”) who was also known by the names of the dragon (Revelation 12:9), that old serpent (Genesis 3:1-15), and the devil (“accuser or slanderer” Revelation 12:9). The angel bound Satan with the chain (made from something that could hold powerful spiritual beings in a similar way that the Abyss contains fallen angels), threw him into the Abyss, and the Abyss was shut and sealed (insured of no escape). This is where Satan will be for almost all of the 1,000 year reign of King Jesus except for a time of short deception (Revelation 20:7) and finally being eternally banished to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10) (verses 2, 3).

THOUGHT: Think of what life on earth will be like with King Jesus ruling the entire earth and Satan being bound. Thank Yahweh that you will be a part of it. Pray for those who do not yet believe that their minds would be opened and that they can discern truth from error (2 Corinthians 4:4).

II. King Jesus sets up His rule on this earth with His saints which will last 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4-6).

A. The Apostle John sees two different groups that are going to be with King Jesus during His 1,000 year earthly reign. The first group is going to judge on thrones which seems to be a reference to his resurrected Old and New Testament saints ruling with Him as His co-heirs (verse 4a; Daniel 7:9-10, 22-27; Matthew 19:28; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Revelation 11:18). The second group is the saints that have died in the Great Tribulation by martyrdom (after the rapture by axe beheading) because they refused to take the mark of the beast, and stuck to the word of God and the message of Jesus (verse 4b; Revelation 13:1-18, 14:9-13, 16:15). These two groups receive their new bodies before the 1,000 year reign of Christ for the purpose of living and reigning with Him (verse 4).

B. The rest of the dead (which would be the Old Testament, New Testament, Tribulational, and Millennial unbelievers) do not receive resurrected bodies until the 1,000 year reign of Christ is completed (verse 5).

C. Believers in Yahweh Jesus (Old, New, Tribulational) are blessed and holy (favored by Yahweh and set apart for His service) because they are free from the second death (lake of fire, Revelation 20:14) and will be priests of God forever and reign with Christ for 1,000 years on this earth (verse 6; Isaiah 61:6; 1 Peter 2:5-11; Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 22:3-5).

D. Through the book of Revelation, Yahweh has given to His believers increased understanding concerning the phasing of the bodily resurrections and duration of the reign of King Jesus from what is found in I Corinthians 15:20-28.

THOUGHT: John uses the term “thousand years” six times in seven verses in Revelation 20:1- 7. From a contextual, grammatical, literal, and historical standpoint, what Biblical information causes you to take this number literally or figuratively?

REIGNING WITH CHRIST FOR 1,000 YEARS

REVELATION 20:6C

- I. King Jesus the Messiah (Christ) will rule over this entire earth in fulfillment of Scripture.
 - A. This will fulfill all the Old Testament covenants perfectly. The Abrahamic (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-15), Davidic (2 Samuel 7:1-16), New (Jeremiah 31:31-40), and Palestinian (Deuteronomy 1:6-8) covenants will all be perfectly fulfilled during the Millennial reign and Eternal reign of Yahweh King Jesus.
 - B. Old and New Testament prophecy tells us that the Messiah (Christ) was also going to be the promised King of Israel on this earth and then on into eternity (2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:20-27; Isaiah 11:1-16; Jeremiah 33:19-21; Zechariah 14:9; Luke 1:32, 33; Revelation 19:16).
 - C. King Jesus will rule on this earth as Yahweh's appointed Anointed ruler and will rule the entire earth including its kings with a rod of iron (with a strength that cannot be overcome) (Psalm 2:1-12, Psalm 72:1-20; Ezekiel 39:25-29; Daniel 2:44, 45, 7:14, 27; Zechariah 14:9; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

THOUGHT: When has this or will this happen if not in the literal millennial reign of Christ? Is Christ ruling with a rod of iron right now? How will all these Scriptures be fulfilled which speak of this literal earth, literal Israel, literal kings and kingdoms, and a literal rule with a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ upon this earth?

