

## INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

It is 96 A.D., the church is in what seems to be a "death-struggle" with the forces of evil, and the Christians *seem* to be losing! But things are not always what they seem to be outwardly. "Write, then, the things you see, both the things that are now, and the things that will happen afterward" (*Rev. 1:19*).

To understand this book, we must first begin at the fact that it was intended for the believers in John's day and age (*Rev. 1:1-3*). It is God's answer to the prayers and tears of severely persecuted Christians who were scattered through the cities of Asia Minor. It must be studied in the light of the conditions that existed in the last ten years of the First Century A.D. It shows Jesus as the EXPEDITER (one who puts into effect an order or decree in the shortest possible time) of God's Plan (*Rev. 5*). The Trumpets of chapter 9 answer the question: "*How can a loving God allow pain and suffering?*" To the Christian who suffers pain, this is a Seal (compare *Rev. 7:2-3* note); but to the unbeliever, this pain and suffering is a Trumpet of warning!

The theme of this book is stated very well in the words of *Rev. 17:14*. "*They will fight against the Lamb; but the Lamb, and his called, chosen, and faithful followers with him, will defeat them, for he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings.*"

Chapters 1 to 3 form the basic foundation of this entire book. Revelation is made up of "picture-symbols," which, like "modern art," are intended to express an idea. Each of these picture-symbols presents *one* central idea.

It seems normal to us to write an account by "beginning at the beginning, going on to the end, and then stopping." But there are other ways of looking at things. The Jewish mind often arranged things according to their importance, rather than by the order in which they happened. And sometimes they would record one event out of sequence just because it seemed to them worthy of stress. Still another method is to work like a farmer plowing his field: make one pass across the field, go back, move over slightly, and make another pass, and continue until the whole field has been covered.

Revelation uses this third method. We find *seven* (the Divine number) parallel sections in the book. All sections begin with the *First Coming* of Christ, and all continue to, or past, the *Second Coming*.

**(1) The Church in the World. chapters 1-3.**

(*Matt. 28:20*)

**(2) Trial and Persecution of the Church. chapters 4-7.**

(*John 16:33*)

**(3) The Church VICTORIOUS! chapters 8-11.**

(*Luke 18:7*)

**(4) Christ versus the Dragon. chapters 12-14.**

(*Gen. 3:15*)

**(5) Christ's final wrath. chapters 15-16.**

(*Rom. 2:5*)

**(6) The fall of Babylon. chapters 15-16 17-19.**

(*2 Pet. 3:13*)

**(7) Christ and his Church VICTORIOUS! chapters 20-22.**

(*Rom. 8:37*)

INTO ETERNITY FOREVER!

In Revelation, the curtain of both the present and the future is lifted, so that we may know what is being worked out here and now, and the GUARANTEED CERTAINTY that those who win the victory through faith, will receive everything God has promised them!

# THE REVELATION OF JOHN

**1** This book is about what Jesus Christ revealed, which God gave him, to show to God's servants what must happen very soon. Christ made these things known to his servant John by sending his angel to him, <sup>2</sup>and John has told all that he has seen. This is his report concerning the message from God and the truth revealed by Jesus Christ. <sup>3</sup>Happy is the one who reads this book, and happy are those who listen to the words of this prophetic message and obey what is written in this book! For the time is near when all this will happen.

## Greetings to the Seven Churches

<sup>4</sup>From John to the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace be yours from God, who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven

## Prologue

**1** The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

## Greetings and Doxology

John, <sup>4</sup>  
To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before

## The Church in the World. Chapters 1 - 3. (Matt. 28:20)

[Chapters 1 to 3 form the basic foundation of this entire book. Revelation is made up of "picture-symbols," which, like "modern art," are intended to express an idea. Each of these picture-symbols presents *one* central idea. Be careful not to try to give a "deeper meaning," *any more than is necessary* to bring out this *central idea*. To evaluate these, ask: (1) How much description forms the entire picture-symbol? (2) What is the *central idea*?]

1. **Revealed.** The curtain of both the present and the future is lifted (*verse 19*). **Jesus Christ.** It is his message (see *chapter 5*). **Which God gave him.** God's Plan is behind it all. **By sending his angel.** Throughout this book, angels are given the messages to reveal. [See *Heb. 1:14; Rev. 4:1; 21:9; 22:1; 22:8; etc.*] John, as a prophet, is to record all this and pass it on to all mankind.

3. **Happy is the one who reads.** This refers to the "lector" who read the Scriptures aloud. This blessing is for the one who reads, those who listen and obey.

4. **John to the seven churches.** This is to the Roman province called Asia. Ephesus was the capital. All seven churches are in that province. They are named in *verse 11*. There were other churches as well in Asia (*Acts 20:17; Col. 4:13*). Seven is the perfect or sacred number, and these churches are symbolic of all the church everywhere at every age of time. **Grace and peace.** A blessing, directly to the seven, indirectly to all the church. **God, who is.** See *Exod. 3:14*. **The seven spirits.** Symbolic of the fullness and perfection of the Holy Spirit.

spirits in front of his throne, <sup>5</sup>and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn Son who was raised from death, who is also the ruler of the kings of earth.

He loves us, and by his death he has freed us from our sins <sup>6</sup>and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father. To Jesus Christ be the glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

<sup>7</sup>Look, he is coming with the clouds! Everyone will see him, including those who pierced him. All peoples of earth will mourn over him. Certainly so! Amen.

<sup>8</sup>"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God Almighty, who is, who was, and who is to come.

### A Vision of Christ

<sup>9</sup>I am John, your brother, and in union with Jesus I share with you in suffering, and in his Kingdom, and in enduring. I was put on the island named Patmos because I had proclaimed God's word and the truth that Jesus revealed.

his throne, and from Jesus <sup>5</sup> Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth,

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us <sup>6</sup> to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father —to be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

Look, he is coming with <sup>7</sup> the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.

So shall it be! Amen.

"I am the Alpha and the <sup>8</sup> Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

### One Like a Son of Man

<sup>9</sup> I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of

5. **And from Jesus Christ.** He is the faithful witness (*John 8:14*); the firstborn Son (*Col. 1:18*); the ruler (*Eph. 1:21*). **He loves us.** Continuous love! **Death . . . freed us.** Our sin-offering (see *1 Pet. 1:18-19*).

7. **Look, he is coming.** (*Matt. 26:64; Acts 1:9-11*.) **Everyone.** All the dead will awake. **Those who pierced him.** National Israel (*Zech. 12:10*). **All peoples of earth.** Because he is coming to judge the world (*Acts 17:31*).

8. **I am the Alpha and the Omega.** The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet - the beginning and the end (*Isa. 41:4*). All things begin and end in God (The Father - see also *Rev. 21:5-6*. But notice *Col. 1:15-16*).

9-11. **I am John.** He mentions himself for the third time. [The fourth and fifth times are in *Rev. 21:2 & 22:8*.] **I share with you in suffering.** All the church was being persecuted. **Kingdom . . . Enduring.** Being part of Christ's Kingdom also means enduring patiently. **Island named Patmos.** In some way, John's loyalty to Christ had caused his exile to this cruel island. Historical evidence points to 95-96 A.D. for the date of this book. Patmos is a rocky "prison house" in the south part of the Aegean Sea about thirty miles in circumference. **On the Lord's day.** The resurrection of Jesus on Sunday caused that day to be known as the Lord's day. The letters written by Barnabas, Ignatius and Dionysius near this time, speak of the Lord's day in this way, and this "name" is commonly used from that time onward. It is not to be confused with the "Sabbath day" which was Saturday (see Smith's Bible Dictionary, etc.).

<sup>10</sup>On the Lord's day the Spirit took control of me, and I heard a loud voice, that sounded like a trumpet, speaking behind me. <sup>11</sup>It said, "Write down what you see, and send the book to these seven churches: in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

<sup>12</sup>I turned around to see who was talking to me. There I saw seven gold lampstands. <sup>13</sup>Among them stood a being who looked like a man, wearing a robe that reached to his feet, and a gold band around his chest. <sup>14</sup>His hair was white as wool, or as snow, and his eyes blazed like fire; <sup>15</sup>his feet shone like brass melted in the furnace and then polished, and his voice sounded like a mighty waterfall. <sup>16</sup>He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came out of his mouth. His face was as bright as the midday sun. <sup>17</sup>When I saw him I fell down at his feet like a dead man. He placed his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the

Jesus. On the Lord's Day I 10  
was in the Spirit, and I heard  
behind me a loud voice like  
a trumpet, which said: 11  
"Write on a scroll what you  
see and send it to the seven  
churches: to Ephesus,  
Smyrna, Pergamum, Thya-  
tira, Sardis, Philadelphia  
and Laodicea."

I turned around to see the 12  
voice that was speaking to  
me. And when I turned I saw  
seven golden lampstands,  
and among the lampstands 13  
was someone "like a son of  
man," dressed in a robe  
reaching down to his feet and  
with a golden sash around  
his chest. His head and hair 14  
were white like wool, as white  
as snow, and his eyes were  
like blazing fire. His feet 15  
were like brass glowing in a  
furnace, and his voice was  
like the sound of rushing  
waters. In his right hand he  
held seven stars, and out of  
his mouth came a sharp  
double-edged sword. His  
face was like the sun shining  
in all its brilliance.

When I saw him, I fell at 17  
his feet as though dead.  
Then he placed his right  
hand on me and said: "Do  
not be afraid. I am the First

**The Spirit took control of me.** He was "lifted up" to that spiritual state in which revelations are given (*John 14:26; 2 Pet. 1:21*). **Write down what you see.** This message was to be circulated among all the Christians (*verse 4*).

**12. I saw seven gold lampstands.** He saw this first. They symbolize the seven churches (*verse 20*).

**13. Among them. "I will be with you always!" Like a man.** (*John 1:14; Rom. 8:3*) [Son of Man - *Luke 22:69-70; Dan. 7:13*.] **A robe . . . a gold band.** The robe of a high priest with the gold band of a king.

**14. His hair was white.** Not with age, but with heavenly glory! White symbolizes purity and victory.

**15. His feet . . . his voice.** Along with the *eyes that blaze like fire*, these are symbolic of great power and authority (see *Dan. 10:6; Ezek. 43:2*).

**16. Seven stars.** The "angels" of the churches (*verse 20*). **Sharp two-edged sword.** A symbol of God's word (*Rev. 19:15; Eph. 6:17*). **His face was as bright.** See the transfiguration (*Luke 9:29*).

**17. I fell down.** Shock and fright! **Don't be afraid.** The old love (*John 14:1-3*). **The first and the last.** Compare *verse 8*. Note the similarity between God and Christ.

first and the last. <sup>18</sup>I am the living one! I was dead, but look, I am alive forever and ever. I have authority over death and the world of the dead. <sup>19</sup>Write, then, the things you see, both the things that are now, and the things that will happen afterward. <sup>20</sup>Here is the secret meaning of the seven stars that you see in my right hand, and of the seven gold lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."

### The Message to Ephesus

**2** "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: "This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven gold lampstands. <sup>2</sup>I know what you have done; I know how hard you have worked and how patient you have been. I know that you cannot tolerate evil men, and that you have tested those who say they are apostles but are not, and have found out that they are liars. <sup>3</sup>You are patient, you have suffered troubles for my

and the Last, I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

"Write, therefore, what <sup>19</sup>you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. The mystery of the <sup>20</sup>seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

### To the Church in Ephesus

**2** "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: I know your deeds, <sup>2</sup> your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. <sup>3</sup> You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

**18. I am the living one!** Killed, but alive forever! Note the stress on life. **I have authority.** Compare *Matt. 28:18*. He has authority even over death and Hades [the world of the dead]. He will raise everyone from death at his Coming! See *John 5:27-29*.

**19. Write.** John is to preserve this vision so that all may share its message. **Now.** Current events, dating from the First Coming of Christ. **Afterward.** Those things which had not yet happened. The curtain of both the present and the future is lifted.

**20. Seven stars.** The "angels" of the seven churches. "Angel" means "messenger," and is used for both human and heavenly messengers in the Bible [in the original language]. "Angels" here must refer to the "evangelists" [preachers - see note on *Eph. 4:11*] of the churches since John is to write to them. Compare *Malachi 2:7*; *2 Tim. 4:5*.

[These seven churches are symbolic of all the church everywhere at all times. The letters to the churches describe conditions and events which occur again and again in the history of the church in the world. The geography of these churches can be found in a good Bible Dictionary. We concentrate on the spiritual lesson to be learned from each of these.]

*The idea which would make these churches represent seven successive periods of church history is clearly false, since this would make the dead church at Sardis represent the golden age of Reformation.]*

**1-2. To the angel of the church in Ephesus.** To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20*. **This is the message.** See *Rev. 1:13, 16, 20*. **I know what you have done.** This church had a good past record. They had worked hard; they had aggressively carried out the Great Commission in a spirit of patience; they had fought for the Faith (*Jude 3*) and tested those who made the claim to be apostles (*1 John 4:1-3*).

**3. You are patient.** All the Devil could do to them did not make them give up!

sake, and you have not given up. <sup>4</sup>But here is what I have against you: you do not love me now as you did at first. <sup>5</sup>Remember how far you have fallen! Turn from your sins and do what you did at first. If you don't turn from your sins, I will come to you and take your lampstand from its place. <sup>6</sup>But here is what you have in your favor: you hate what the Nicolaitans do, as much as I.

<sup>7</sup>"If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!

"To those who have won the victory I will give the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life that grows in the Garden of God."

### The Message to Smyrna

<sup>8</sup>"To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

"This is the message from the one who is the first and the last, who died and lived again. <sup>9</sup>I know your troubles; I know that you are poor—but really you are rich! I know the evil things said against you by those who claim to be Jews, but are not; they are a group that belongs to

Yet I hold this against you: <sup>4</sup>You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. <sup>6</sup>

He who has an ear, let him <sup>7</sup>hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

### To the Church in Smyrna

"To the angel of the church <sup>8</sup>in Smyrna write:

These are the words of him <sup>9</sup>who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a

4. **You do not love me.** A very serious charge! Paul had planted the church here about 52 A.D. (*Acts 18:19-21*). This church was more than forty years old as Christ dictates the letter to John. A second generation has grown up who do not have the intense enthusiasm, spirit, and love which the first generation church had. Christ was not "real" to them. (Compare *Joshua 24:31; Judges 2:7, 10.*) They were fiercely zealous for truth, yet they did not love Christ! [This lack of love characterized the Pharisees. They were fanatics for truth (as they understood it) but despised everybody else (*Luke 18:9-12*). One who despises others, will come to despise God as well!]

5. **Remember how far you have fallen!** (1) They had been at a high spiritual level. (2) They had lost their hold on Christ and had dropped into the pit of spiritual defeat [*but they did not know it!*]. (3) **Turn!** They must actively recapture this love. It is AGAPE - *an act of will.* "I will love God; I will love fellow man." See *1 John 4:15-21*. **If you don't.** This warning speaks to every church which has lost its "first love." It will cease to exist, if it does not turn from its SIN [IT IS A SIN NOT TO LOVE] and recapture the Spirit and Power of Christ!

6. **Here . . . in your favor.** The Nicolaitans taught that Christian liberty gave permission to live immorally. They were right to hate what the Nicolaitans did [not the Nicolaitans themselves].

7. **If you have ears.** A grim warning to listen carefully. **To those who have won the victory.** God's promise! Christian life is a battle. **Tree of life.** Note the stress on LIFE. [See *Gen. 2:9; 3:22; Rev. 22:2.*] **Garden of God.** Paradise (*2 Cor. 12:2-4*) - the home of God's people.

8. **To the angel of the church in Smyrna.** To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20*.

9. **I know your troubles.** Being a Christian at that time often meant losing your job, and hardship followed. The Lord tells those believers that they must not let themselves fall into self-pity. They are poor - yet rich in spiritual things (*Matt. 6:20; 19:21; Luke 12:21*). Their Lord knows all this! **Evil things said against you.** These who claimed to be Jews slandered Christ and accused Christians before the Roman officials (and did what they could to get Christians fired from their jobs). See *Acts 13:50*;

Satan! <sup>10</sup>Do not be afraid of anything you are about to suffer. Listen! The Devil will put you to the test by having some of you thrown into prison; your troubles will last ten days. Be faithful to me, even if it means death, and I will give you the crown of life.

<sup>11</sup>"If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!

"Those who win the victory will not be hurt by the second death."

### The Message to Pergamum

<sup>12</sup>"To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

"This is the message from the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. <sup>13</sup>I know where you live, there where Satan has his throne. You are true to me, and you did not abandon your faith in me even during the time when Antipas, a faithful witness for me, was killed there where Satan lives. <sup>14</sup>But here are a few things I have against you: there with you are some who follow the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak how to cause the people of Israel to sin by eating food that had been offered to idols, and by committing

synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

He who has an ear, let him <sup>11</sup>hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

### To the Church in Pergamum

"To the angel of the church <sup>12</sup>in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. I know where <sup>13</sup>you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

Nevertheless, I have a few <sup>14</sup>things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual im-

14:2, 5, 19; 17:5; 21:27-30; 24:2. These "Jews" are no longer God's people.

10. **Do not be afraid.** You may suffer, but do not fear. **The Devil.** He is the power behind those who claim to be Jews. ["Jew" in the Bible is applied to different groups of people. Sometimes it means specifically the Pharisees, Sadducees and teachers of the Law (the group who rejected Christ).] **Your troubles will last ten days.** A definite, full, but short period of time. See *Matt. 24:22; 2 Cor. 4:8-9; 1 Pet. 1:6-9*. **Be faithful to me.** Not just until death, but even if it costs you your life! **Crown of life.** Note the emphasis on victory over death! (See also *2 Tim. 4:7-8*.)

11. **Not be hurt by the second death.** Life eternal to those who win the victory! The second death is eternal separation from God (*Rev. 20:14*).

12. **To the angel of the church in Pergamum.** To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20*. **Sharp two-edged sword.** See *Rev. 1:16*.

13. **I know where you live.** They lived in a center of Satan-inspired idol worship. Christians were asked to burn incense to the fetich of the emperors and to say "Caesar is our Lord." **You are true to me.** They resisted the temptation to repudiate Christ to save themselves. They kept their faith even when Antipas was martyred. [The identity of Antipas is not known.]

14. **A few things.** Probably, they emphasized individuality to the point where church discipline was ignored. In the error of Balaam (*Num. 25:2; 31:16*) false teachers at Pergamum taught Christians to join in the feasts of idols and the sex orgies. They may have taught that this was allowed in order to escape persecution.



immorality. <sup>15</sup>In the same way, you also have people among you who follow the teaching of the Nicolaitans. <sup>16</sup>Turn from your sins, then! If not, I will come to you soon and fight against those people with the sword that comes out of my mouth.