- II. King Jesus will rule the earth from the nation of Israel in His capital city Jerusalem.
 - A. Israel will be established with its full prophesied borders (Genesis 15:18-21; Deuteronomy 1:6-8; Ezekiel 47:13-48:29).
 - B. There will be many topographical changes on the earth due to the violent earthquakes, meteors, and hailstones during the Great Tribulation.
 1. Islands will have vanished and mountains will have been leveled (Zechariah 14:10; Revelation 16:20).
 2. Jerusalem will have been split into three parts (Revelation 16:19) and rebuilt (Jeremiah 31:37-40).
 3. Jerusalem and Mount Zion will rise above the other mountains (Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1; Zechariah 14:10).
 4. The Mount of Olives will be split in two (Zechariah 14:3, 4) and fresh water will flow from Jerusalem to a western (currently Mediterranean) and eastern (currently the Dead) sea (Zechariah 14:8). This "living water" brings life wherever it touches and revitalizes the Dead Sea (Ezekiel 47:1-12).
 5. An enlarged temple will be rebuilt and Israel will be the place of worship for the world (Ezekiel 40:1-48:35; Zechariah 14:16-21).

6. If a nation or “family of the earth” does not worship the King, the Yahweh of hosts (Sabaoth), then that group of people will receive no rain (Zechariah 14:16-21).

III. King Jesus’ reign on earth begins with only believers in Him (Matthew 25:31-34).

- A. There will be many people at His return that have refused the mark of the beast and have believed or will believe in Him (Revelation 1:7, 14:9-13, 16:15). These will go into the 1,000 year kingdom in their mortal bodies.
- B. There will be many people who will return with Jesus in their resurrected bodies to rule and reign with Him (Revelation 1:6, 11:18, 14:13, 19:9, 14, 20:4, 6).

IV. King Jesus’ 1,000 year reign will be a kingdom of:

- A. Righteousness (right and correct Yahweh honoring decisions and actions).
 1. It will have a righteous King (Psalm 72:1-19, 96:10; Isaiah 11:4, 5, 16:5, 32:1).
 2. It will start out with righteous people (Isaiah 26:2, 60:21; Matthew 25:37).
 3. The King will rule righteously bringing true justice to the poor (Isaiah 11:4) and swift judgment (Isaiah 16:5) so that all nations see that Yahweh (Jesus) is ruling this earth and glorifying His name (Psalm 96:10; Isaiah 62:1, 2). The people of this earth receive the true blessing of the beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12).
 4. He will appoint the people with the perfect gifting and leadership abilities to be His under-shepherds and under-leaders (Isaiah 61:3-11, 66:20, 21; Matthew 10:40-42; 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27; 1 Corinthians 3:5-15; Revelation 11:17, 18, 19:4, 6).
- B. Peace (Shalom—Isaiah 9:6, 7), holiness (Ezekiel 44:23, Zechariah 14:20, 21), truth (Psalm 98:3, Isaiah 16:5, Zechariah 8:3), obedience (Psalm 2:9, Mal. 1:11), and a full outpouring of the Holy Spirit bringing extra knowledge of Yahweh (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Joel 2:28-32).

V. With King Jesus ruling the world from Jerusalem, the curse of Genesis 3:14-19 begins a process of lifting and reversing. With Satan bound (Revelation 20:1-3a) and Jesus and His saints in charge, many good changes will come to this earth. Mortal people will still be born in sin and be able to choose unbelief and wickedness which will have an effect at the end of the 1,000 year reign (Revelation 20:3, 7-9). However, most unrighteousness will be overwhelmingly contained.

- A. The earth will have abundance. It will be well watered with rain (Isaiah 30:23, 35:7) and unproductivity under the curse will turn into productivity (Isaiah 62:8-9; Jeremiah 31:5; Ezekiel 48:18, 19). Agricultural and economic abundance characterizes the age (Micah 4:1-5; Zechariah 8:9-12).
- B. There will be a unified language reversing the curse of Babel (Genesis 11:6-9, Zephaniah 3:9).
- C. There will be healing of sickness, deformity of body and mental disease (Isaiah 29:17-19, 33:24, Isaiah 35:3-6, 61:1-2, 65:20; Jeremiah 30:17, 31:8; Ezekiel, 34:16; Micah 4:6, 7; Zephaniah 3:19). People will live longer again (Isaiah 65:20).

- D. There will be protection from violence and oppression from evil people (Isaiah 14:3-6, 41:8-14, Isaiah 42:6-7; Ezekiel 34:27; Zechariah 8:14-15, 9:8-12).
- E. Animals will be changed to be more peaceful, less aggressive, less venomous, and less harmful (Isaiah 11:6-9, 35:9, 65:25; Romans 8:20-22).
- F. The earth's population will skyrocket due to less death, more protection, less disease, healthier bodies, and better nutrition (Isaiah 65:20; Ezekiel 47:22).