<sup>17</sup>"If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!

"To those who have won the victory I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give each of them a white stone, on which a new name is written which no one knows except the one who receives it."

### The Message to Thyatira

<sup>18</sup>To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

"This is the message from the Son of God, whose eyes blaze like fire, whose feet shine like polished brass. <sup>19</sup>I know what you do. I know your love, your faithfulness, your service, and your patience. I know that you are doing more now than you did at first. <sup>20</sup>But here is what I have against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a messenger of God. She teaches and misleads my servants into committing immorality and eating food that has been

morality. And you have <sup>15</sup> others who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. <sup>16</sup> Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

He who has an ear, let him <sup>17</sup> hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

### To the Church in Thyatira

"To the angel of the church <sup>18</sup> in Thyatira write:

These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished brass. I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. <sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, I have this <sup>20</sup> against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food

15. In the same way. Nicolaitans - see verse 6.

16. Turn from your sins. Forgiveness requires turning from sin first. If not I will come. A grim warning to the unrepentant.

17. If you have ears. Listen! Hidden manna. The bread of life is Jesus Christ - hidden from the world. A white stone. The symbol of being pronounced "not guilty." It implies victory over sin and the Devil. A new name. Symbolic of the new relationship the Christian will have with God and Christ in that Eternal World (compare 2 Cor. 5:17-21).

18. To the angel of the church in Thyatira. To the evangelist. See note on Rev. 1:20.

19. I know what you do. They had done the opposite of the church at Ephesus. They had continued to grow stronger in their "first love," and showed this in the way they helped the poor.

20. But here is what I have against you. Here in Thyatira, labor guilds were centered around an idol. Sex orgies and drunkenness were part of the activity of these guilds. Obviously a Christian could not take part in this sort of thing, so, he lost his job! This created terrific pressure on the Christians to participate in these orgies, so he could keep his job and feed his family (see 1 Pet. 4:4; compare 1 Cor. 7:26-28). Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, symbolizes seduction, idolatry and immorality [1 Kings 16:31; 18:4;

offered to idols. <sup>21</sup>I have given her time to turn from her sins, but she does not wish to turn from her immorality. <sup>22</sup>And so I will throw her on a bed where she and those who committed adultery with her will suffer terribly. I will do this now, unless they repent from the wicked things they did with her. <sup>23</sup>I will also kill her followers, and then all the churches will know that I am he who knows men's thoughts and wishes. I will repay each one of you according to what you have done.

<sup>24</sup>"But the rest of you in Thyatira have not followed this evil teaching; you have not learned what the others call 'the deep secrets of Satan.' I say to you that I will not put any other burden on you. <sup>25</sup>But you must hold firmly to what you have until I come. <sup>26-28</sup>To those who win the victory, who continue to do what I want until the very end, I will give the same authority which I received from my Father: I will give them authority over the nations, to rule them with an iron rod and to break them to pieces like clay pots. I will also give them the morning star.

sacrificed to idols. I have <sup>21</sup> given her time to repent of her immorality, but she will not. So I will cast her on a <sup>22</sup> bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her <sup>23</sup> children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. Now I say to the rest <sup>24</sup> of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you): Only <sup>25</sup> hold on to what you have until I come.

To him who overcomes <sup>26</sup> and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—

'He will rule them with a <sup>27</sup> rod of iron and dash them to pieces like pottery'—

just as I have received authority from my Father. I <sup>28</sup> will also give him the morn-

19:1-2]. Here "Jezebel" symbolizes a faction in the church who developed an "easy way out." What they said must have been this: "You can't conquer sin unless you experience it. If you learn the deep things of Satan by worshiping the idol and joining the orgy, you will be a better Christian." The church at Thyatira was permitting this, but the One whose "eyes blaze like fire" is not to be fooled! He has said: "You must be holy, because I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16).

21. **I have given her time.** It is God's wish that everyone would turn from sin. Even Jezebel is offered the opportunity to repent. (See why Jesus came! John 3:16-17.)

22. **And so I will throw her.** A "bed" and "terrible suffering" are symbolic of God's wrath. Those who refuse to turn from their sin bring upon themselves certain punishment!

23. **I will also kill her followers.** A grim threat of Divine vengeance upon those who "follow Jezebel" (by participating in this sin). **Then all the churches will know.** God loves us (see Rom. 5:8-11) and wants to bless us. But sin brings punishment, sometimes in this life (see Ananias and Sapphira - Acts 5:1-11).

24. **But the rest of you.** Some were faithful and had not followed the false way of Jezebel. **Any other burden.** Only to avoid the sins of the faction. [Compare Acts 15:28-29.]

25. **But you must hold firmly.** To the gospel of Christ which the apostles had taught them.

26-28. **To those who win the victory.** The world may seem to be winning now, but it is the Christians who really are ruling the world right now at this time! (See Rev. 8:3-5; 5:8-10; Rom. 5:17.) **I will give them authority.** A just reward for the suffering Christian! (Compare Luke 19:17; 1 Cor. 4:20.)

**The morning star.** The right to share in Christ's glory! (Compare Rev. 22:16; 2 Pet. 1:19.) **If you have ears.** Grim warning to the wicked; confident hope to the friends of God!

<sup>29</sup>“If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!”

### The Message to Sardis

**3** “To the angel of the church in Sardis write: “This is the message from the one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know what you are doing; I know that you have the reputation of being alive, even though you are dead! <sup>2</sup>So wake up, and strengthen what you still have, before it dies completely. For I find that what you have done is not yet perfect in the sight of my God. <sup>3</sup>Remember, then, what you were taught and how you heard it; obey it, and turn from your sins. If you do not wake up, I will come upon you like a thief, and you will not even know the hour when I come. <sup>4</sup>But a few of you there in Sardis have kept your clothes clean. You will walk with me, clothed in white, because you are worthy to do so. <sup>5</sup>Those who win the victory will be clothed like this in white, and I will not remove their names from the book of the living. In the presence of my Father and of his angels I will declare openly that they belong to me.

<sup>6</sup>“If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!”

ing star. He who has an ear, <sup>29</sup> let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

### To the Church in Sardis

**3** “To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. <sup>2</sup> Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never erase his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. <sup>6</sup>

1. **To the angel of the church in Sardis.** To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20*. **I know what you are doing.** Sardis was sinking into the death of spiritual apathy. Christ has the “seven [*life-giving*] spirits” of God. He knows their need of life, and calls for them to repent and live.

2. **So wake up.** Sardis still has a good name, but it sleeps spiritually. In Pergamum and Thyatira, a small part of the church had been captured by the temptation of the world. At Sardis, almost the entire church had fallen. But, there is still hope that renewal can come! **Not yet perfect.** The forms were there, and the ceremonies, but the spirit and power were lacking (*compare 2 Tim. 3:5*).

3. **Remember . . . obey it.** They had received the gospel of Christ. They must obey it again, as they had once done. **Like a thief.** A grim warning of sudden disaster, if they do not repent.

4. **But a few of you.** God had some few who were still faithful to him. These were “lights” in the darkness. **Clothed in white.** Symbolic of the victory of God’s people (*see Isa. 61:10; Rev. 19:8*).

5. **Those who win.** Those who are spiritually dead will have their names erased from the book of the living. Those who win will receive everything the Lord has promised them! [Book of the living: ancient cities wrote the names of their citizens in a book. Criminals had their names erased, also the dead.] **I will declare openly.** See *Matt. 10:32-33*. Christ will cite those who cite him! [CRRE: *to single out and call special attention to.*]

6. **If you have ears.** A warning to listen to Jesus and to obey his command.

**The Message to Philadelphia**

7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: "This is the message from the one who is holy and true, who holds the key that belonged to David, who opens so that none can close, who closes so that none can open. 8 I know what you do; I know that you have a little power; you have followed my teaching and have been faithful to me. I have opened a door before you, which no one can close. 9 Listen! As for that group that belongs to Satan, those liars who claim that they are Jews, but are not, I will make them come before you and bow down at your feet. They will all know that I love you. 10 Because you have kept my order to be patient, I will also keep you safe from the time of trouble which is coming upon the whole world, to test all the people on earth. 11 I am coming soon. Keep safe what you have, so that no one will rob you of your victory prize. 12 I will make him who is victorious a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never again leave it. I will write on him the name of my God, and

**To the Church in Philadelphia**

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 7

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens, no one can shut; and what he shuts, no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. 8 9 10

I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him 11 12

7. **To the angel of the church in Philadelphia.** To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20*. **Who holds the key.** A key opens and shuts. Christ has the authority to do this. He has the power of David's throne (*Isa. 22:22; Matt. 16:19; 28:18; Rev. 5:5; Acts 15:15-18*).

8. **I know what you do.** Christ knows their living faith and their spiritual strength. **I have opened a door.** Symbolic of great opportunities (compare *Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3*).

9. **Listen! As for that group.** Bitter opposition from those who claim to be Jews. (See note on *Rev. 2:9*.) **I will make them come.** Victory over the opposition. Also, some of these who fight against them will come to Christ and join in praising him.

10. **Because you have kept.** They lived their faith (compare *James 2:14-26*). They continued to proclaim the gospel. **I will also keep you safe.** A promise of Divine protection. Note that it goes hand in hand with "Keep safe what you have" in the next verse. The "time of trouble" comes on the earth again and again, to test people and to call them to turn to God. (Compare *Rev. 16:10-11; Acts 17:30; 2 Pet. 3:9*.)

11. **I am coming soon.** His promise. Jesus comes in judgment through his angels (*Rev. 1:1*). He will come in person at the Second Coming (*Rev. 1:7*).

12. **I will make him.** The victory prize is to be permanently with God! See *Psalms 27:4*. **In the temple.** The church of Christ (*Eph. 2:22*). **I will write on him.** When one enters Christ's church, the spiritual

the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from my God. I will also write on him my new name.

<sup>13</sup>“If you have ears, then, listen to what the spirit says to the churches!”

### The Message to Laodicea

<sup>14</sup>“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

“This is the message from the Amen, the faithful and true witness, who is the origin of all that God has created. <sup>15</sup>I know what you have done; I know that you are neither cold nor hot.

How I wish you were either one or the other!

<sup>16</sup>But because you are barely warm, neither hot nor cold, I am going to spit you out of my mouth!

<sup>17</sup>‘I am rich and well off,’ you say, ‘I have all I need.’ But you do not know how miserable and pitiful you are! You are poor, naked, and blind.

<sup>18</sup>I advise you, then, to buy gold from me, pure gold, in order to be rich. Buy also white clothing to dress yourself and cover up your shameful nakedness. Buy also some medicine to put on your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup>I reprove and punish all whom I love. Be in earnest, then, and

the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. He who has an ear, let him <sup>13</sup>hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

### To the Church in Laodicea

“To the angel of the church <sup>14</sup>in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, <sup>15</sup>

that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because <sup>16</sup>

you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

You say, ‘I am rich; I have <sup>17</sup>acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are

wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to <sup>18</sup>

buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your

shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Those whom I love I <sup>19</sup>reprove and discipline. So be

temple on earth, three names are written on him [*Father, Son, Holy Spirit - Matt. 28:19*]. When he enters the Eternal temple, three names are written on him [*the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, my new name (Jesus speaking)*].

**13. If you have ears.** Listen carefully to the words of promise!

**14. To the angel of the church in Laodicea.** To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20. The Amen.* See *2 Cor. 1:20*.

**15. I know what you have done.** Sardis was sinking into death, but Laodicea was already dead spiritually. Christ has no word of praise for them. They are barely warm (tepid). They are not hostile to Christ, but neither do they love him.

**16. I am going to spit you out of my mouth.** Symbolic of intense disgust!

**17. I am rich and well off.** They had lots of money and a very high standard of living. But they had mistakenly substituted this for spiritual wealth. [They were a success by the world’s standards.] **You are poor, naked, and blind.** This was how God saw them.

**18. I advise you.** A call to turn to Christ! **Gold.** Symbolic of true wisdom (*Col. 2:3*). **White clothing.** Symbolic of union with Christ (*Matt. 22:11-13; Gal. 3:27*). **Medicine.** Symbolic of being able to “see” the truth (*1 John 2:20*), and of “removing blindness.”

**19. I reprove and punish all whom I love.** As a father spans his children to teach them (*Heb. 12:5-11*).

turn from your sins. <sup>20</sup>Listen! I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and eat with him and he will eat with me. <sup>21</sup>To those who win the victory I will give the right to sit by me on my throne, just as I have been victorious, and now sit by my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup>"If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!"

earnest, and repent. Here I <sup>20</sup> am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, he with me.

To him who overcomes, I <sup>21</sup> will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He <sup>22</sup> who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

### Worship in Heaven

**4** At this point I had another vision, and saw an open door in heaven.

And the voice that sounded like a trumpet, which I had heard speaking to me before, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this." <sup>2</sup>At once the Spirit took control of me. There in heaven was a throne, with someone sitting on it. <sup>3</sup>His face gleamed like such precious stones as jasper and carnelian; all around the throne there was a rainbow the color of an emerald. <sup>4</sup>In a circle around the throne were twenty-four other thrones, on which were seated twenty-four elders dressed in white and

### The Throne in Heaven

**4** After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the <sup>2</sup> Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And <sup>3</sup> the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Surrounding the <sup>4</sup> throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four el-

**20. Listen! I stand at the door and knock.** Christ is always knocking at the door, but they must turn from sin and open the door to him. Faith and turning from sin are man's action. These are Christ's own people, but they have forgotten him and are being called to renewal.

**21. To those who win the victory.** The promise is available! *Sit by me.* Share his rule (*compare 1 Cor. 6:2-3*). **Just as I have been victorious.** He has already defeated Satan (*Heb. 12:2*).

**22. If you have ears, then.** A grim word of warning; but also a promise!

**Trial and Persecution. Chapters 4 - 7.** (*John 16:33*)

#### BACK TO FIRST COMING OF CHRIST

Chapters 4 - 7 begin with the First Coming and deal with the church being persecuted and tested in the world. Jesus says: "But be brave! I have defeated the world!" (*John 16:33*).

Chapter 4 relates to God and Creation. The central idea is that God's throne [his authority, sovereignty, etc.] is the **ABSOLUTE CENTER** of the Universe, and that he is **IN CONTROL**!

**1. I had another vision.** John is given a series of visions in this book. **An open door in heaven.** So that he can see how God looks at our entire Universe! **Come up here.** To the throne as it appears in the vision! Note that chapters 4 & 5 teach **ONE MAIN LESSON** - "*Jehovah reigns; let the peoples tremble!*"

**3-6.** God's throne is the spiritual center of the universe. Words can only hint at his glory! **Jasper.** A diamond - *white, brilliant* - symbolic of holiness. **Carnelian.** A topaz - *bloody red* - symbolic of judgment and wrath. **Rainbow.** Symbolic of the storm ending! God's promise ending! through Christ (*compare Rom. 8:28*). **Twenty-four elders.** Symbolic of God's people in both the Old and New Testaments. They are

wearing gold crowns. <sup>5</sup>From the throne came flashes of lightning, sounds, and peals of thunder. There were seven lighted torches burning before the throne; these are the seven spirits of God. <sup>6</sup>In front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

Surrounding the throne, on each of its sides, were four living creatures covered with eyes in front and in back. <sup>7</sup>The first living creature looked like a lion; the second looked like a calf; the third had a face like a man's face; and the fourth looked like a flying eagle. <sup>8</sup>Each one of the four living creatures had six wings, and they were covered over with eyes, inside and out. They never stop their singing day or night:

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,  
who was, who is, and who is to come.”

<sup>9</sup>The four living creatures sing songs of glory and honor and thanks to the one who sits on the throne who lives forever and ever. When they do so, <sup>10</sup>the twenty-four elders fall down before the one who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives forever and ever. They throw their crowns before the throne, and say,

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In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

dressed in white to show purity, and wear gold crowns to show victory over death (see Rev. 2:10). **Lightning, sounds, thunder.** Symbolic of God's mighty power. **Seven spirits of God.** Seven is the Divine complete number. Symbolic of the Holy Spirit. **A sea of glass.** Symbolic of God's purifying power (compare Rev. 7:14). **Four living creatures.** These are Cherubim (a special type of angel) - they symbolize the total creation (see Ezek. 1 & 10; Rom. 8:20-21). [The Cherubim were fifteen feet tall! See 1 Kings 6:23ff.]

7-8. Angels everywhere have strength, offer service, have intelligence and are swift. See Psalm 103:20-21; Heb. 1:14; Dan. 9:21; Luke 12:8; 5:10. **Lion.** Symbolizes strength. **Calf.** Symbolizes service. **Man.** Symbolizes intelligence. **Eagle.** Symbolizes swiftness. **Wings, eyes.** Symbolize unceasing activity. [The central idea of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures is to clearly show the importance of The Throne. They surround The Throne in praise and honor, always ready to carry out the will of God.]

9-11. In these verses, all Creation (symbolized by the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures) praise the Triune God - ELOHIM - on his Throne, and worship their Creator. The picture is one of continuing, ceaseless worship. The song (verse 11) praises God for Creation and for his will which gave existence and life to all things (compare Col. 1:15-20).

11 "Our Lord and God! You are worthy to receive glory, honor, and power. For you created all things, and by your will they were given existence and life."

"You are worthy, our Lord 11 and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

### The Scroll and the Lamb

**5** I saw a scroll in the right hand of the one who sat on the throne; it was covered with writing on both sides, and was sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup>And I saw a mighty angel, who announced in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" <sup>3</sup>But no one was found in heaven, or on earth, or in the world below, who could open the scroll and look inside it. <sup>4</sup>I cried bitterly because no one had been found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside it. <sup>5</sup>Then one of the elders said to me, "Don't cry. Look! The Lion from Judah's tribe, the great descendant of David, has won the victory and can break the seven seals and open the scroll."

### The Scroll and the Lamb

**5** Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

Chapter 5 relates to God's Lamb (Jesus Christ) and his work of "*buying men for God*." The last two verses of this chapter are the praise of the total Universe, joined together in worship to God and the Lamb.

1. **Scroll.** This is symbolic of God's Eternal Plan - his purpose for the total Universe throughout history. [Books in ancient times, were made by gluing together pages to form a sheet many feet in length. These were rolled up for storage.] **Sealed.** Scrolls were sealed to prevent unauthorized use. These were often arranged so that breaking the first seal would allow access to the first part. Then a second seal would have to be broken to give access to further material. The SEALED scroll symbolizes God's Plan *undisclosed* and *unexecuted*.

2. **Who is worthy?** Only someone with authority could break the seals.

3. **But no one was found.** No one, man or angel, had the authority to break the seals and execute God's Plan.

4. **I cried bitterly.** John, *in the vision*, feels the dismay of Creation as God's Scroll remains sealed.

5. **Then one of the elders.** Not an angel, but an elder (*Rev. 4:4*), speaks the good news! **Look!** Jesus Christ has won the victory! He is the "Lion from Judah's tribe" (*Gen. 49:9-10*); and "the great descendant of David" (*Isa. 11:1-10; Matt. 22:41-45*). He won the victory through his death (*Luke 9:31*).



<sup>6</sup>Then I saw a Lamb standing in the center of the throne, surrounded by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb appeared to have been killed. It had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God that have been sent into all the world. <sup>7</sup>The Lamb went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who sat on the throne. <sup>8</sup>As he did so, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each had a harp, and gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people. <sup>9</sup>They sang a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll  
and to break open its seals.

For you were killed, and by your death  
you bought men for God,  
from every tribe, language, nation, and  
race.

<sup>10</sup>You have made them a kingdom of  
priests to serve our God,  
and they shall rule on earth."

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song:

"You are worthy to take  
the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
because you were slain,  
and with your blood you  
purchased men for God  
from every tribe and  
language and people  
and nation.

You have made them to  
be a kingdom and  
priests to serve our  
God,  
and they will reign on the  
earth."

6. **Then I saw a Lamb.** Not the Lion, but the Lamb. **Center of the throne.** This shows both the authority of Jesus, and the authority of his act of sacrifice on the Cross. **Seven horns,** Symbolic of his authority. **Seven eyes.** Symbolic of the Holy Spirit (*Rev. 1:4; Eph. 2:22*).

7-8. **The Lamb went and took the scroll.** The sovereignty of both heaven and earth is given into his hands! [*See Heb. 1 & 2; Phil. 2:6-11.*] **As he did so.** As he takes the scroll and is made King of Creation, there is a great burst of praise from the four living creatures [Creation] and the twenty-four elders [God's people in all ages of time]. **Harp.** Symbolic of great happiness (*compare Rev. 18:22*). **Gold bowls.** Symbolic of prayer and thankfulness.

9-10. The praise of the created and the Redeemed! **By your death.** The bloody death of the Cross is the PRICE of buying men [men and women] for God (*Rev. 1:6*). **A kingdom of priests.** In Christ's kingdom (*Col. 1:13*) everyone is a priest. Christ himself is *the* high priest. Alford (Greek Testament) says: "The present *BASILEUOUSIN* [*they shall rule*] is not to be rendered as a future, but keeps its own meaning (the whole aspect and reference of this heavenly vision being not *future*, but *present*: the world and church as now existing, *compare Eph. 2:6*)." Those who are bought for God: (1) are made into a Kingdom; (2) become priests; (3) receive kingly authority. These things are true, even though God's people are persecuted and insulted.

<sup>11</sup>Again I looked, and I heard angels, thousands and millions of them! They stood around the throne, the four living creatures, and the elders, <sup>12</sup>and sang in a loud voice,

“The Lamb who was killed is worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom, and strength, honor, glory, and praise!”

<sup>13</sup>And I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, and in the world below, and every creature in the sea—all creatures in the whole universe—and they were singing,

“To him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be praise and honor, glory and might, forever and ever!”

<sup>14</sup>The four living creatures answered, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

### The Seals

**6** Then I saw the Lamb break open the first of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice that sounded like

Then I looked and heard <sup>11</sup> the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they <sup>12</sup> sang:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”

Then I heard every creature <sup>13</sup> in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

The four living creatures <sup>14</sup> said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

### The Seals

**6** I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thun-

11. **Again I looked.** Still a vision. The angels of heaven join the Created and the Redeemed to praise Jesus.

12. **And sang in a loud voice.** They sing the praises of Jesus for his *act of death* which sets men free from the results of sin. Christ demonstrated that he is “worthy” by his heroic sacrifice (*Eph. 3:8-11*).

13. **And I heard every creature.** Every being joins in the chorus of praise to God and the Lamb! It is God’s act in Jesus the Lamb, which allows God to give the verdict of “not guilty” in regard to those who were “paid for” by the death of Christ. The total Universe shares in the benefits of this act (*Rom. 8:20-21; Col. 1:20*).

14. **Amen.** The four living creatures place their seal of approval on the worship. **And the elders.** They, too, fall down to worship the Triune God, and especially the Lamb. [It was a custom in the ancient world to fall down with the face pressed to the ground as a sign of submission and worship.]

In chapters 6 & 7, the Lamb who took the sealed scroll (*Rev. 5:7*), now begins to open the seals and to disclose a sequence of events.

1. **Then I saw.** The Lamb breaks open the first of the seals. **Come.** The four living creatures (cherubim) take turns introducing a horseman.

thunder, "Come!" <sup>2</sup>I looked, and there was a white horse. Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown. He went out as a conqueror to conquer.

<sup>3</sup>Then the Lamb broke open the second seal; and I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" <sup>4</sup>Another horse came out, a red one. Its rider was given the power to bring war on the earth, that men should kill each other; he was given a large sword.

<sup>5</sup>Then the Lamb broke open the third seal; and I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there was a black horse. Its rider held a pair of scales in his hand. <sup>6</sup>I heard what sounded like a voice coming from among the four living creatures. It said, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages. But do not damage the olive oil and the wine!"

der, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

2. **There was a white horse.** The Rider on the white horse symbolizes Christ. [This is still a vision.] The bow, the crown, and the white horse, are symbolic of conquest and victory. **As a conqueror to conquer.** Christ is a conqueror (*Rev. 3:21*). He has already conquered death and the world of the dead (*Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:18*). Compare the Rider in *Rev. 19:11ff*: Christ stands among his gold lampstands (*Rev. 1:12ff*), and this can be taken as symbolic of his conquest through his church. It is the church (the messianic community) which is commanded to: "Go!" (*Matt. 28:19-20*).

3-4. **Another horse came out.** This horse is red - symbolic of violent death. As the Good News of Jesus is preached, persecution and sacrifice follow. Read what Jesus said in *Matt. 10:34-39*. The red horse refers to religious persecution stirred up by preaching Christ. The sword here is the sacrificial knife which was used to kill the animal on the Jewish altar (*compare Heb. 9:12ff*). "Kill" as used here means to "slaughter as a sacrifice." The world slaughters the people of God as a sacrifice [they don't intend it that way] to God, which he accepts as praise to him (*Rev. 13:9-10; 14:13*).

5-6. **There was a black horse.** Symbolic of great economic hardship. The scales are symbolic of famine (*Ezek. 4:10ff*), and the prices given for wheat and barley are famine prices. But it is not famine, since plenty of wheat and barley are available *if you can pay the price!* Oil and wine symbolize luxury here, but these people can barely buy the cheapest food. Who are they? - The Christians. See note on *Rev. 2:20; 13:17*. The second and third Riders belong together. As soon as the Good News of Christ is preached, the world will persecute the church in every way. The two forms mentioned here: *slaughter* and *economic hardship* - are symbolic of every form of persecution.

<sup>7</sup>Then the Lamb broke open the fourth seal; and I heard the fourth living creature say, "Come!" <sup>8</sup>I looked, and there was a pale colored horse. Its rider was named Death, and Hades followed close behind. They were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with war, famine, and disease, and with the wild animals of earth.

<sup>9</sup>Then the Lamb broke open the fifth seal. I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because they had proclaimed God's word and had been faithful in their witnessing. <sup>10</sup>They shouted in a loud voice, "Almighty Lord, holy and true! How long will it be until you judge the people of earth and punish them for killing us?" <sup>11</sup>Each of them was given a white robe; and they were told to rest a little while longer, until the total number was reached of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed, as they had been.

<sup>12</sup>And I saw the Lamb break open the sixth seal. There was a violent earthquake, and the sun became black, like coarse black cloth, and the

When the Lamb opened <sup>7</sup> the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" <sup>8</sup> I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

When he opened the fifth <sup>9</sup> seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud <sup>10</sup> voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Then each of them <sup>11</sup> was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

I watched as he opened <sup>12</sup> the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood-red, and

7-8. **There was a pale-colored horse.** This horse is a very sickly gruesome color, symbolic of disease and death. Its Rider is Death, and Hades (the world of the dead) comes trotting along behind. War, famine, disease and wild animals come on believer and unbeliever alike. Death cuts down, and Hades [symbolizing disembodied spirits of the dead (see notes on *Luke 16:22-23*)] seizes them. To the believer, this punishment is helpful (*Heb. 12:5-11*); but to the nonbeliever, it is a curse, because they do not turn from their sins (*Rev. 9:20-21*).

9. **Then the Lamb broke open the fifth seal.** This is still a vision. I saw . . . the souls. He sees an altar, and under it the souls (not bodies) of those who were being slaughtered under the second seal. Their lives were both a sacrifice and a testimony to Christ.

10. **How long?** These souls shout in a loud voice, asking for vengeance! But did not Jesus ask God to forgive those who killed him? We answer, these souls do not ask for revenge, but they ask God's vengeance for God's sake. By slaughtering them, the world repudiates God! See *Jude 14-15*.

11. **They were told to rest.** A white, flowing robe is given to each of them (symbolic of being free from guilt, of being holy, and of great happiness). God hears their prayers, but his purpose is not yet fulfilled. God knows the exact number of martyrs to his cause, and not until this many are sacrificed to him, will our world come to an end.

12-14. **And I saw the Lamb break open the sixth seal.** The sixth seal introduces the Judgment, and shows us something of the terror of the wicked at that time. The events of verses 12, 13, 14 are to be

moon turned completely red, like blood. <sup>13</sup>The stars fell out of the sky to earth, like unripe figs falling from the tree when a strong wind shakes it. <sup>14</sup>The sky disappeared, like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved from its place. <sup>15</sup>Then the kings of the earth, the rulers and the military chiefs, the rich and the mighty, and all other men, slave and free, hid themselves in caves and under rocks on the mountains. <sup>16</sup>They called out to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the eyes of the one who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup>The great day of their wrath is here, and who can stand up against it?"

the stars in the sky fell to 13 earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky reced- 14 ed like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Then the kings of the 15 earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the 16 mountains and the rocks: "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the 17 great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

### The 144,000 People of Israel

**7** After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind should

#### 144,000 Sealed

**7** After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any

lumped together around the central idea of God's wrath and power *unleashed* [at Christ's Second Coming] against the world of wicked people. Compare *Ezekiel 38:19; Amos 8:8; Joel 2:10*.

15-16. **Then the kings of the earth, etc.** Under the symbolism of six groups of men, John sees [in his vision] the total godless world in terror as they will attempt to escape from God's wrath. As the very earth shakes to pieces beneath their feet, even death itself seems less to be feared than the wrath of the Lamb who comes in Judgment (*Rev. 1:7*). Suffering Christian, you have no reason to be afraid of all this! **THE LAMB IS YOUR KING AND YOUR FRIEND!**

17. **The great day of their wrath is here.** Chapter 6 closes with Judgment Day, but the seventh seal is not yet opened! God sends punishment on the world in our day [or at least allows it to come] because the wicked persecute his people. But God will not execute his complete vengeance, nor close the door of grace, until his Plan is fulfilled and Jesus returns to begin his work of Judgment (*see Acts 17:31*).

**Judgment halted for the sealing of God's people.** 144,000 is symbolic of God's people in both the Old and New Testaments.

1. **After this I saw four angels.** Two events are presented in this chapter: the sealing of God's people [symbolic of ownership; protection; genuineness]; and the gathering of God's people in the Eternal World. Chapter six ends with Judgment ready to begin. As chapter seven opens, four angels (symbolic of the total agencies of destruction) are standing at the four corners of the earth (symbolic of the total Creation: North, South, East, West) holding back the four winds (symbolic of punishment, destruction, anguish), just about to release them to do their work of vengeance.

blow on the earth, the sea, or any tree. <sup>2</sup>And I saw another angel coming up from the east with the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels to whom God had given the power to damage the earth and the sea. <sup>3</sup>The angel said, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees, until we mark the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads." <sup>4</sup>And I was told the number of those who were marked with God's seal on their foreheads: it was 144,000, from every tribe of the people of Israel. <sup>5</sup>There were 12,000 from the tribe of Judah marked with the seal; 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben; 12,000 from the tribe of Gad; <sup>6</sup>12,000 from the tribe of Asher; 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali; 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh; <sup>7</sup>12,000 from the tribe of Simeon; 12,000 from the tribe of Levi;

tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. he called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

From the tribe of Judah	5
12,000 were sealed,	
from the tribe of Reuben	
12,000,	
from the tribe of Gad	
12,000,	
from the tribe of Asher	6
12,000,	
from the tribe of Naphtali	
12,000,	
from the tribe of	
Manasseh 12,000,	
from the tribe of Simeon	7
12,000,	
from the tribe of Levi	
12,000,	
from the tribe of Issachar	
12,000,	

2-3. **And I saw another angel.** This angel has the seal of the living God [which shows he is acting on God's instructions]. He puts into effect a "hold" on Judgment until all God's people are sealed. A "seal" identifies ownership; protects against tampering; certifies genuineness. One who is a Christian is sealed by the death of Christ (he bought us for God and we share his death - *Rom. 6:3-4*); is certified by the Holy Spirit as to genuineness (*Rom. 8:16*); and has the Father's protection throughout this life.

4. **And I was told the number.** John does not see the number, he hears it! 144,000. Numbers have symbolic meanings [this was especially true with the ancient peoples]. This number (144,000) is formed by multiplying 3 (the Trinity) by 4 (the total Creation, because the redeemed come from the "four corners" of the world), which makes 12. This number (12) becomes the symbol of the Father acting through the Son in the Spirit to set men free from their sins ( $3 \times 4 = 12$ ). To show God's people in both the Old and New Testaments, we multiply 12 times 12 (12 Tribes; 12 Apostles) to get 144. Then to emphasize that it is the total number of God's people, not just a small part, we multiply 144 by 1,000! [ $1,000 = 10 \times 10 \times 10$  symbolic of perfect completeness.] This number 144,000 represents the total Church Militant in both the Old and New Testaments [all those who do in fact belong to God]. The Church Militant is the messianic community of believers, at work in this world (First Seal). [The Redeemed in the Old Testament are included in this number, although not actually part of the church which Jesus built. However, they will share in the promise (*Heb. 11:39-40*).]

5-8. **There were 12,000.** Exactly 12,000 are sealed from 12 tribes to make 144,000. This cannot be the Jews (in the flesh). (1) The Ten Tribes had disappeared in Assyria and lost their identity. (2) Judah and Benjamin had lost their national existence and all the records destroyed, in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem [some 25 years before John writes this]. (3) The Tribes are arranged out of sequence. Judah is put first, not Reuben. Dan and Ephraim are omitted. There was no Tribe of Joseph, but his

12,000 from the tribe of Issachar; <sup>8</sup>12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun; 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph; and 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin.

### The Great Crowd

<sup>9</sup>After this I looked, and there was a great crowd—no one could count all the people! They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language, and they stood in front of the throne and of the Lamb, dressed in white robes, and holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup>They called out in a loud voice, “Our salvation comes from our God, who sits on the throne, and from the Lamb!” <sup>11</sup>All the angels stood around the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures. Then they fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup>saying, “Amen! Praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and might belong to our God forever and ever! Amen!”

from the tribe of Zebulun 8  
12,000,  
from the tribe of Joseph  
12,000,  
from the tribe of Benjamin  
12,000.

### The Great Multitude in White Robes

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And <sup>10</sup>they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God,  
who sits on the throne,  
and to the Lamb.”

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: <sup>12</sup>

“Amen!  
Praise and glory  
and wisdom and thanks  
and honor  
and power and strength  
be to our God for ever and  
ever.  
Amen!”

sons Ephraim and Manasseh each founded a Tribe (*Gen. 48:5*). Levi is also counted to make 12, but as the priestly Tribe had no inheritance (*Num. 2:33*), to count Levi would have made 13 Tribes: (4) Christ did away with the distinction of race (*Gal. 3:23-29; Eph. 2:14-18*). (5) 144,000 is mentioned again in *chapter 14*, where they are all: men [males]; unmarried; virgin. This is clearly symbolic (see notes on *Rev. 14:3-5*).

9. **And there was a great crowd.** This time John sees the Church Triumphant [God's people in Eternity] as they live forever in the presence of God and his Throne. Notice that the Redeemed in Eternity are a Great Crowd, so many of them that they cannot be counted! **THE WORK OF CHRIST IS NOT A FAILURE!** They are from EVERY race, tribe, nation, and language (see *Col. 1:23*). All those Jews who accepted Christ are included in this number (compare *Acts 21:20*). **White robes.** Symbolic of being free from guilt, of being holy, and of great happiness. **Palm branches.** Symbolic of happiness after a victory.

10. **Our salvation.** They shout their praise to God and to the Lamb. Note they look to GOD AND CHRIST as the source of their salvation.

11-12. **All the angels.** The chorus of heaven and Creation joins in the song of the Redeemed, as they praise God and the Lamb (compare *Rev. 5:11*).

<sup>13</sup>One of the elders asked me, "Who are these people dressed in white robes, and where do they come from?"

<sup>14</sup>"I don't know, sir. You do," I answered.

He said to me, "These are the people who have come safely through the great persecution. They washed their robes and made them white with the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup>That is why they stand before God's throne and serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne will protect them with his presence. <sup>16</sup>Never again will they hunger or thirst; neither sun nor any scorching heat will burn them; <sup>17</sup>because the Lamb, who is in the center of the throne, will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Then one of the elders <sup>13</sup> asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?"

I answered, "Sir, you <sup>14</sup> know."

And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There- <sup>15</sup> fore,

they are before the throne of God

and serve him day and night in his temple;

and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

Never again will they <sup>16</sup> hunger;

never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat upon them,

nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb at the center <sup>17</sup> of the throne

will be their shepherd;

he will lead them to

springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

<sup>13</sup>. **One of the elders asked me.** He asks this to focus John's attention on the great crowd of people.

<sup>14</sup>. **I don't know, sir. You do.** John's answer shows that he is eager to know the answer.

<sup>15-17</sup>. **These are the people.** The words of the elder form the close to this section [chapters 4 - 7]. Remember the central idea of this section is: "*Jehovah reigns; let the peoples tremble!*" The theme of this section is: *the church being persecuted and tested in the world.* What the elder says is the *inspired interpretation* of the GREAT CROWD. These people are the Church Triumphant, who have kept their faith during persecution, and who have "graduated" from Earth. Now they are assembled in Eternity, never to leave the presence of God and the Lamb. They have washed their flowing white robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (*1 John 1:7; Heb. 9:14; Rom. 6:3-11*). **Springs of living water.** Water symbolizes eternal life and salvation (*Isa. 55:1; John 7:38-39*). Springs of water symbolize the source of life which they have through the Lamb, and the eternal companionship with the Father. **And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.** "*He will annihilate death for all time; and the Lord, the Eternal, will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the shame of His people He will remove from the whole earth; because the Eternal has said this.*" [*Isaiah 25:8*. Zamenhof's version of the Masoretic Text].