THOUGHT: Knowing more about the 1,000 year reign of Christ should make us, as believers, more grateful (that we will be part of it), more prayerful for those who have not yet believed, and more patient as we wait for the next phase of Yahweh's plan to unfold.

SATAN'S LAST EARTHLY DECEIT, THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT, AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

REVELATION 20:7-21:8

- I. At the end of Christ's 1,000 year reign on this earth, Satan is released from his prison for a short time of deceit before his final destruction (Revelation 20:7-10).
 - A. Satan is released from his prison (the Abyss, Revelation 20:1) after the 1,000 year (sixth time this is used in six verses) reign of Christ on this earth is ended (verse 7).
 - B. During the 1,000 year reign, the mortal believers that started Christ's Kingdom with Him (the sheep, Matthew 25:31-34) had children which would still be born in sin. These new children need to believe personally in Yahweh Jesus (who would at that time be reigning in Jerusalem) for their eternal life or they would remain unsaved. Evidently, many people after 1,000 years have been led, ruled, and controlled during Christ's reign who have refused to believe. These people Satan deceives into trying to overthrow Christ and His people at a great end time Millennial battle (verse 8).
 1. The earth's population will skyrocket due to less death, more protection, less disease, healthier bodies, and better nutrition (Isaiah 65:18-25; Ezekiel 47:22). If as little as 10 million adult couples began having children at the beginning of the Millennium at 10 kids per couple (remember there will be less pain in childbirth and a decreased death rate since the curse will be reversing), then there could be 100 million more people within 20- 30 years. Depending on the death rate during the Millennium, the earth's population could reach 10 billion after only 100 years. What will the earth's population be after 1,000 years of Christ's reign on this earth?
 2. Gog and Magog in the Old Testament comes from Ezekiel 38:1-39:29 where Gog is the ruler and Magog is the land and/or people that fight against Israel during an end time battle. There are some similarities to this Millennial battle (i.e. fire from heaven, Ezekiel 37:22) but also many differences (i.e. Ezekiel's battle involves a few nations and comes from the north whereas the Millennial battle involves all nations). The Ezekiel battle seems to fit better into a time before Christ's return (perhaps a battle in the series of battles before Armageddon-Revelation 16:12-21) but probably prefigures this end time Millennial battle. Many Jewish Rabbi's have referred to any opponents of Israel as Gog and Magog from the Ezekiel passage.
 - C. Satan brings his vast army against Israel and Jerusalem (the beloved city, also Christ's capital city) but before there is any battle, fire came down out of heaven and consumed them. Evidently, Yahweh has had enough of Satan's deceit and lies (verse 9).

- D. The devil (Greek diabolos, Hebrew Satan) is now thrown into the lake of fire where he will spend eternity, joining the beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet who have already been there 1,000 years (Revelation 19:20). This, along with many other verses of Scripture, teaches us that the wicked will not be annihilated but rather will exist forever. The English word hell in the New Testament came from the Greek words Gehenna or Gehenna of fire (the place south of Jerusalem used for burning refuse, Matthew 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5) and is now the place called “the lake of fire” in Revelation for the place of eternal punishment (verse 10).
- II. Yahweh’s Great White Throne Judgment happens after the Millennium, Satan’s last earthly deception, and Satan’s judgment (Revelation 20:11-15).
- A. After the preceding events, Yahweh Jesus (John 5:22) sits upon His Great White Throne in a place designated for the judgment of all the wicked dead. Scripture tells us that our present earth and heaven will be destroyed and replaced by a New Heaven and New Earth (verse 11; Isaiah 65:17, 66:22, 24; Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17, 21:33; 2 Peter 3:10- 13).
- B. The righteous Old Testament, New Testament, and Tribulational saints have already received their bodily resurrection over 1,000 years previously (Revelation 6:9-17, 20:4, 6). This is the resurrection of the wicked dead and possibly the Millennial saints (unless they had an undisclosed special resurrection). There were books (scrolls) that recorded everything done by everyone and there was “the book of life” which is the record of believers in Yahweh Jesus (Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:15, 21:27) (verse 12a).
- C. Anyone not recorded in “the book of life” (as a believer) was thrown into the lake of fire (verse 15) but each was judged fairly according to what they had done (verse 12). This is similar to the Bema of Christ for the righteous (2 Corinthians 5:10) that happened 1,000 years previously for the purpose of reward and Millennial position. In the case of unbelievers this judgment of works could determine an assignment or position in hell. Whatever is happening in the lake of fire or hell, it is “outside” (Isaiah 66:24; Revelation 22:15) the realm of the coming New Earth, eternally separated from the life of fellowship with Yahweh, and full of torment and regret (see the verses on hell in Revelation 20:10). The sea, Death and Hades all appear to be holding areas for the departed dead bodies and souls according to their context (verses 12b-15).
- III. The beginning of the promised and prophesied New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21:1- 8).
- A. The New Heaven and New Earth are now in existence before the Apostle John’s eyes and one of the distinguishing features of this New Earth is that it no longer contains a sea or ocean (verse 1; Isaiah 65:17, 66:22; 2 Peter 3:10-13).
- B. The Apostle John next sees the New Jerusalem, the holy city, descending out of heaven from God which will be the special home for God and His people throughout eternity (verse 2; John 14:1-3; Hebrew 11:16; 12:22; Revelation 3:12).
- C. A loud voice, probably an angel, speaks from the throne saying: (verses 3, 4)
1. God will dwell with His people from this time on. In other words, there will no longer be any separation or lack of intimacy (verse 3; Ezekiel 37:27).