## The Seventh Seal

**8** When the Lamb broke open the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. <sup>2</sup>Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God; they were given seven trumpets.

<sup>3</sup>Another angel, who had a gold incense container, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to add to the prayers of all God's people and offer on the gold altar that stands before the throne. <sup>4</sup>The smoke of the burning incense went up with the prayers of God's people from the hands of the angel standing before God. <sup>5</sup>Then the angel took the incense container, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it on the earth. There were peals of thunder, sounds, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

## The Trumpets

<sup>6</sup>Then the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

## The Seventh Seal and the Golden Censer

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

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. 2

Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. 3  
4  
5

## The Trumpets

Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. 6

## Church Victorious! Chapters 8-11 (Luke 18:7)

In this section of chapters, we again return to the First Coming of Christ. The Seals [of persecution] bring Trumpets [warning of Judgment] which bring Bowls [of judgment poured out]. Chapter 8 is God's pledge of destruction on unbelievers. It shows God's vengeance through the ages of time - by the medium of natural disasters. The first four Trumpets are sent by God as a warning! *Notice that the Seals, Trumpets, Bowls of Wrath, and similar symbols, refer to Principles - of man's conduct and God's discipline - that are at work throughout history. The events symbolized by the Trumpets may be seen any day of the year in any part of the earth. Therefore, Trumpets are simultaneous with Seals.*

1-2. **Silence in heaven.** The hush of silence is to emphasize the things which are about to happen. **Then I saw.** John did not see the silence, but he sees the seven angels. They are given seven Trumpets to warn the unbelievers on earth.

3-4. **Another angel.** Before the Trumpets are blown, another angel comes. He has a gold incense container, and he is given much incense to add to the prayers of all God's people. Christ is our "go-between" at the Father's right side, and he pleads with God for his people. The Holy Spirit is "ANOTHER Helper" (John 14:16) here on earth, and he adds to our prayers by "pleading with God for us" (Rom. 8:26). **The smoke . . . went up.** The prayers of God's people go up to the Throne of God! The One on the Throne both sees and knows the suffering and the praise of his children on earth.

5. **And threw it on the earth.** God has heard the prayers, and the judgments to come are his answer to them. **Peals of thunder, etc.** This is to show that this is God's decree.

6. **Prepared to blow them.** To carry out God's decree. This is serious warning, but not final doom. Note that Trumpets affect a *third of the earth* - but not the whole earth.

<sup>7</sup>The first angel blew his trumpet. Hail and fire, mixed with blood, came pouring down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees, and every blade of green grass.

<sup>8</sup>Then the second angel blew his trumpet. Something that looked like a large mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea was turned into blood, <sup>9</sup>a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

<sup>10</sup>Then the third angel blew his trumpet. A large star, burning like a torch, dropped from the sky and fell on a third of the rivers, and on the springs of water. <sup>11</sup>(The name of the star is Bitterness.) A third of the water turned bitter, and many men died from drinking the water, because it had turned bitter.

<sup>12</sup>Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet. A third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that their light lost a third of its brightness; there was no light during a third of the day and during a third of the night also.

The first angel sounded 7  
his trumpet, and there came  
hail and fire mixed with  
blood, and it was hurled  
down upon the earth. A third  
of the earth was burned up,  
a third of the trees were  
burned up, and all the green  
grass was burned up.

The second angel sounded 8  
his trumpet, and something  
like a huge mountain, all a-  
blaze, was thrown into the  
sea. A third of the sea turned  
into blood, a third of the liv- 9  
ing creatures in the sea died,  
and a third of the ships were  
destroyed.

The third angel sounded 10  
his trumpet, and a great star,  
blazing like a torch, fell from  
the sky on a third of the  
rivers and on the springs of  
water—the name of the 11  
star is Wormwood. A third  
of the waters turned bitter,  
and many people died from  
the waters that had become  
bitter.

The fourth angel sounded 12  
his trumpet, and a third of  
the sun was struck, a third  
of the moon, and a third of  
the stars, so that a third of  
them turned dark. A third of  
the day was without light,  
and also a third of the night.

7. **Hail and fire, mixed with blood.** These came pouring down. Symbolic of destructive land disasters, which our Lord sends against those who persecute his church. *All* land disasters should be viewed in this light.

8. **A large mountain burning with fire.** That is what it *looked like*. This is symbolic of destructive disasters in which God uses the *sea* as a tool of vengeance. We are to interpret *all* disasters involving the sea in the light of this.

10. **A large star, burning like a torch.** It drops from the sky to show that it is God's act. It may be the Devil who inflicts these things, but God allows it and God sends it against those who persecute his people (the messianic community). Now the *land waters* (lakes, rivers, etc.) are used as a tool of vengeance. The star's name is **Bitterness** - symbolic of the bitter sorrow which these disasters bring to wicked people. [Perhaps such things as pollution and shortages, including all sorts of problems, can be thought of as part of this third Trumpet.]

12. **Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet.** The heavens themselves become tools to be used against the enemies of Christ's church! All disasters which have their origin in space are included here.

<sup>13</sup>Then I looked, and I heard an eagle that was flying high in the air say in a loud voice, "O horror! horror! How horrible it will be for all who live on earth when the sound comes from the trumpets that the other three angels must blow!"

**9** Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet. I saw a star which had fallen from the sky to earth; it was given the key to the abyss. <sup>2</sup>The star opened the abyss, and smoke poured out of it, like the smoke from a large furnace; the sunlight and the air were made dark by the smoke from the abyss. <sup>3</sup>Locusts came down out of the smoke upon the earth, and they were given power like that of scorpions. "They were told not to harm the grass, or the trees, or any other plant; they could harm only the men who did not have the

As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in mid-air call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

**9** The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their

**13. I heard an eagle.** Four angels have blown. Now there is a short intermission. The eagle is a bird of prey (symbolic of violence and destruction). The next three Trumpets will be more horrible than the first four!

*The fifth and sixth Trumpets are brought by Satan, not God. Yet God can use even the Devil's work to punish and to warn the wicked.*

**1. I saw a star.** The star is Satan (*Luke 10:18 "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."*). **Which had fallen.** The Devil rebelled against God, lost his holiness, his position in heaven, and his glory. **Was given the key.** In the vision John sees the authority to release the forces of evil given to Satan.

**2. Opened the abyss.** This is "hell" before the Judgment. After Judgment hell is the "lake of fire" (*Rev. 20:14-15*). **Were made dark by the smoke.** Satan opens the abyss and fills the world with demons and evil influence. The society of men is "darkened" by the moral and spiritual wickedness created through Satan's influence.

**3. Locusts came down.** Compare *Joel 1:7-12*. Locusts look like a giant grasshopper. A swarm of locusts drops down out of the sky, like smoke, darkening the sun-light, falling on the farmer's fields and quickly stripping every leaf off the growing plants. Locusts, then, symbolize destruction, grief, hopelessness, despair. Locusts are just the right symbol for John to use to describe the forces of evil which pour out from the abyss, bringing horror and destruction. This kind of locust does not harm the grass, or trees, or any plant. They can only harm those who do not have God's seal. God's people are sealed (*Rev. 7:1-8*), and have the promise: "he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your power to resist" (*1 Cor. 10:13*).

mark of God's seal on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>The locusts were not allowed to kill these men, but only to torture them for five months. The pain caused by their torture is like the pain a man suffers when stung by a scorpion. <sup>6</sup>During the five months those men will seek death, but will not find it; they will want to die, but death will flee from them.

<sup>7</sup>The locusts looked like horses ready for battle; on their heads they had what seemed to be gold crowns, and their faces were like men's faces. <sup>8</sup>Their hair was like women's hair, their teeth were like lions' teeth. <sup>9</sup>Their chests were covered with what looked like iron breastplates, and the sound made by their wings was like the noise of many horse-drawn chariots rushing into battle. <sup>10</sup>They have tails and stings, like those of a scorpion, and it is with their tails that they have the power to hurt men for five months. <sup>11</sup>They have a king ruling over them, who is the angel in charge of the abyss. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon; in Greek the name is Apollyon (meaning "The Destroyer").

foreheads. They were not 5  
given power to kill them, but  
only to torture them for five  
months. And the agony they  
suffered was like that of the  
sting of a scorpion when it  
strikes a man. During those 6  
days men will seek death,  
but will not find it; they will  
long to die, but death will e-  
lude them.

The locusts looked like 7  
horses prepared for battle.  
On their heads they wore  
something like crowns of  
gold and their faces resem-  
bled human faces. Their hair 8  
was like women's hair, and  
their teeth were like lions'  
teeth. They had breastplates 9  
like breastplates of iron, and  
the sound of their wings was  
like the thundering of many  
horses and chariots rushing  
into battle. They had tails 10  
and stings like scorpions and  
in their tails they had power  
to torment people for five  
months. They had as king 11  
over them the angel of the  
Abyss, whose name in He-  
brew is Abaddon, and in  
Greek, Apollyon.

5. **Not allowed to kill these men.** God has placed a limitation on these evil spirits who operate in the hearts and lives of evil men and women. They are destructive, horribly so, yet they can torture, but not kill. **The pain caused by their torture.** The scorpion has a poisonous sting in its tail, and its sting is extremely painful, and sometimes fatal.

6. **During the five months.** Verses 6-10 give a symbolic picture of these "locusts from the abyss." Do not try to "pick apart" the symbol of the locusts [what is the *separate* meaning of the hair, teeth, breastplates, etc.]. We look at these verses as a "whole" - a symbolic picture giving one central meaning. The details belong to the picture *as a whole*. What more frightening, horrible, and *true* picture could be painted, of the powers of evil at work in the world of men? Here are demons, stealing the light from those who do not know God [who do not *want* to know God]. They take away love and good will; joy and peace; common sense and knowledge. They cause mankind to bring terror and destruction upon each other. They bring political and social chaos [think of the Red Guards in China; the French Revolution, etc.]. Man's inhumanity to man is the source of incredible misery and suffering!

11. **They have a king.** Their king is the angel in charge of the abyss. His name is given in Hebrew and Greek - meaning "the Destroyer." This entire symbolic picture shows one central idea: terror-panic-destruction! That is Satan's work. [In view of this, think about what Paul wrote: "He rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us safe into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). See also Eph. 6:12.]

<sup>12</sup>The first horror is over, after this there are still two more horrors to come.

<sup>13</sup>Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet. I heard a voice coming from the corners of the gold altar standing before God. <sup>14</sup>The voice said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates!" <sup>15</sup>The four angels were released; they had been prepared for this very hour of this very day of this very month and year, to kill a third of all mankind. <sup>16</sup>I was told the number of the mounted troops: it was 200 million. <sup>17</sup>And in my vision I saw the horses and their riders: they had breastplates red as fire, blue as sapphire, and yellow as sulfur. The horses' heads were like lions' heads, and from their mouths came out

The first woe is past; two 12 other woes are yet to come.

The sixth angel blew his 13 trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth 14 angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." And the four 15 angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the 16 mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.

The horses and riders I 17 saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire,

12. **The first horror is over.** It is over in John's vision. See *verses 20-21*.

13. **Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet.** As this angel blows, a voice is heard *coming from the corners of the gold altar standing before God*. In *Rev. 8:3-4*, we saw the incense and the prayers of God's people go up from the altar to the Throne of God. Here, the answer to those prayers is spoken of as coming from the "corners of the gold altar." God uses the work of the Devil to bring *warning of judgment or warning judgments* on wicked men.

14. **Release the four angels.** These are evil angels. Note they have been **bound** at the great river. [The four angels of *Rev. 7:1* are good angels, who "stand at the four corners of the earth."] As these evil angels are released, the same powers of evil that do the work of destruction in the hearts and lives of men, change these wicked men into *devils* (so to speak). In times of war, wicked people lose the thin veneer of morality and civilization [the atrocities of any war show this]. The sixth Trumpet paints a picture of war; not one specific war, but **ALL WAR** - past, present, and future. The four evil angels are pleased with the idea of plunging all mankind into war. Yet they cannot act unless God permits [they were *bound*! Let us keep in mind, that in allowing them to be released, God uses even war as a voice calling for the wicked to repent (compare *verses 20-21*). [The Trumpets of *Revelation 9* answer the question: "How can a loving God allow pain and suffering?" To the Christian who suffers in pain, this is a Seal (compare *Rev. 7:2-3 note*); but to the unbeliever, this pain and suffering is a Trumpet of warning!] **The great river Euphrates.** This symbolizes Assyria and Babylon, therefore, the entire wicked world.

15-18. **The four angels were released.** War is in God's decree (even though it is Satan who actually brings it); and the hour, day, month, and year are fixed. These angels are allowed to kill one third of all mankind - horrible, yet limited. John sees *in the vision* the armies on the battlefield. There are so many troops he cannot count them, but he is told there are **200 million** (a symbolic number); and these mounted troops and horses have but one purpose - to destroy! In the vision, the mounted troops and the horses work together so well, that the colors of the breastplates and the fire, smoke, and sulphur coming from the horses' mouths, match each other. **Fire**, symbolic of destruction. **Sapphire**, symbolic of suffering. **Sulphur**, symbolic of torture. These symbolize the destructive machines of war, the bombs etc., the defoliating chemicals, poison gas, etc. - all the things which man uses to kill each other in battle.

fire, smoke, and sulfur. <sup>18</sup>A third of mankind was killed by those three plagues: the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur coming out of the horses' mouths. <sup>19</sup>For the power of the horses is in their mouths, and also in their tails. Their tails are like snakes, with heads, and they use them to hurt people.

<sup>20</sup>The rest of mankind, all those who had not been killed by these plagues, did not turn away from what they themselves had made. They did not stop worshiping the demons and the idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see, hear, or walk. <sup>21</sup>Nor did those men repent of their murders, their magic, their immorality, or their stealing.

### The Angel and the Little Scroll

**10** Then I saw another mighty angel coming down out of heaven. He was dressed in a cloud, with a rainbow around his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like columns of fire. <sup>2</sup>He had a small scroll open in his hand. He put his right foot on the sea, his left foot on the land, <sup>3</sup>and called out in a loud voice that sounded like the roar of lions. After he had called out, the seven thunders answered back with a

smoke and sulfur. A third of 18 mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. The power of 19 the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

The rest of mankind that 20 were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did 21 they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

### The Angel and the Little Scroll

**10** Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and he gave a loud <sup>2</sup> shout like the roar of a lion. <sup>3</sup> When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke.

20-21. **The rest of mankind.** From this we see that the general meaning of these six Trumpets is clear. During the period of time which began with Christ's first Coming, and extends all the way to his Second Coming, our Lord Jesus Christ who is ruling all things as he is authorized by the Scroll of God's Decree (Rev. 5:7), will again and again punish those who persecute his church, by allowing [inflicting] disasters on every part of their life - both physical and spiritual. [But disasters in the Christian's life do not indicate punishment, as Jesus points out in *Luke 13:1-5*] **Nor did those men repent.** Man in general ignores the warning voices! Stubborn, foolish, man continues to violate the commandments of God by worshiping false gods (*verse 20*), and hating his fellow-man (*verse 21*). The un-repentance of mankind brings the Bowls of wrath poured out (*chapters 15 & 16*), and the final Day of Judgment. Delay is no longer possible!

<sup>1</sup>1-3. **Then I saw another mighty angel.** To announce the third and final horror (the Final Judgment), another angel appears. The symbolism shows he is to be closely associated with Christ (*see Rev. 1:7; 4:3; 1:17; 1:15*). Note that John does not worship this angel as he does Christ. **Cloud:** authority, judgment. **Rainbow:** mercy and promise for God's people. **Sun:** God's power and holiness. **Fire:** fierce destruction. **A small scroll:** the Gospel - the Good News of what Jesus has done. He stands on the sea and land and shouts! What he has to say concerns the whole Universe and must be heard by everyone. **The seven thunders answered back.** Thunder is God's voice (*see Psalm 29:1-5*).

roar. "As soon as they spoke, I was about to write. But I heard a voice speak from heaven, "Keep secret what the seven thunders said: do not write it down!"

"Then the angel that I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and made a vow in the name of God, who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and all things in it, the earth and all things in it, and the sea and all things in it. The angel said, "There will be no more delay! But when the seventh angel blows his trumpet, then God will accomplish his secret plan, as he announced to his servants, the prophets."

"Then the voice that I had heard speaking from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go and take the open scroll which is in the hand of the angel standing on the sea and on the land."

"I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me. "Take it and eat it; it will turn sour in your stomach, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

"I took the little scroll from his hand and ate it, and it tasted sweet as honey in my mouth. But after I had swallowed it, it turned sour in my

And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down."

Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. And he swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: "Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."

So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey." I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my

4. **Keep secret what the seven thunders said.** There are things at work in both the present and the future which are not revealed to us. Seven is the Divine number, and these seven thunders are God's instruments working out his Plan.

5-6. **Then the angel.** He acts as God's agent. **There will be no more delay!** The Final Judgment is ready to come! God's secret Plan (*1 Cor. 2:9-10*) will reach its total completeness in the Final Judgment. Then will God's people be given their final reward and inheritance, just as God promised. [Note that the "apparent delay" in *Rev. 10:8 to 11:13* is not "time on the clock," but describes our present world from the viewpoint of the work of the church.]

8. **Go and take the open scroll.** John is told to take the scroll, which is the Good News about Jesus. Notice that it is *open*, not sealed. Its message is for all peoples.

9. **It will turn sour in your stomach.** The Gospel (Good News) is a thing of beauty and "sweet as honey." But the "sour taste" of persecution follows it.

10. **But after I had swallowed it.** Not only must John (and each Christian) understand and digest the message of the Good News; he (and we) must live it and experience it (*Eph. 2:10*). But this very persecution brings new opportunities to speak for Christ (*Luke 21:12-19*).

stomach. <sup>11</sup>Then I was told, "Once again you must speak God's message about many nations, races, languages, and kings."

stomach turned sour. Then 11 I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."

### The Two Witnesses

**11** I was then given a measuring stick, like a rod, and told, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count those who are worshiping in the temple. <sup>2</sup>But omit the outer courts of the temple. Do not measure them, because they have been given to the heathen, who will trample on the Holy City for 42 months. <sup>3</sup>I will send my two witnesses, dressed in sackcloth; and they will proclaim God's message during those 1,260 days."

<sup>4</sup>The two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lamps that stand before the Lord of the earth. <sup>5</sup>If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes

### The Two Witnesses

**11** I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to 5

11. **Once again.** Not "to," but "about." John is old, perhaps one hundred years old, as he receives this vision. There is more for John to record, so that all down the stream of history, believers will "hear" John speak God's message [Read the "Key" to Revelation in the introduction.]

**Bitter Persecution.** John now speaks about the "sour" experiences which come to the church of Christ when the "sweet" Gospel is preached.

1. **I was given a measuring stick.** To "measure" is symbolic of *setting apart, making secure, clearly identifying*. [This is still a vision. The fact that there is no temple in Jerusalem when he writes this, is not important.] **Count those who are worshiping in the temple.** These are God's people - the true church. They will suffer severely, but they will never lose God's promise - if they hold firmly to their faith! [Compare *1 Thess. 3:3*.]

2. **But omit the outer courts.** Symbolic of the "nominal Christian," who is an unfaithful *church member*, but not really one of Christ's people. John sees *earthly Jerusalem* and the *earthly* temple. The outer courts have been given to the heathen (unbelievers). **42 months.** 42 months = 1,260 days = 3½ years [time, times, and half a time] = the entire Gospel Age, from Pentecost to the Second Coming. This period of time is symbolic of God's church being persecuted, yet not destroyed. Compare *James 5:17; Rev. 11:6; 1 Kings 17:1 to 18:10*.

3. **I will send my two witnesses.** [The two witnesses are the Church Militant.] Jesus sent his disciples out two by two (*Luke 10:1*). Two witnesses symbolize the *outreach* [missionary spirit] of the messianic community in taking the "sacred and ever-living message of eternal salvation" to the whole world, **1,260 days**. The Gospel Age (see note on verse 2). **The church judges the world.** Compare *James 5:17-18*.

4-6. **The two witnesses are the two olive trees.** The *two olive trees* symbolize *evangelism* - the outreach of the messianic community. The *two lamps* symbolize the *fellowship* within the messianic community. Compare *Zech. 4*. God blesses his people through the preaching of the word [evangelism] and through the fellowship within the messianic community. In a very real sense, the messianic community is a "COLONY OF HEAVEN!" **If anyone tries to harm them.** God hears and answers the prayers of his perse-



out of their mouths and destroys their enemies; and in this way whoever shall try to harm them will be killed. <sup>6</sup>They have authority to shut up the sky so that there will be no rain during the time they proclaim God's message. They have authority also over the springs of water, to turn them into blood; they have authority also to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they wish.

<sup>7</sup>When they finish proclaiming their message, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will fight against them. He will defeat them and kill them, <sup>8</sup>and their bodies will lie on the street of the great city, where their Lord was nailed to the cross. The symbolic name of that city is Sodom, or Egypt. <sup>9</sup>People from all nations, tribes, languages, and races will look at their bodies for three and a half days, and will not allow them to be buried. <sup>10</sup>The people of earth will be happy over the death of these two. They will celebrate, and send presents to one another, because those two prophets brought much suffering upon the

harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. <sup>8</sup>Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. For three, <sup>9</sup>and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of <sup>10</sup>the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

cuted people. (*Rev. 8:3-5*). The church may seem to be weak and helpless, but God's power backs them up! Whoever fights against the church of Christ will be destroyed by the fire that comes out of the mouths of the two witnesses. Symbolic, but no less real! The Trumpets of chapters 8 & 9 can be thought of as the church's judgment on the world. **They have authority.** A blessing, when rejected, turns into a curse! One who rejects the Good News of God's ACT in Christ to save men, brings God's curse upon himself (*compare 1 Thess. 2:16*). **ARMAGEDDON - the cycle of the church.** Originally a royal canaanite city, on a hill guarding an important mountain pass. Many battles were fought there. Solomon built fortifications there. King Josiah was killed there (*2 Chron. 35:22-27*), and the Jews held a special memorial service for him each year. As a symbol, Armageddon represents *fierce struggle*. In Revelation we meet this "battle of Armageddon" four times: *Rev. 11:7-13; 16:12-21; 19:19-21; 20:7-10*.

7-10. **The beast . . . will fight against them.** *In the vision*, a beast comes up out of the *abyss* [hell before the Judgment], fights against the two witnesses, defeats them and kills them. This is Satan, working through the entire anti-christian world. He defeats the church of Christ, and their dead bodies lie on the street. Earthly Jerusalem symbolizes the anti-christian forces of Satan. **Sodom** symbolizes *immorality*. **Egypt** symbolizes *slavery*. **The people of the earth will be happy.** They think that by silencing the voice of the church of Christ, they have freed themselves from God's power. They think they can do as they please, without any messianic community to "judge them" and bring suffering upon them because of their sins.

people of earth. <sup>11</sup>After three and a half days a life-giving breath came from God and entered them, and they stood up; all who saw them were terribly afraid. <sup>12</sup>Then the two prophets heard a loud voice say to them from heaven, "Come up here!" As their enemies watched, they went up into heaven in a cloud. <sup>13</sup>At that very moment there was a violent earthquake; a tenth of the city was destroyed, and 7,000 people were killed in the earthquake. The rest of the people were terrified and praised the greatness of the God of heaven.

<sup>14</sup>The second horror is over; but look! The third horror will come soon.

### The Seventh Trumpet

<sup>15</sup>Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The power to rule over the world belongs now to our Lord and his Messiah, and he will rule

But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.

At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

### The Seventh Trumpet

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

11-14. **After three and a half days.** The two witnesses [the Church Militant] is "dead" only a short time. The world is happy too soon! God sends a life-giving breath, and they stand up! The wicked are terribly afraid! **Come up here!** God honors them by calling them to *come up* to where he is. **They went up into heaven in a cloud.** They go up in the same way that their Lord went up (*Acts 1:9*). **A violent earthquake.** Symbolic of God's judgment on the wicked. Compare *Rev. 6:12-17*. **CENTRAL IDEA.** Verses 7-13 show a continuing cycle of events. Satan himself fights against the church of Christ [through the anti-christian world] and destroys it. But after 3½ days, God sends a life-giving breath into it. The church *seems* to die, and is *reborn*, AGAIN AND AGAIN! The church does not terminate. It is taken up to God and continues to be with him forever, in the eternal Wedding Feast of the Lamb (*Rev. 19:7-9*). God's purpose in the First Coming of Jesus, is stated in *John 3:16-17*.

15-18. **Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet.** This *introduces* the End of the World and the Final Judgment, *but does not describe it!* The loud voices in heaven announce: "The power to rule over the world belongs now to our Lord and his Messiah, and he will rule forever and ever!" Compare *1 Cor. 15:24-28*. It may seem as if Satan is the supreme ruler, and that all the power is on the side of the forces of evil. Revelation shows us that God is in control now! Judgment will reveal God's mighty power as it

forever and ever!" <sup>16</sup>Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell down on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup>saying:

"Lord God Almighty, who is and who was!

We thank you that you have used your great power and have begun to rule!

<sup>18</sup>The heathen were filled with rage, because it is the time for your wrath to come, and for the dead to be judged.

It is the time to reward your servants, the prophets, and all your people, all who fear you, great and small alike.

It is the time to destroy those who destroy the earth!"

<sup>19</sup>God's temple in heaven was opened, and the box holding the covenant was seen in his temple. Then there were flashes of lightning, sounds, peals of thunder, and earthquake, and heavy hail.

### The Woman and the Dragon

**12** Then a great mysterious sight appeared in the sky. There was a woman, whose dress

And the twenty-four elders, <sup>16</sup> who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: <sup>17</sup>

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; <sup>18</sup> and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great—and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

Then God's temple in <sup>19</sup> heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the sacred chest of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

### The Woman and the Dragon

**12** A great and wondrous sign appeared in heav-

actually is!!! **Then the twenty-four elders.** Symbolic of the Redeemed. They respond to what the loud voices announced by falling down [see note on *Rev. 5:14*] and worshiping God. **And have begun to rule!** God has been ruling all along, but not in ways clearly seen. As Judgment begins, all opposition is crushed forever! **Because it is the time.** It has not been the right time, up till now. **To reward your servants.** God keeps his promises! Compare *Rev. 22:12*. **It is the time to destroy those who destroy the earth!** Sin pays its wage. The wicked *earn* the punishment they will receive. Compare *Rev. 18:6*.

**19. God's temple in heaven was opened.** This *symbolic picture* shows the beauty of God's love to his children. The *temple* is *wide open* so all can see the *box holding the covenant*. That *box* symbolizes the real and perfect *union* [fellowship of *1 John 1:7* given real meaning] of God and his people. **Flashes of lightning.** The same *box holding the covenant* is symbolic of God's wrath to those who have rejected him. The lightning, sounds, thunder, earthquake, and hail symbolize God's mighty power brought in wrath against the ungodly (*compare Jude 15*).

**Christ and The Dragon. Chapters 12-14.** (*Gen. 3:15*)

*This is the fourth parallel section, and we again return to the First Coming of Christ.* "And I will place hostility between you and the woman and between your children [IDARO] and her children [IDARO]; he will crush your head, and you will strike at his heel." [*Gen. 3:15. Zamenhof*]

1. **Then a great mysterious sight appeared in the sky.** *In the vision*, the woman is symbolic of God's

was the sun and who had the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. <sup>2</sup>She was soon to give birth, and the pains and suffering of childbirth made her cry out.

<sup>3</sup>Another mysterious sight appeared in the sky. There was a huge red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and a crown on each of his heads. <sup>4</sup>With his tail he dragged a third of the stars out of the sky and threw them to earth. He stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, in order to eat her child as soon as it was born. <sup>5</sup>Then the woman give birth to a son, who will rule over all nations with an iron rod. But the child was snatched away and taken to God and his throne. <sup>6</sup>The woman fled to the desert, to a place God had prepared for her, where she will be taken care of for 1,260 days.

<sup>7</sup>Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, who fought

en: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with a rod of iron. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and

people in both the Old and New testaments. At the right time, Jesus is born of a human mother and lived under the Jewish Law (*Gal. 4:4*). There is a continuity between the Jewish church and the church of Christ (*see Heb. 9:15*). *Verses 1-6* form one central idea - *God's act in history!* **The sun:** the New Testament [the Christian system]. **The moon:** The Old Testament [the Law]. **Twelve stars:** the twelve apostles. **To give birth:** The Incarnation [Christ taking human form]. **The pains and suffering:** compare *Isa. 66:5-12*.

3. **Another mysterious sight appeared in the sky.** In the vision, the huge red dragon is Satan. The seven heads, ten horns, and the crowns are a lot like those of the beast in *Rev. 17*. [Compare notes there. These can be understood as symbolic of the Roman Empire, but Satan uses all the governments of the world against Christ and his church.]

4. **With his tail.** Symbolic of the great power this dragon has! [*See Eph. 2:1-3; 6:10-13.*] **In order to eat her child.** *Matt. 2* helps us understand this. Satan, acting through Herod, has the male children of the Bethlehem area, two years old and under, *killed*. But Christ lives on, in Egypt. [Satan tries in every generation to destroy God's people, but he is unable to do it!]

5. **Then the woman gave birth.** The whole earthly life of Jesus. **Who will rule.** Compare *Luke 19:27*. **But the child was snatched away.** Christ being taken up to heaven to sit on his throne. See *Rev. 5:7; Phil. 2:9*.

6. **The woman fled to the desert.** Symbolic of the fact that Satan cannot destroy God's people 1,260 days. See note on *Rev. 11:2*.

7. **Then war broke out in heaven.** The central idea of *verses 7-12* is that Christ's atonement [God's act in Christ to set men free] frustrates the Devil. Note that Michael and his angels do the attacking. The dragon is defeated and expelled from heaven. See notes on *Rev. 20:1-3*.

back with his angels; <sup>8</sup>but the dragon was defeated, and he and his angels were not allowed to stay in heaven, any longer. <sup>9</sup>The huge dragon was thrown out! He is that old serpent, named the Devil, or Satan, that deceived the whole world. He was thrown down to earth, and all his angles with him.

<sup>10</sup>Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now God's salvation has come! Now God has shown his power as King! Now his Messiah has shown his authority! For the accuser of our brothers, who stood before God accusing them day and night, has been thrown out of heaven.

<sup>11</sup>Our brothers won the victory over him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the truth which they proclaimed; and they were willing to give up their lives and die. <sup>12</sup>And so be glad, you heavens, and all you that live there! But how terrible for the earth and the sea! For the Devil has come down to you, and he is filled with rage, because he knows that he has only a little time left."

<sup>13</sup>When the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he began to pursue

his angels fought back. But <sup>8</sup> he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon <sup>9</sup> was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Then I heard a loud voice <sup>10</sup> in heaven say:

"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.

For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

They overcame him <sup>11</sup> by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony;

they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Therefore rejoice, you <sup>12</sup> heavens and you who inhabit them!

But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you!

He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

When the dragon saw that <sup>13</sup> he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the

10. **Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying.** The picture John has seen in *verses 7-9* is now explained by what he hears. Satan has been "thrown out of heaven" in the sense that he has lost his place as the "accuser of our brothers." Compare *Rom. 8:33-34*. **Now God's salvation has come!** This is the first effect of Christ's atonement.

11. **Our brothers won the victory!** This is the second effect. The blood of the Lamb, and the Truth of the Good News, permit escape from the "law of sin and death" (*Rom. 8:1-4*).

12. **For the Devil has come down.** This is the third effect. Satan is filled with rage because time is running out and he has already lost the fight! He wants to do as much harm as he can, before he is thrown into the "lake of fire" (*Rev. 20:10*).

13. **He began to pursue the woman.** *Verses 13-18* form the third "picture." The central idea is that the Devil will now direct his fury against the messianic community.

the woman who had given birth to the boy. <sup>14</sup>She was given the two wings of a large eagle in order to fly to her place in the desert, where she will be taken care of for three and a half years, safe from the serpent's attack. <sup>15</sup>And then from his mouth the serpent poured out a flood of water after the woman, so that it would carry her away. <sup>16</sup>But the earth helped the woman; it opened its mouth and swallowed the water that had come from the dragon's mouth. <sup>17</sup>The dragon was furious with the woman, and went off to fight against the rest of her descendants, all those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus. <sup>18</sup>And the dragon stood on the seashore.

### The Two Beasts

**13** Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with

male child. The woman was <sup>14</sup> given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times, and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. Then <sup>15</sup> from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. But the earth helped <sup>16</sup> the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. Then the dragon was enraged <sup>17</sup> at the woman, and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

**13** And the dragon stood <sup>1</sup> on the shore of the sea.

14. **To fly to her place in the desert.** Symbolic of divine protection. That is, the Lord gives his people such strength that they can be faithful even to the point of death! **Three and a half years.** See note on *Rev. 11:2*.

15. **The serpent poured out a flood of water.** Symbolic of words and language. Here it means: Lies, false doctrines, false ideologies. These are all things which hinder the spread of the Good News.

16. **But the earth helped the woman.** Symbolic of the great masses of people. Even though Satan is able to use them against the church, they also *defeat* Satan's purpose by "swallowing up" the "water" from his mouth.

17. **Against the rest of her descendants.** Satan makes his attack against individual Christians, hoping to "pick them off one by one." See note on *Acts 6:13-14*. Christians are to know that during this Gospel Age which stretches from Pentecost until the Second Coming, both good and bad will come to God's people. Satan will send persecution and lies against the messianic community, and against each Christian. But God's special help prevents the Devil from attacking the church directly and destroying it! Satan is to be allowed one last all-out effort to destroy the church (*Rev. 20:7-10*), and this may parallel the persecution of the first century. But we already know the outcome! Satan has already lost! And the Second Coming will put a stop to his final effort. [Some think a period of explosive growth will take place in the church of Christ at the exact same time that Satan is permitted to make his last effort. History shows that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church."]

18. **And the dragon stood on the seashore.** This introduces the next chapter, as Satan produces agents to do his work. Since he himself cannot attack the church directly, he raises up *anti-christian powers* [human agencies] through whom he works *indirectly*.

*The Devil produces agents to do his work. First is the beast from the sea. Second, the beast from the earth. The first beast is horrible to look at. The second looks harmless, which makes it the more dangerous of the two. A third agent is identified in Rev. 14:8, Great Babylon the Prostitute.*

1. **Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea.** We learn from *Rev. 17* that this beast is symbolic of

a crown on each of its horns, and a wicked name written on its heads. <sup>2</sup>The beast I saw looked like a leopard, with feet like a bear's feet, and a mouth like a lion's mouth. The dragon gave the beast his own power, his throne, and his vast authority. <sup>3</sup>One of the heads of the beast seemed to have been killed, but the fatal wound had healed. The whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast. <sup>4</sup>All people worshiped the dragon because he had given his authority to the beast. They worshiped the beast also, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who can fight against it?"

<sup>5</sup>The beast was allowed to say terribly wicked things, and it was permitted to have authority for

#### The Beast out of the Sea

And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-

anti-christian world powers [governments]. **Ten horns:** destructive power. **Seven heads:** universal authority and rule [in this world]. The *crowned horns* do not symbolize victory, but rather show that this "universal authority" has been arrogantly seized.

2. **The beast I saw.** Three well known animals are mentioned here: each symbolic of swiftness, crushing power, eagerness to destroy. **The dragon gave the beast his own power.** Those in nations and governments who persecute the church of Christ, receive their power and their motivation from the dragon, Satan. [Note that the same Roman government could serve both God and Satan. We see Rome symbolized in the "seven heads and ten horns." Yet read what Paul says in *Rom. 13:1-7*.]

3. **But the fatal wound had healed.** Remember this was directed to the believers in John's day. The seven heads represent seven empires that follow each other in history (*Rev. 17:10*). [Old Babylon; Assyria; New Babylon; Medo-Persia; Macedonia; Rome; etc.] The beast symbolizes all anti-christian empires. The head that seemed to have been killed, but had healed, must mean that one of these empires which had been fiercely persecuting the church, had stopped doing this, but after a time, had started the persecution again. Rome fits this pattern. Emperor Nero nailed Christians to posts, poured oil on them and burned them as torches to amuse the mob. But in 68 A.D., Nero killed himself. For a few years, Rome was "dead" as a persecuting power. But then in the last years of the first century, Domitian began the persecution again (*Rev. 1:9*).

4. **They worshiped the beast also.** At the time when John lived, Roman Emperors demanded that people call them "Lord" and "Savior." See notes on *verses 15-16*.

5. **To have authority for 42 months.** Satan works through the governments of this world throughout the entire Gospel Age. The governments seize power that belongs only to God, and they blaspheme God, heaven, and all God's people. They are allowed to defeat God's people [it seems that way, but see *Rev. 11:9-13*]. Every tribe, nation, language, and race will worship anti-christian government and place their trust in it. Compare *Rev. 11:7*.

42 months. <sup>6</sup>It began to curse God, his name, the place where he lives, and all those who live in heaven. <sup>7</sup>It was allowed to fight against God's people and to defeat them, and it was given authority over every tribe, nation, language, and race. <sup>8</sup>All people living on earth will worship it, that is, everyone whose name has not been written, before the world was created, in the book of the living that belongs to the Lamb that was killed.