2. God will rid His people of suffering, pain, and death (verse 4; Isaiah 25:8, 65:17; 1 Corinthians 15:20-56).
- D. Yahweh Father speaks from His throne now that all has been accomplished and sin and His previous creation have prophetically passed away (verse 5-8; Revelation 1:4, 8; Revelation 4:2).
1. Yahweh Father proclaims the trustworthiness and truthfulness of the message of the coming New Heaven and New Earth, tells John to write it down for others to read, and says that the events of the old creation are prophetically over because He alone is the beginning and the end (verses 5, 6a; Isaiah 44:6, 48:12; Revelation 1:8).
 2. Yahweh Father promises the blessing of salvation and eternal life with Him to all His people who drink of His free gift of the water of life (the gift of Jesus) (verse 6b; Isaiah 55:1; John 4:14, 7:38; Revelation 22:17). He promises His conquering ones or overcomers inheritance with Him (verse 7; Revelation 2:11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21).
 3. Yahweh Father warns anybody who refuses to receive His water of life (contextually from verse 6) and rather chooses a mortal life opposed to Yahweh's truth, character, and plan will receive their portion in the lake of fire (verse 8; Revelation 20:15).

THE NEW JERUSALEM AND THE CONCLUSION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

REVELATION 21:9-22:21

- I. The amazing city of the New Jerusalem is revealed to the Apostle John (Revelation 21:9-22:5).
 - A. One of the angels of the seven last bowl judgments is sent to show the Apostle John some of the details of the New Jerusalem just as previously one of these angels showed him the city of the Antichrist. An obvious powerful message of the book of Revelation is that following Satan and his Antichrist will ultimately lead to pride, a destroyed city, death, and the lake of fire (Revelation 17:1-18:24, 19:17-20:15). Whereas, following Yahweh Father and His Christ will ultimately lead to humility, an eternal city, and eternal life in Yahweh's presence as His Bride (Revelation 19:1-22:21) (Revelation 21:9).
 - B. The Apostle John was carried away to a very high mountain (on the New Earth which had already been prophetically created, Revelation 21:1) where he saw the holy city Jerusalem (New Jerusalem, Revelation 21:2) coming down out of the New Heaven and presumably landing on the New Earth. For the second time, the Apostle tells us that it is "from God" (also Revelation 21:2). This city has been especially made by Yahweh Father Himself to be the eternal place of fellowship between God and His people (Revelation 21:10; Isaiah 66:22; John 14:2-4; 1 Corinthians 2:9).
 - C. The exterior aspects of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:11-21).
 1. It radiated the glory of God, Yahweh Father Himself, which looked to the Apostle John like jasper (probably like a translucent diamond). This is also the first description of Yahweh Father's throne in Revelation 4:3! (Revelation 21:11).
 2. It is surrounded by a high wall which according to verse 17 measured out at 144 cubits (216 feet tall, wide, or both) (verse 12a).
 - a. The wall had 12 large entry gates which could give access into or out of the city. The Millennial Jerusalem had smaller versions of these (Ezekiel 48:31-34). The twelve tribes of Israel were inscribed on the gates (three gates to the east, north, south, and west, see Ezekiel 42:16-19) and one angel was at each gate (verses 12b-13).
 - b. The wall had 12 foundations that it was built on with the 12 names of the 12 apostles on each foundation (verse 14; Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 2:20).
 3. The angel was given a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and walls. This usually was a piece of bamboo a little over 10 feet long (Revelation 11:1) but for this occasion, the angel was given gold (verse 15).