<sup>9</sup>"Listen, then, if you have ears to hear with! <sup>10</sup>Whoever is meant to be captured, will surely be captured; whoever is meant to be killed by the sword, will surely be killed by the sword. This calls for endurance and faith on the part of God's people."

<sup>11</sup>Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb's horns,

two months. He opened his <sup>6</sup> mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was <sup>7</sup> given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and <sup>8</sup> nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been recorded in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

He who has an ear, let <sup>9</sup> him hear.

If anyone is to go into cap- <sup>10</sup> tivity, into captivity he will go.

If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed.

This calls for patient endur-  
ance and faithfulness on the  
part of the saints.

#### The Beast out of the Earth

Then I saw another beast, <sup>11</sup> coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon.

8. *Before the world was created.* "God stands at the close of history and looks back on the future as though it had already happened!" He can know every choice which we will make, without interfering with our free will. Compare John 6:44-45; 2 Thess. 2:13-14.

9-10. *Whoever is meant to be.* Persecution is part of God's decree (Rev. 6:9-11; 1 Thess. 3:3). One who understands this will patiently bear his load, *expecting* to receive God's blessing! When the world used the "sword" against the messianic community, God himself will avenge them.

11. *Then I saw another beast.* The beast from the sea is the Devil's "hands." This beast from the earth is the Devil's "mind." *Like a lamb's horns.* This beast is the *false prophet* (Rev. 16:13; 19:20). Some have applied this specifically to the Roman church. This is a mistake. This second beast symbolizes all false religion and all false philosophy in every form during the entire Gospel Age. It is the Devil's counterfeit of the "true Lamb of God." It is not one individual, or one religion; but an *attitude*. [In the church of Christ itself, two different attitudes have struggled together since the very beginning. One "distorts" the Good News and leads away from God (see Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Thess. 2:7). The other points back to God's perfection. Men such as the apostles opposed any distortion of the teachings of Christ, and pointed all to the "perfect law that sets men free" (James 1:25).]



and it spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup>It used the vast authority of the first beast in its presence. It forced the earth and all who live on it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. <sup>13</sup>This second beast performed great miracles; it made fire come down out of heaven to earth, in the presence of all men. <sup>14</sup>And it deceived all the people living on earth by means of the miracles which it was allowed to perform in the presence of the first beast. The beast told all the people of the world to build an image in honor of the beast that had been wounded by the sword, and yet lived. <sup>15</sup>The second beast was allowed to breathe life into the image of the first beast, so that the image could talk and put to death all those who would not worship it. <sup>16</sup>The beast forced all men, small and great, rich and poor, slave and free, to have a mark placed on their right hands and on their foreheads. <sup>17</sup>No one could buy or sell unless he had this mark, that is, the beast's name or the number that stands for the name.

He exercised all the author- <sup>12</sup>  
ity of the first beast on his  
behalf, and made the earth  
and its inhabitants worship  
the first beast, whose fatal  
wound had been healed.  
And he performed great <sup>13</sup>  
miraculous signs, even caus-  
ing fire to come down from  
heaven to earth in full view  
of men. Because of the signs <sup>14</sup>  
he was given power to do on  
behalf of the first beast, he  
deceived the inhabitants of  
the earth. He ordered them  
to set up an image in honor  
of the beast who was wound-  
ed by the sword and yet  
lived. He was given power <sup>15</sup>  
to give breath to the image  
of the first beast, so that it  
could speak and cause all  
who refused to worship the  
image to be killed. He also <sup>16</sup>  
forced everyone, small and  
great, rich and poor, free  
and slave, to receive a mark  
on his right hand or on his  
forehead, so that no one <sup>17</sup>  
could buy or sell unless he  
had the mark, which is the  
name of the beast or the  
number of his name.

12. **It used the vast authority.** A union of "church and state." Anti-christian religion uses the power of anti-christian government. The Roman Empire and the heathen priest worked hand in hand to persecute the Christians.

13. **It made fire come down.** Tricks and false-miracles to "sell" people the State Religion. Also, since "fire" can symbolize the Holy Spirit, this can refer to what seem to be "outpourings of the Spirit." The Devil does not mind people being religious, just as long as he can turn them away from God. See *Matt. 24:24*. **To build an image.** This is "emperor worship" in all its forms. Compare note on *Rev. 2:13*. Images [idols, fetishes] were actually made in honor of the Roman Emperor, and worshiped. Whoever refused to bow down to the Emperor's fetish, or refused to say: "The emperor is Lord," was killed. *But this is symbolic of the new "corporate image" formed by the alliance of religion and government.*

15-16. **Allowed to breath life into the image.** We see the "unholy alliance" of anti-christian religion and anti-christian government working together to make slaves out of people. When people can be fooled into believing their *leader* [emperor, dictator, chariman, king, etc.] is a "god," they give themselves as willing slaves. The mark of the beast is the *spirit* of anti-christ (*1 John 2:18-19*) which shows itself in individuals by their "God-opposing, Christ-rejecting, persecuting attitude." Contrast this with the "seal" placed on the forehead of the believer (*Rev. 7:3*), symbolic of the "mind of Christ" (*Phil. 2:5*) which each one of the *saved* is to have. The believer has a *seal*, but the unbeliever has only a *mark*.

17. **No one could buy or sell.** See note on *Rev. 2:20*. Anti-christian powers discriminate against the believer who remains true to his Lord.

<sup>18</sup>This calls for wisdom. Whoever is intelligent can figure out the meaning of the number of the beast, because the number stands for a man's name. Its number is 666.

### The Song of the Redeemed

**14** Then I looked, and there was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion; with him were 144,000 people who have his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. <sup>2</sup>And I heard a voice from heaven that sounded like the roar of a mighty waterfall, like a loud peal of thunder. The voice I heard sounded like the music made by harpists playing their harps. <sup>3</sup>The 144,000 stood facing the throne, the four living creatures, and the elders. They sang a new song which only they, who had been redeemed from the earth, could learn. <sup>4</sup>They are the men who have kept themselves pure by not having sexual relations with women; they are virgins.

This calls for wisdom. If 18 anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.

### The Lamb and the 144,000

**14** Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the

18. Its number is 666. Not having our system of numbers, the ancients wrote numbers using letters of their alphabet. But almost any name can be added up to "666," if the letters are juggled enough. It may be that John intended this to represent the name of the Roman Emperor at that time. But since the number represents the beast's name, it is symbolic. 7 is perfect, 6 is one less than perfection. The church of Christ could be represented by 777, since it is perfect. The number of the beast is 666, *complete imperfection!* Christ's church does not terminate, but rises to Eternity to the "Feast in Heaven." The beast and the false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire (*Rev. 19:20*). Christ's church CANNOT fail! The beast has failed already! [Christians must think of themselves as being in *active rebellion* against Satan and all who follow him. See *Eph. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; Phil. 2:12-16.*]

*In the last chapter, we saw Satan introduce two agents in his battle against God's people. But he had already lost, even before he began. This chapter shows the TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH!*

1-5. **The Lamb standing on Mount Zion.** "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion" (*Psalms 125:1*) Compare *Heb. 12:22*; and see note on *Rev. 7:9*. 144,000. This is clearly a symbolic number. Note that they are all: men (males); unmarried; virgins; faultless. The voice John hears sing the new song is theirs. It *sounded like*: the roar of a waterfall; a loud peal of thunder; harpists playing. It is a *new song* that omits the *trivial* and the *trite*. It sings of a **NEW EXPERIENCE!** This song is about the *new experience* of those who have been "bought for God" (*Rev. 5:9*). Only those who have been *set free* by the imputed righteousness of Christ (*Rom. 8:4*) can understand the meaning of this. They have chosen to follow Christ and have kept themselves pure from sin (*James 1:27*). Therefore only those who have been **REDEEMED** from earth can learn this new song! [Avoid taking verse 4a literally! Read what Paul says in *1 Tim. 4:1-5.*] **From the rest of mankind.** They were *bought for God* out of the rest of the people. The first fruits are for God, and Satan takes all the other. *The Harvest of the Earth* is pictured in the last part of this chapter.

They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been redeemed from the rest of mankind and are the first ones to be offered to God and to the Lamb. <sup>5</sup>They have never been known to lie; they are faultless.

### The Three Angels

<sup>6</sup>Then I saw another angel flying high in the air, with an eternal message of Good News to announce to the peoples of the earth, to every race, tribe, language, and nation. <sup>7</sup>He said in a loud voice, "Fear God, and praise his greatness! For the time has come for him to judge mankind. Worship him who made heaven, earth, sea, and the springs of water!"

<sup>8</sup>A second angel followed the first one, saying, "She has fallen! Great Babylon has fallen! She gave her wine to all peoples, and made them drink it—the strong wine of her immoral lust!"

<sup>9</sup>A third angel followed the first two saying in a loud voice, "Whoever worships the beast and its image, and receives the mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup>will himself drink God's wine, the wine of his anger, which he has poured at full strength into the cup of his wrath! All who do

Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless. 5

### The Three Angels

Then I saw another angel 6 flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, 7 "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

A second angel followed 8 and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries."

A third angel followed 9 them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, 10 too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be

6-7. **Then I saw another angel.** The three angels of this section belong together. Their mission is to warn of impending doom, and to call mankind to "fear God and praise his greatness!" This is *one mission*, because the warning is also a call. God wants all mankind to turn to him! **Fear God.** All mankind is **ALREADY LOST!** No one can escape, who continues in unbelief! The Good News is that God has acted in history through Christ, and that all can now turn to him and be saved!

8. **A second angel.** The angel identifies Babylon, the third of Satan's agents. Babylon symbolizes the world as a center of anti-christian seduction [the glamour, glitter, romance, etc., which leads many to "sell their soul" because they are in love with this present world (2 Tim. 4:10)]. Babylon is described more completely in chapters 17-19. **She has fallen!** So certain is the destruction of Babylon, that the angel uses the "historic future" to speak of the event as though it had already happened! This is a warning to all who love *this world!* The "*strong wine of her immoral lust*" brings only death! The Good News is that Jesus offers a way to escape the Wrath of Judgment!

9-11. **Whoever worships the beast and its image.** "If your choice is to worship Satan, you must expect to share his doom." Since hell is a place of spirits, symbolic language is used to describe the **TORMENT** that is really *indescribable!* The fact that never-ending punishment will be the fate of those who hate the Lord and persecute his church, should help strengthen the believer to go on being faithful to the

this will be tormented in fire and sulfur before the holy angels and the Lamb. <sup>11</sup>The smoke of the fire that torments them goes up forever and ever. There is no relief, day or night, for those who worship the beast and its image, for anyone who has the mark of its name."

<sup>12</sup>This calls for endurance on the part of God's people, those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to Jesus.

<sup>13</sup>Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Happy are the dead who from now on die in the service of the Lord!"

"Certainly so," answers the Spirit. "They will enjoy rest from their hard work, because the results of their service go with them."

### The Harvest of the Earth

<sup>14</sup>Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was a being who looked like a man, with a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. <sup>15</sup>Then another angel went out from the temple and cried out in a loud voice to the one who was sitting on the cloud, "Use your sickle and reap the harvest, because the right time has come; the earth is ripe for the

tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of <sup>11</sup> their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." This calls for patient <sup>12</sup> endurance on the part of the saints who keep God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.

Then I heard a voice from <sup>13</sup> heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

### The Harvest of the Earth

I looked, and there before <sup>14</sup> me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel <sup>15</sup> came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the

Lord. [It often looks like the Devil has it all on his side, and that he is winning. But you cannot sin and get away with it! "Pay-day" will come! If you *keep the faith*, you CANNOT lose!]

12-13. **Happy are the dead!** One of the "beatitudes" of Revelation. [See note on *Rev. 19:9*.] Those who endure are **HAPPY!** [*Happy*: no word exactly translates *MAKARIOS*. It shows *extreme happiness!*] "Suffering Christian, you may have it hard now, but don't let it discourage you!" "*And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble*" (2 *Cor. 4:17*).

14. **Then I looked.** We come again to the Final Judgment. We see a two-part harvest. **Who looked like a man.** This is Jesus. Compare note on *Rev. 1:13*. He wears a crown of gold, not thorns. The cloud symbolizes *judgment*. The sharp sickle in his hand symbolizes *harvest*.

15-16. **Use your sickle.** This is Christ's harvest. Those symbolized by this are the first-fruits [the

harvest!" <sup>16</sup>Then the one who sat on the cloud swung his sickle on the earth, and the earth's harvest was reaped.

<sup>17</sup>Then I saw another angel come out of the temple in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

<sup>18</sup>Then another angel, who is in charge of the fire, came from the altar. He shouted in a loud voice to the angel who had the sharp sickle, "Use your sickle, and cut the grapes from the vineyard of the earth, because the grapes are ripe!"

<sup>19</sup>So the angel swung his sickle on the earth, cut the grapes from the vine, and threw them into the winepress of God's great anger. <sup>20</sup>The grapes were squeezed out in the winepress outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress in a flood 200 miles long and about five feet deep.

### The Angels with the Last Plagues

**15** Then I saw another mysterious sight in the sky, great and amazing. There were seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last ones, because they are the final expression of God's wrath.

earth is ripe." So he that <sup>16</sup> was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

Another angel came out <sup>17</sup> of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Still another angel, who had <sup>18</sup> charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." The angel swung his sickle on the earth, <sup>19</sup> gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in <sup>20</sup> the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horse's bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.

### Seven Angels With Seven Plagues

**15** I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed.

144,000 mentioned in the first section of this chapter] of earth. **Swung his sickle on the earth.** The first harvest is all the redeemed, that is, all who have reached out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make themselves part of it. [See notes on *Acts 2:37-38*.] Compare *Matt. 3:12; 1 Thess. 4:16-17*. The Church Militant becomes the Church Triumphant! See notes on *Rev. 7:9*.

**17-20. Then I saw another angel.** This angel destroys all the unbelievers of earth. [This does not mean annihilation.] **He shouted in a loud voice.** Still another angel shouts to the destroying angel. These are God's orders: "Use your sickle." **Cut the grapes from the vine.** The vine symbolizes the great crowds of evil men who repudiate God. The grapes symbolize the individual unbelievers. **The grapes were squeezed out.** These who would not believe are crushed in the winepress of God's wrath. The blood comes out in a flood 200 miles long and about five feet deep to show the completeness of God's judgment of the earth. [I understand both harvests to take place at the same time. Compare *Matt. 13:36-43; 25:31-33*.]

**Christ's Final Wrath. Chapters 15-16** (*Rom. 2:5*)

*This is the fifth parallel section. The central idea is: "God will not tolerate sinful men forever." It once again begins with Christ's First Coming.* "But the wicked, with actions and words, have called death to themselves, and thinking it a friend, have made an agreement with it, because they choose to be part of it."

**1. Then I saw another mysterious sight in the sky.** Again and again we see a cycle of events in Revelation - the cycle of the church. The Holy Spirit produces faith in the hearts of people through the preach-

<sup>2</sup>Then I saw what looked like a sea of glass, mixed with fire. I also saw those who had won the victory over the beast and its image, and over the one whose name is given by a number. They were standing by the sea of glass, holding harps that God had given them. <sup>3</sup>They were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

"Lord, God Almighty,  
how great and wonderful are your  
deeds!  
King of all nations,  
how right and true are your ways!  
Who will not fear you, Lord?  
Who will refuse to declare your great-  
ness?  
You alone are holy.  
All the nations will come  
and worship before you,  
because your righteous deeds are seen  
by all."

And I saw what looked like <sup>2</sup>  
a sea of glass mixed with  
fire and, standing beside the  
sea, those who had been  
victorious over the beast and  
his image and over the num-  
ber of his name. They held  
harps given them by God  
and sang the song of Moses,  
the servant of God, and the  
song of the Lamb: <sup>3</sup>

"Great and marvelous are  
your deeds,  
Lord God Almighty.  
Just and true are your  
ways,  
King of the ages.  
Who will not fear you, O <sup>4</sup>  
Lord,  
and bring glory to your  
name?  
For you alone are holy.  
All nations will come  
and worship before you,  
for your righteous acts  
have been revealed."

ing of the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free. Those who believe and are baptized (*Acts 2:41*) are added to the *group* [the church: the messianic community]. The Devil fights against them through human agents, and we see that again and again, the church is persecuted [*chapters 4-7*]. We see God again and again send warning-judgments against the persecuting world [*chapters 8-11*], but these people do not repent. [Some few do.] This constant warfare between the *world* and the *church* points to the deeper conflict between the "child of the woman" [Christ] and the Dragon [*chapters 12-14*]. But, when the Trumpets of Warning fail to produce repentance, and wicked men fail to turn to God, *what then?* Will God close his eyes to it all until the Judgment??? *Chapters 15-16* answer this. Whenever in our world, wicked men ignore the Trumpets of Warning, the Bowls of God's Wrath are poured out! These are the Last Plagues! Death plunges these rebels, who will not accept forgiveness, into the hands of an angry God! [Notice that the *same event* may be a *Seal* to the believer; a *Trumpet of Warning* to the wicked; and a *Bowl of Wrath* to the rebel.]

**2. Then I saw what looked like a sea of glass.** Before John tells us about the Bowls of Wrath, he shows us the Church Triumphant in eternity. The sea of glass, mixed with fire, symbolizes *God's transparent righteousness*. "Because your righteous deeds are seen by all." His wrath against the rebels is righteous (see *Rev. 18:4-8*). I also saw those who had won the victory. Notice God gave them the harps they hold, symbolic of God giving the victory to his faithful servants.

**3-4. They were singing the song of Moses.** A song of victory and triumph! Read it in *Exod. 15:1-19*. Did not God send Trumpets of Warning again and again, pleading with the wicked to turn away from their sin??? By refusing God's mercy, they have "brought on themselves" God's Bowls of Wrath! After the Judgment, the Church Triumphant will clearly see that this is true, and they will praise God for his just punishments on the rebels.

<sup>5</sup>After this I saw the temple in heaven open, with the tent of God's presence in it. <sup>6</sup>The seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple; they were dressed in clean shining linen, and had gold bands tied around their chests. <sup>7</sup>Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven gold bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. <sup>8</sup>The temple was filled with smoke from the glory and power of God, and no one could go into the temple until the end of the seven plagues brought by the seven angels.

### The Bowls of God's Wrath

**16** Then I heard a loud voice speaking from the temple to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth!"

After this I looked and in 5  
heaven the temple, that is, 6  
the tabernacle of testimony, 7  
was opened. Out of the tem- 8  
ple came the seven angels 9  
with the seven plagues. They 10  
were dressed in clean, shin- 11  
ing linen and wore golden 12  
sashes around their chests. 13  
Then one of the four living 14  
creatures gave to the seven 15  
angels seven golden bowls 16  
filled with the wrath of God, 17  
who lives for ever and ever. 18  
And the temple was filled 19  
with smoke from the glory 20  
of God and from his power, 21  
and no one could enter the 22  
temple until the seven 23  
plagues of the seven angels 24  
were completed. 25

### The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath

**16** Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth."

5. **After this I saw the temple in heaven open.** The temple is opened and the tent of God's presence shown. This tells us that the wrath which we are about to see is God's wrath.

6. **The seven angels.** These angels come out of the temple. The way they are dressed shows they are God's angels.

7. **Then one of the four living creatures.** One of the cherubim (see note on *Rev. 4:6*). The bowls are gold (symbolic of God's service) and they are full (showing fierceness). The time for mercy is past. Those who have rejected Christ's sacrifice will feel the full weight of God's wrath.

8. **The temple was filled with smoke.** Symbolic of the complete and thorough action of God's wrath. [Compare *Isa. 6:4; 14:31; Psalm 14:1; 18:8.*] **No one could go into the temple.** God's wrath has closed the door of mercy. No one can "plead with God" for the rebels who are about to be punished. Compare *1 John 5:16*. [This does not mean God has closed the doors to the church of Christ. Those doors were opened that Pentecost, and will not be closed until Christ's Second Coming. But those who rebel against God Almighty finally reach a place where they have used up all their opportunities. Then there is nothing left at all, but the certain vengeance of the Lord.]

1. **Go and pour out the seven bowls.** This is God's authorization for what follows. [The Bowls of Wrath are a lot like the plagues sent on Egypt (see *Exodus chapters 7-10*); and they parallel the Trumpets of Warning (*Rev. ch 8-9*). The first Trumpet (*Rev. 8:7*) affects the *earth*; so does the first Bowl (*Rev. 16:2*). The second Trumpet affects the *sea*; so does the second Bowl. The third Trumpet affects the *rivers*; likewise the third Bowl. The fourth both affect the *sun*. The fifth the pit of the *abyss* or the *throne of the beast*. The sixth the *river Euphrates*. The seventh brings in the Second Coming and the end of the world.]

<sup>2</sup>The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth. Terrible and painful sores appeared on those who had the mark of the beast, and on those who had worshiped its image.

<sup>3</sup>Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea. The water became like the blood of a dead person, and every living creature in the sea died.

<sup>4</sup>Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water, and they turned into blood. <sup>5</sup>I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, "You are righteous in these judgments you have made, O Holy One, who is and who was! <sup>6</sup>They poured out the blood of God's people and of the prophets, and so you have given them blood to drink. They are getting what they deserve!" <sup>7</sup>Then I heard a voice from the altar saying, "Lord, God Almighty! True and righteous indeed are your judgments!"

<sup>8</sup>Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to burn men with its fiery heat. <sup>9</sup>Men were burned by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God, who has authority over these plagues. But they would not turn from their sins and praise his greatness.

The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.

The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died.

The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say:

"You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged;

For they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve."

And I heard the altar respond:

"Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."

The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.

**2. Poured out his bowl on the earth.** Disease (such as Acts 12:21-23); land disasters in general (see note on Rev. 8:7). Note that the Trumpets affect only a third of the earth; but the Bowls affect the whole earth!

**3. Poured out his bowl on the sea.** All disasters which involve the sea. (See note on Rev. 8:8.)

**4. Poured out his bowl on the rivers.** All disasters which come from the land waters. (See note on Rev. 8:10.)

**5-7. I heard the angel.** He declares the justice of what God is doing! God's people have cried out for vengeance (Rev. 6:9-11); and God heard them and promised to answer these prayers (Rev. 8:1-5).

**8-9. Poured out his bowl on the sun.** The fourth Trumpet brings the heavens themselves as tools to be used against the enemies of Christ's church! (See note on Rev. 8:12.) Some think Deut. 28:20-22 applies here, and that man's cruelty to each other is included in this.



<sup>10</sup>Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast. Darkness fell over the beast's kingdom, and men bit their tongues because of their pain, <sup>11</sup>and they cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they did not turn from their evil ways.

<sup>12</sup>Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. The river dried up, to provide a way for the kings who come from the east. <sup>13</sup>Then I saw three unclean spirits, that looked like frogs, coming out of the mouth of the dragon, the mouth of the beast, and the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup>They are the spirits of demons that perform miracles. These three spirits go out to the kings over the whole earth, to bring them together for the war on the great day of Almighty God.

<sup>15</sup>"Listen! I am coming like a thief! Happy is he who stays awake and takes care of his clothing, so that he will not walk around naked and be ashamed in public!"

<sup>16</sup>Then the spirits brought the kings together in the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

The fifth angel poured out <sup>10</sup> his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God <sup>11</sup> of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

The sixth angel poured <sup>12</sup> out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east. Then I saw <sup>13</sup> three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are <sup>14</sup> spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

"Behold, I come like a <sup>15</sup> thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

Then they gathered the <sup>16</sup> kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

10-11. **Poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast.** This shows the incredible cruelty of man to each other. Governments fall! Political chaos brings economic depression! The throne of the beast is the center of anti-christian government. When Assyria falls, or Babylon, or Rome, the whole universe of the ungodly seems to crash down around them! Compare notes on *Rev. 9:6; Matt. 24:21*.

12-14. **Poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates.** The sixth Trumpet introduces war in general (see notes on *Rev. 9:14*). Here the Bowl brings us to Armageddon. See notes on *Rev. 11:4-10*. These verses are a picture-symbol. The river represents the wicked world. The unclean spirits look like frogs to show their hideous, repulsive nature. They represent the power and influence of hell introduced into the thoughts and actions of mankind. The kings from the east and the kings over the whole earth come together to war against the messianic community - MOTIVATED by hell itself! The central idea is Satan and the powers of hell at work in our world. But God uses the horror that war brings to warn the ungodly (Trumpet) and to punish the rebel (Bowl). Satan uses war in his attempt to destroy God's people. In the continuing cycle of Armageddon, Satan destroys his own followers by forcing them to fight against God and his church. Compare *2 Kings 19:32-36*, which is the "picture" of the final Armageddon. That final Armageddon comes just before the Second Coming. Therefore the sixth bowl is Armageddon, and the seventh bowl is the Day of Judgment. The events of the first six bowls repeat again and again, but reach their final form just before and in connection with the Last Day.

15-16. **Listen! I am coming like a thief!** At the peak of Satan's effort, Christ suddenly appears! Compare *Rev. 20:9*. The ungodly will be caught "naked" by this! As the kings come to Armageddon, the seventh bowl is poured out.

<sup>17</sup>Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl in the air. A loud voice came from the throne in the temple, saying, "It is done!" <sup>18</sup>There were flashes of lightning, sounds, peals of thunder, and a terrible earthquake. There never has been such an earthquake since the creation of man; this was the worst earthquake of all! <sup>19</sup>The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of all countries were destroyed. God remembered great Babylon, and made her drink the wine from his cup—the wine of his furious wrath. <sup>20</sup>All the islands disappeared, all the mountains vanished. <sup>21</sup>Great stones of hail, each weighing as much as a hundred pounds, fell from the sky on men. And men cursed God because of the plague of hail, because it was such a terrible plague.

### The Great Prostitute

**17** Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came to me and said, "Come

The seventh angel poured 17  
out his bowl into the air, and  
out of the temple came a  
loud voice from the throne,  
saying, "It is done!" Then 18  
there came flashes of light-  
ning, rumblings, peals of  
thunder and a severe earth-  
quake. No earthquake like it  
has ever occurred since man  
has been on earth, so tre-  
mendous was the quake.  
The great city split into three 19  
parts, and the cities of the  
nations collapsed. God re-  
membered Babylon the  
Great and gave her the cup  
filled with the wine of the  
fury of his wrath. Every 20  
island fled away and the  
mountains could not be  
found. From the sky huge 21  
hailstones of about a hun-  
dred pounds each fell upon  
men. And they cursed God  
on account of the plague of  
hail, because the plague was  
so terrible.

### The Woman on the Beast

**17** One of the seven  
angels who had the

17. Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl in the air. Satan's last effort at crushing God's people ends before it has any chance of succeeding, as the seventh bowl brings the Judgement. **It is done!** God's decree has been carried out. The work is complete. The seventh bowl brings our world of *time* to an end. 18-21. **There were flashes of lightning.** These verses are symbolic of the *horror* of Judgment. The final collapse of Babylon is a crushing blow to all who have the mark of the beast. The earth breaking to pieces and the huge hail stones are part of the picture. The central idea is that in the final Judgment, the entire empire of evil is to be destroyed! As the great stones of hail fall *from the sky*, they symbolize the complete wrath of God directed against all the ungodly (see *Jude 14-16*). But even as they stand on the brink of hell, these ungodly rebels curse God and blaspheme him!

**Christ and the Fall of Babylon. Chapters 17-19 (1 John 2:17)**

*This is the sixth parallel section. The central idea is: "The world and everything in it that men desire is passing away." We once again return to the First Coming. Chapter 17 shows the nature and history of the prostitute; chapter 18 shows the inevitable, complete, irrevocable downfall and ruin of her; chapter 19 shows heaven celebrating God's victory over the prostitute.*

1. **Come, and I will show you.** So far five enemies of Christ have been introduced to us: the dragon (Satan); the beast from the sea (anti-christian government); the beast from the earth, who is the false prophet (anti-christian religion and philosophy); the prostitute Babylon (anti-christian seduction); and the men who have the mark of the beast (who are rebels against God). We saw the doom of those who have the mark of the beast in *chapters 15 & 16*. We will see the doom of Babylon in *Rev. 18:2*; the doom of the sea beast and the false prophet (earth beast) in *Rev. 19:20*; and the doom of the dragon (Satan) in *Rev. 20:10*. **How the great prostitute is to be punished.** Note that she is a prostitute, not an adulteress! She is not an *apostate church*, but rather *the world* as it symbolizes **LUXURY, VICE, and GLAMOUR (1 John 2:16)**.

and I will show you how the great prostitute is to be punished, that great city that is built near many rivers. <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth committed immorality with the great prostitute, and the people of the world became drunk from drinking the wine of her immorality."

<sup>3</sup>The Spirit took control of me, and the angel carried me to a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a red beast that had wicked names written all over it; the beast had seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup>The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and covered with gold ornaments, precious stones, and pearls. In her hand she held a gold cup full of obscene and filthy things, the result of her immorality. <sup>5</sup>On her forehead was written a name that has a secret meaning: "The Great Babylon, mother of all prostitutes and perverts of the world." <sup>6</sup>And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's people, and the blood of those who were killed because they had been loyal to Jesus.

When I saw her I was completely amazed.

seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."

Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names, and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead:

MYSTERY  
BABYLON THE GREAT  
THE MOTHER OF  
PROSTITUTES AND OF THE  
ABOMINATIONS OF  
THE EARTH

I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was

2. **Committed Immorality.** The whole world is an idol to those who do not have the right attitude toward God. Industry, commerce, art, culture, and all the other such things can be used by the Devil to seduce people, even believers, and turn them away from God. Two people can live side by side in the same house, and look out upon two completely different worlds!

3-6. **There I saw a woman sitting on a red beast.** These verses form a picture-symbol. The red beast is the sea-beast of Rev. 13:1. It is the governments of the world as the center or focus of the spirit of persecution. The woman sits on this beast - the two work together. But do not identify this woman with the woman of Rev. 12. The two are enemies!!! This picture-symbol paints a lurid picture of those, who like Judas, sell out the Lord for *thirty pieces of silver*. This "selling out" of the Lord and persecuting his people go hand-in-hand. We said Babylon symbolizes *anti-christian seduction*. The gold cup invites you to drink, and implies something of great value. But it is full of obscene and filthy things. Some things are evil in themselves, and other things which are good can be used in evil ways. The gold cup symbolizes everything as it is used to separate people from God. Compare note on Rev. 18:4.

7 "Why are you amazed?" the angel asked me. "I will tell you the secret meaning of the woman and of the beast that carries her, the beast with seven heads and ten horns. 8 The beast you saw was once alive, but lives no longer; it is about to come up from the abyss and will go off to be destroyed. The people living on earth whose names have not been written, before the world was created, in the book of the living, will all be amazed as they look at the beast. It was once alive, now it no longer lives, but it will reappear.

9 "This calls for wisdom and understanding. The seven heads are seven hills, the hills that the woman sits on. They are also seven kings: 10 five of them have fallen, one still rules, and the other one has not yet come; when he comes he must remain only a little while. 11 And the beast that was once alive, but lives no longer, is itself an eighth king who belongs to the first seven and goes off to be destroyed.

greatly astonished. Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.

9 "This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five 10 have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. 11 The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.

7-8. **I will tell you the secret meaning.** The woman sits on the red beast (*verse 3*), and they are one in *purpose and intent*. Worldly people drink the wine of her immorality and experience her pleasures; and the world as a center of persecution works in close cooperation with the world as the center of luxury, anti-christian culture and pleasure. Both Babylon and the beast are "past, present, and future." Their *form* changes; their *substance* stays the same. Babylon will be destroyed and the beast will go off to be destroyed, but not until both have fooled all who do not have their name written in the book-of the living. See *Rev. 13:8*.

9-11. **The seven heads are seven hills.** Note that both the beast and Babylon ARE IN EXISTENCE as John writes this! The seven hills clearly speak of Rome, as *verse 18* also shows. Imperial Rome, center of the Empire. John sees this city filled with glamour, romance, appeal - all the things to attract kings and rulers. It was *insane* in its search for pleasure. Christians were torn to pieces to please the crowds. The prostitute was drunk with the blood of God's people (*verse 6*). **They are also seven kings.** The five who have fallen and the one who still rules can be fit into history. Old Babylonia, Assyria, New Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greco-Macedonia - have all fallen. Rome still ruled, as John wrote this. The seventh king/kingdom which will remain only a little while is not so easy to identify with history. *Johnson* thinks it was the Eastern Roman Empire as it was revived by Justinian in the early part of the sixth century. Others identify this with Constantine the Great; still others with the Germanic nations that conquered Rome. Perhaps this seventh king/kingdom is symbolic of *all* the anti-christian world powers that will oppress God's people until the time of the Second Coming. **Is itself an eighth king.** The beast itself is the final form of world power, who will be destroyed by Christ's Second Coming. Compare *2 Thess. 2:8*. Again we say that the *forms* change but the *substance* stays the same. The beast seems to revive after every defeat (*verse 8*) but always goes off to be destroyed.

<sup>12</sup>“The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet begun to rule, but who will be given authority to rule as kings for one hour with the beast. <sup>13</sup>These ten all have the same purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. <sup>14</sup>They will fight against the Lamb; but the Lamb, and his called, chosen, and faithful followers with him, will defeat them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings.”

<sup>15</sup>The angel also said to me, “The waters you saw, on which the prostitute sits, are nations, peoples, races, and languages. <sup>16</sup>The ten horns you saw, and the beast, will hate the prostitute; they will take away everything she has and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and destroy her with fire. <sup>17</sup>For God placed in their hearts the desire to carry out his purpose, by acting with one accord and giving to the beast their power to rule, until God’s words come true.

<sup>18</sup>“The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

“The ten horns you saw 12  
are ten kings who have not  
yet received a kingdom, but  
who for one hour will receive  
authority as kings along with  
the beast. They have one 13  
purpose and will give their  
power and authority to the  
beast. They will make war 14  
against the Lamb, but the  
Lamb will overcome them  
because he is Lord of  
lords and King of kings—  
and with him will be his  
called, chosen and faith-  
ful followers.”

Then the angel said to 15  
me, “The waters you saw,  
where the prostitute sits, are  
peoples, multitudes, nations  
and languages. The beast 16  
and the ten horns you saw  
will hate the prostitute. They  
will bring her to ruin and  
leave her naked; they will eat  
her flesh and burn her with  
fire. For God has put it into 17  
their hearts to accomplish  
his purpose by agreeing to  
give the beast their power to  
rule, until God’s words are  
fulfilled. The woman you 18  
saw is the great city that  
rules over the kings of the  
earth.”

**12-14. The ten horns.** The ten “horn-kings” who “rule as kings for one hour with the beast” symbolize all the important and influential men of every activity [art, education, commerce, industry, government, etc.] to the degree that they serve the central authority. Their goal is to honor themselves, and to do this they give their power and authority to the beast to help it fight against Christ and his church. See verse 14. But the Lamb and his followers constantly defeat every form of anti-christian power. It may not seem that way on the surface of things, but just when the beast seems to be winning, his doom is already there.

**15-17. For God placed in their hearts.** The prostitute sits on the waters, which symbolize the nations, peoples, races and languages - that are always working to oppose the church of Christ. The world in general, especially the great men of influence, drink from her gold cup and become drunk with the wine of her immorality. They carry her and give themselves to everything she has to offer. But the world, in a sense, destroys itself. The very people who make up the “anti-christian world” hate the prostitute and utterly destroy her. God is using these very rebels as his own agents. They give their power to the beast, until God’s words come true. Then they turn on her and destroy her, but it is too late! They are punished by the results of their own foolishness. Compare Judas, as he throws down the thirty pieces of silver and goes out to hang himself. Compare Matt. 4:8-10 and notes.

**18. Is the great city.** Rome. See verse 9.

### The Fall of Babylon

**18** After this I saw another angel coming down out of heaven. He had great authority, and his splendor brightened the whole earth. <sup>2</sup>He cried out in a loud voice, "She has fallen! Great Babylon has fallen! She is now haunted by demons and unclean spirits; all kinds of filthy and hateful birds live in her. <sup>3</sup>For she gave her wine to all peoples and made them drink it—the strong wine of her immoral lust. The kings of the earth committed immorality with her, and the businessmen of the world grew rich from her unrestrained lust."

"Then I heard another voice from heaven, saying,

"Come out, my people! Come out from her!

You must not take part in her sins;  
you must not share her punishments!

### The Fall of Babylon

**18** After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice he shouted: 2

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!

She has become a home for demons

and a haunt for every evil spirit,

a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird.

For all the nations have drunk 3

the maddening wine of her adulteries.

The kings of the earth committed adultery with her,

and the merchants of the earth grew rich

from her excessive luxuries."

Then I heard another voice 4  
from heaven say:

"Come out of her, my people,

so that you will not share in her sins,

so that you will not receive any of her plagues;

The Prostitute is "The Great Babylon" - the symbol of anti-christian seduction [the glamour, romance, and appeal of this world (*1 John 2:15-17*)], at any moment of history. "Babylon" is the world as a center of industry, commerce, art, culture, etc. A **WRONG ATTITUDE** toward these things (compare *1 Tim. 6:10*) will cause a person to turn away from God. Babylon's **FALL** happens again and again throughout history, but perhaps the fall of the last Babylon [Babylon in its final form?] will be simultaneous with the Second Coming of Christ. [Anti-christian religion is symbolized by the False Prophet.]