4. The city itself was laid out foundationally in a square shape with its width, length, and height all equal. Each distance was 12,000 stadia or about 1,380 miles (each stadion was about 607 feet or 85 meters). Therefore, the city itself was most likely cube shaped (possibly triangular). As an item of interest, the holy of holies in Solomon's Temple and Ezekiel's Millennial Temple area were cube shaped (verse 16; 1 Kings 6:20; 2 Chronicles 3:8-9; Ezekiel 42:15-20, 45:2).
5. Added details on the materials and colors of the city, wall, and street (verses 18-21).
 - a. The wall was built of jasper (a translucent diamond-like material) and the city was built from a pure gold-like material that was like clear glass (verse 18).
 - b. The foundations of the wall, which must be above ground enough to be seen, are adorned with every kind of precious stone or jewel. This would reflect a vast array of colors on the translucent wall and clear as glass city including blue (sapphire, jacinth, amethyst), green (chalcedony or onyx, emerald, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase), red (sardonyx or agate, sardius or carnelian), and yellow (chrysolite) (verses 19-20).
 - c. The 12 gates were made of a single pearl and the street probably running through the gate was pure gold which was transparent (verse 21).

THOUGHT: Any entry or exit into the New Jerusalem will cause people and angels to remember Yahweh's work in Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church to the praise of His name.

- D. The interior aspects to the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:22-22:5).
 1. It has no temple in it because Yahweh Father and Yahweh Jesus are its temple (verse 22).
 2. It will have the glory of God shining with such intensity that it will be its own light as well as be the source of light for the nations living on the New Earth. If the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem are Old Testament, New Testament, and Tribulational believers that reigned with Christ during His 1,000 year reign (Revelation 20:4), then the nations are probably Millennial believers (verses 23-27).
 3. It will have a river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God (Yahweh Father) and the Lamb (Yahweh Jesus). This has some similarities to the Millennium but now the Father's throne is present also (Revelation 22:1; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Zechariah 14:8; John 7:38).
 4. It will have the tree of life on each side of this river of life running all the way through the middle of the street of the city. Perhaps the tree is single rooted with many trees running on both sides of this river that's in between the cities main highway system. This again has some similarities to the Millennial time period (Revelation 22:2a; Ezekiel 47:7-12). The tree produces 12 kinds of fruit (possibly one kind a month) and leaves which heal (therapeian-Greek) or give health to the nations. Perhaps Millennial believers have resurrected bodies which the leaves and fruit of this tree gives added benefit (Revelation 22:2b; Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24).

5. It will be free of the curse of sin (Genesis 3:14-19), and will rather be full of the service and worship of Yahweh (Revelation 22:3). Yahweh's servants will see Yahweh's face and have His name on their foreheads (Revelation 22:4; Revelation 2:11, 12). This eternal service and worship (in and out of the city) will be eternal because Yahweh's people will reign forever with Him (Revelation 22:5; Daniel 7:14, 27).

II. The conclusion to the book of Revelation (Revelation 22:6-21).

A. The message of this book is trustworthy and true. It was given by Yahweh Father, in 100% agreement with earlier Scriptural prophets, through angelic messengers and Yahweh Jesus to the Apostle John. The one who keeps the words of this prophecy will be blessed by Yahweh Jesus Himself at His prophetically soon return (Revelation 22:6, 7; Revelation 1:1- 3).

B. John heard and saw the things of Revelation, again gets rebuked by an angel (also Revelation 19:10) and is instructed to let others hear this message before it's too late (Revelation 22:8-10; Daniel 12:4, 9).

C. Yahweh Jesus tells us that He is coming soon several times in these closing verses. When He comes, there is reward and judgment for His creation (verses 12, 13; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12-15). The blessed believers enter the New Jerusalem and unbelievers enter a place outside the New Earth called the Lake of Fire (verses 14, 15; Revelation 20:11-22:5).

D. Yahweh Jesus is the promised Messiah (Christ) who will come again and now offers His free gift of the water of life to any and all who want it (verses 16, 17; Isaiah 11:1,10; 55:1; John 7:37-39; Revelation 2:28). The book of Revelation is written to be believed, warns unbelievers, and witnesses to Christ's soon return for those alive now (verses 18-21).