1-3. **After this I saw another angel.** Angels are sent to announce God's decree, and to carry out his work. **Great Babylon has fallen!** Compare *Isa. 21:9; Jer. 50:2; 51:8*. The angel uses the "historic future" to speak of Babylon's coming fall as though it had already happened. The emptiness and desolation of "fallen Babylon" is described in the last half of *verse 2*. (Compare *Isa. 13:20-22; Jer. 50:39, 45; 51:37, 42; Zeph. 2:14*.) *Verse 3* gives the reason for Babylon's fall. [It is a paradox that this present world is both a blessing and a curse, serving both God and the Devil. What it is to you will be determined by your attitude toward it (*1 Tim. 6:10*).]

4. **Come out, my people.** Notice that God has people living in Babylon. God's people in all ages are commanded to *come out of Babylon*. (Compare *Isa. 48:20; 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:54; Zech. 2:7; 2 Cor. 2:16-18*.) Since Babylon is the World, as a center of *seduction*, God's people in all ages live right in the middle of it. To "come out" is to be pure from her sins. [Some have misunderstood this call to "come out," and dropped out of society and hidden themselves away. But the Apostles and early Christians did not do this. They continued to be an active part of society, working to turn people to Jesus Christ -

<sup>5</sup> For her sins are piled up as high as heaven, and God remembers her wicked ways.	for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.	5
<sup>6</sup> Treat her exactly as she has treated you; pay her back twice as much as she has done.	Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done.	6
Fill her cup with a drink twice as strong as the drink she prepared for you.	Mix her a double portion from her own cup.	
<sup>7</sup> Give her as much suffering and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. For she keeps telling herself: 'Here I sit, a queen! I am no widow, I will never know grief!'	Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.'	7
<sup>8</sup> Because of this her plagues will all strike her in one day, disease, grief, and famine. And she will be burned with fire, because the Lord God, who judges her, is mighty."	Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.	8
<sup>9</sup> The kings of the earth who shared her im- morality and lust will cry and weep over the city when they see the smoke of her burning.	"When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her.	9
<sup>10</sup> They stand a long way off, because they are afraid of her suffering, and say, "How terrible! How awful! This great and mighty city Babylon! In just one hour you have been punished!"	Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: 'Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!'	10

which then "changes the world" for that person. "When anyone is joined to Christ he is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

5. **And God remembers her wicked ways.** It may look like God has forgotten, but he has not!

6. **Pay her back twice as much.** She deserves what she will receive!

7. **For she keeps telling herself.** In the vision, Babylon is proud and arrogant. (Compare Isa. 14:13-14; 47:8; Jer. 50:29.)

8. **Because of this.** Because she is proud and boastful, her plagues will all strike her in one day (symbolic of sudden, complete destruction). The Lord God, whom she has opposed, is very strong!

9-10. **The kings of the earth.** The kings (men of influence) cry and weep when they see her destroyed. They shared her immorality and enjoyed her luxuries. Notice they stand a *long way off* because they are afraid.

<sup>11</sup>The businessmen of the earth also cry and mourn for her because no one buys their goods any longer; <sup>12</sup>no one buys their gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls; their goods of linen, purple cloth, silk, and scarlet; all kinds of rare woods, and all kind of objects made of ivory and of expensive wood, of bronze, iron, and marble; <sup>13</sup>and cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, and frankincense; wine and oil, flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and carriages, slaves and even men's souls. <sup>14</sup>The businessmen say to her, "All the good things you longed to own have disappeared, and all your wealth and glamor are gone, and you will never find them again!" <sup>15</sup>The businessmen, who became rich from doing business in that city, will stand a long way off, because they are afraid of her suffering. They will cry and mourn, <sup>16</sup>and say, "How terrible! How awful for the great city! She used to dress herself in linen, purple, and scarlet, and cover herself with gold ornaments, precious stones, and pearls!" <sup>17</sup>And in one hour she has lost all this wealth!"

All the ship captains and passengers, the sailors and all others who earn their living on the sea, stood a long way off, <sup>18</sup>and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "There never

"The merchants of the 11  
earth will weep and mourn  
over her because no one buys  
their cargoes any more—  
cargoes of gold, silver, pre- 12  
cious stones and pearls; fine  
linen, purple, silk and scar-  
let cloth; every sort of citron  
wood, and articles of every  
kind made of ivory, costly  
wood, bronze, iron and mar-  
ble; cargoes of cinnamon 13  
and spice, of incense, myrrh  
and frankincense, of wine  
and olive oil, of fine flour  
and wheat; cattle and sheep;  
horses and carriages; and  
bodies and souls of men.

"They will say, 'The fruit 14  
you longed for is gone from  
you. All your riches and  
splendor have vanished,  
never to be recovered.' The 15  
merchants who sold these  
things and gained their  
wealth from her will stand  
far off, terrified at her tor-  
ment. They will weep and  
mourn and cry out: 16

'Woe! Woe, O great city,  
dressed in fine linen, pur-  
ple and scarlet,  
and glittering with gold,  
precious stones  
and pearls!

In one hour such great 17  
wealth has been  
brought to ruin!

"Every sea captain, and all  
who travel by ship, the sail-  
ors, and all who earn their  
living from the sea, will stand  
far off. When they see the 18  
smoke of her burning, they  
will exclaim, 'Was there ever  
a city like this great city?'

11-16. **The businessmen of the earth.** The businessmen cry and mourn, because their goods have suddenly become worthless! Most of the list of goods are luxuries for a pleasure-mad world! These include *slaves and even men's souls*. Fortunes have been made through the "seduction of the world." Notice these businessmen stand *long way off* because they are afraid.

17-19. **All the ship captains.** Those who make their fortune by the sea (exporters, importers, fishermen, pearl-divers, etc.). They throw dust on their heads as a sign of sorrow and grief. **And in one hour she has lost everything.** Babylon's fall happens again and again throughout history. The fall of Babylon brings economic chaos! The unbeliever has built his trust and his hope on the things which Babylon symbolizes (the luxuries and pleasures of this world). The world, as it is now, changes (*1 Cor. 7:29-31*). The wicked trust only in material things, and, when Babylon falls, they fall with it! (*Compare Luke 12:16-21.*)



has been another city like the great city!"<sup>19</sup> They threw dust on their heads, they cried and mourned, saying, "How terrible! How awful for the great city! She is the city where all who have ships sailing the seas become rich on her wealth! And in one hour she has lost everything!"

<sup>20</sup>Be glad, heaven, because of her destruction! Be glad, God's people, and the apostles and prophets! Because God has judged her for what she did to you!

<sup>21</sup>Then a mighty angel picked up a stone the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "This is how the great city Babylon will be thrown down with violence, and will never be seen again. <sup>22</sup>The music of harpists and musicians, of players of the flute and the trumpet, will never be heard in you again! No workman in any trade will ever be found in you again; and the sound of the millstone will be heard no more! <sup>23</sup>Never again will the light of a lamp be seen in you; no more will the voices of bride and groom be heard in you. Your businessmen were the most powerful in all the world, and with your false magic you deceived all the people of the world!"

They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out:

'Woe! Woe, O great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth!

In one hour she has been brought to ruin!

Rejoice over her, O heaven!

Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you.'

Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said:

'With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.

The music of harpists and musicians,

flute-players and trumpeters,

will never be heard in you again.

No workman of any trade will ever be found in you again.

The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again.

The light of a lamp will never shine in you again.

The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again.

Your merchants were the world's great men,

By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.

20. **Be glad!** The world makes God's people suffer (see note on Rev. 2:20). God will judge the world in vengeance! He does this again and again by making Babylon fall.

21-23. **Then a mighty angel.** The large stone is *thrown down* to the bottom of the sea where no one can retrieve it! This is symbolic that Babylon will be found "never again!" [God continually judges "society" because "society" persecutes and harms God's people.] **False magic.** Compare *Isa. 47:9-15*. The "glamour, romance, gold, and appeal" of this world are a "false magic," but don't forget that "witchcraft, voodoo, fortune-telling, etc.," turn people from God, and make vast fortunes for some.

<sup>24</sup>Babylon was punished because the blood of prophets and of God's people was found in the city: yes, the blood of all those who have been killed on earth.

**19** After this I heard what sounded like the loud voice of a great crowd of people in heaven, saying, "Praise God! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God! <sup>2</sup>True and righteous are his judgments! He has condemned the great prostitute who was corrupting the earth with her immorality. God has punished her because she killed his servants." <sup>3</sup>Again they shouted, "Praise God! The smoke from the burning of the great city goes up forever and ever!" <sup>4</sup>The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, and said, "Amen! Praise God!"

**The Wedding Feast of the Lamb**

<sup>5</sup>Then there came from the throne the sound of a voice, saying, "Praise our God, all his servants, and all men, both great and small, who

In her was found the blood 24  
of prophets and  
of the saints,  
and of all who have been  
killed on the earth."

**Hallelujah!**

**19** After this, I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:  
"Hallelujah!  
Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments. 2  
He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants."  
And again they shouted: 3  
"Hallelujah!  
The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."  
The twenty-four elders 4  
and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried:  
"Amen, Hallelujah!"  
Then a voice came from 5  
the throne, saying:  
"Praise our God,  
all you his servants,  
you who fear him,  
both small and great!"

24. Punished because the blood. Babylon is "stained with the blood" of prophets and God's people. This requires God's vengeance! Also, this is another reason to think of Babylon as past, present, and future, rather than just a city or power at the "end time."

Heaven celebrates God's victory over the prostitute, Babylon!

1-4. Like the loud voice of a great crowd. The angels praise God for what he has done! They declare that in judging Babylon, God has completed the saving of his people. All opposition has been crushed forever! The twenty-four elders. These symbolize all God's people (see note on Rev. 4:3-6), and they join in praising God for his judgment of the prostitute. The four living creatures join in also! (See note on Rev. 18:20.)

The Wedding Feast of the Lamb.

5. The sound of a voice, saying. A solo voice, perhaps one of the angels. All - angel or man - are called upon to Praise our God!

fear him!" "Then I heard what sounded like the voice of a great crowd, like the roar of a mighty waterfall, like loud peals of thunder. I heard them say, "Praise God! For the Lord, our Almighty God, is King! "Let us rejoice and be glad; let us praise his greatness! For the time has come for the wedding of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself for it. "She has been given clean shining linen to dress herself with." (The linen is the righteous deeds of God's people.)

"Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Happy are those who have been invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb." And the angel added, "These are the true words of God."

"I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do it! I am a fellow servant of yours, and of your brothers, all those who hold to the truth that Jesus revealed. Worship God!"

For the truth that Jesus revealed is what inspires the prophets.

**The Rider on the White Horse**

"Then I saw heaven open, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True; it is with justice that he judges and fights his

6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah!  
For our Lord God  
Almighty reigns.

7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!  
For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

8 Fine linen, bright and clean,  
was given her to wear."

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' " And he added, "These are the true words of God."

10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

**The Rider on the White Horse**

11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges

6. **Then I heard.** He uses different symbols to describe the *voice of praise* directed to God!

7-8. **For the time has come!** Here is the reason for rejoicing! The time has come for the Wedding of Christ and his church! This Wedding Feast will last through all Eternity! [Compare *Isa. 51:1-3; 54:1-5; 62:5; Jer. 2:32; Hosea 2:1; Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:32; Rev. 21:9.*]

9-10. **Write this: Happy are those.** One of the beatitudes of Revelation. See also *Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14. Worship God.* John is ready to worship the speaker, but he is told to worship God! No one else is to be worshiped.

*The judgment of the beast and the false prophet.*

11. **There was a white horse.** The Rider is Christ at his Second Coming. [The white horse and Rider of the first seal are Christ conquering through his church in this world (*see Rev. 6:2.*)]

battles. <sup>12</sup>His eyes were like a flame of fire, and he wore many crowns on his head. He had a name written on him, but no one except himself knows what it is. <sup>13</sup>The robe he wore was covered with blood. The name by which he is called is "The Word of God." <sup>14</sup>The armies of heaven followed him, riding on white horses and dressed in clean white linen. <sup>15</sup>A sharp sword came out of his mouth, with which he will defeat the nations. He will rule over them with a rod of iron, and he will squeeze out the wine in the winepress of the furious wrath of the Almighty God. <sup>16</sup>On his robe and on his leg was written the name: "King of kings and Lord of lords."

<sup>17</sup>Then I saw an angel standing in the sun. He shouted in a loud voice to all the birds flying in mid-air, "Come, and gather together for God's great feast! <sup>18</sup>Come and eat the flesh of kings, generals, and soldiers, the flesh of horses and their riders, the flesh of all men, slave and free, great and small!"

<sup>19</sup>Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered to fight against the one who rides the horse, and against his army. <sup>20</sup>The beast was taken prisoner, together with the false prophet who had performed miracles in his presence. (It was by those miracles

and makes war. His eyes are 12  
like blazing fire, and on his  
head are many crowns. He  
has a name written on him  
that no one but he himself  
knows. He is dressed in a 13  
robe dipped in blood, and  
his name is the Word of God.  
The armies of heaven were 14  
following him, riding on  
white horses and dressed in  
fine linen, white and clean.  
Out of his mouth comes a 15  
sharp sword with which to  
strike down the nations. He  
will rule them with a rod of  
iron. He treads the winepress  
of the fury of the wrath of  
God Almighty. On his robe 16  
and on his thigh he has  
this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND  
LORD OF LORDS.

And I saw an angel stand- 17  
ing in the sun, who cried in a  
loud voice to all the birds fly-  
ing in midair, "Come, gather  
together for the great supper  
of God, so that you may eat 18  
the flesh of kings, generals,  
and mighty men, of horses  
and their riders, and the  
flesh of all people, free and  
slave, small and great."

Then I saw the beast and 19  
the kings of the earth and  
their armies gathered to-  
gether to make war against  
the rider on the horse and his  
army. But the beast was cap- 20  
tured, and with him the false  
prophet who had performed  
the miraculous signs on his

12-16. A symbolic picture (like "modern art") is painted of Christ. **Fire:** fierce destruction. **Crowns:** power and honor. **Name:** authority. **Robe . . . covered with blood:** slaughter, vengeance. **The Word of God:** his identity (*John 1:1*). **Sword:** slaughter - the power to defeat. **White horses:** victory. **White linen:** purity, being "not guilty." **King of Kings and Lord of Lords:** he is the highest of all (*Phil. 2:9*)!

17-18. **Come.** So certain is the victory of Christ, that an angel already calls the birds to come feast on the slaughtered kings and armies!

19. **Gathered to fight against.** This is "Armageddon." We meet this battle four times in Revelation (see also *Rev. 11:7-13; 16:12-16; 20:7-10*). Note that the armies of heaven do not wear armor or carry weapons (*verse 14*). No battle is fought. When the forces of evil are all prepared to destroy the forces of heaven (the church), "fire came down from heaven and destroyed them" (*Rev. 20:9*). See note on *Rev. 16:12*.

20-21. **The beast was taken prisoner.** See what happens to the beast and the false prophet and those who follow them.

that he had deceived those who had the mark of the beast, and those who had worshiped the image of the beast.) The beast and the false prophet were both thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. <sup>21</sup>Their armies were killed by the sword that comes out of the mouth of the one who rides the horse; and all the birds ate all they could of their flesh.

### The Thousand Years

**20** Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the abyss and a heavy chain. <sup>2</sup>He seized the dragon, that old serpent—that is, the Devil, or Satan—and tied him up for a thousand years. <sup>3</sup>The angel threw him into the abyss, locked it and sealed it, so that he could not deceive the nations any more until the thousand years were over. After that he must be set loose for a little while.

<sup>4</sup>Then I saw thrones, and those who sat on them; they were given the power to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been executed because they had proclaimed the truth that Jesus revealed and the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image, nor had they received the mark of the beast on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and ruled

behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh. 21

### The Thousand Years

**20** And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. 2

<sup>3</sup> I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or 4

### Christ and His Church Victors! chapters 20-22. (Rom. 8:37)

*This is the seventh parallel section, and we again return to the First Coming of Christ.*

1-3. **And tied him up for a thousand years.** Christ broke the power of Satan by dying on the cross (Luke 9:31). In the vision, we see Satan tied up with a heavy chain, thrown into the abyss, which is then locked and sealed. His power and influence over the nations is checked. The nations cannot conquer the church! The church conquers (makes them Christ's disciples) the nations. Compare Rev. 11:12-14; 12:5-12. Satan is bound for a thousand years - the entire Gospel Age. Compare Rev. 11:2-6; 12:14. Satan is bound by Christ and his sacrifice. Compare Matt. 12:29; Luke 4:1-13; 10:17-18; John 12:20-32; Col. 2:15; Rev. 12:5-11. "So that he could not deceive the nations any more." Satan is not permitted to destroy the church! **He must be set loose for a little while.** To deceive the nations and persecute the church. Satan is bound, but still permitted to use his evil influence. Again and again we see the events of Revelation repeat themselves. The church grows, becomes powerful, and Satan once again brings persecution against it. (See verses 7-10)

4-6. **Then I saw thrones.** Note that the Second Coming of Christ does not take place until verse 11. In

as kings with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup>(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were over.) This is the first raising of the dead. <sup>6</sup>Happy and greatly blessed are those who are included in this first raising of the dead. The second death has no power over them; they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they will rule with him for a thousand years.

his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

5

6

### The Defeat of Satan

<sup>7</sup>After the thousand years are over, Satan will be set loose from his prison, <sup>8</sup>and he will go out to deceive the nations scattered over all the world, that is, Gog and Magog. Satan will bring them all together for battle, as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. <sup>9</sup>They spread out over the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people and the city that he loves. But fire came down

### Satan's Doom

When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and

7

8

9

*the vision*, John sees the *souls* (not bodies) of those who have killed (executed) for their work of proclaiming the Good News (Truth). **A thousand years.** Symbolic of a long indefinite period of time (*compare 2 Pet. 3:8*). Here it stands for the Gospel Age - that period of time from the Cross to the Second Coming. **They came to life.** This passage speaks only of *souls* of those who were *killed* because of their proclaiming the Good News of Christ. No mention here of a *bodily* resurrection. Where do these souls rule as kings with Christ? In heaven! [Paradise, see note at end of *Luke 16:31*.] They "sit by him on his throne" (*Rev. 3:21*); they "stand with him on Mount Zion" (*Rev. 14:1*); they "stand facing the throne, and sing a new song" (*Rev. 14:3; 15:3*). **Happy and greatly blessed!** See note on *Rev. 14:13*. **This first raising of the dead.** Note that the "second death" has no power over these. It must refer, then, to those who are completely removed from this world scene. Since it is a *resurrection* of the *soul*, it speaks of the transfer of the *spirit* (soul) from this sinful earth [*which is under the curse, Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:20-21*] to heaven (in the sense of paradise, see notes on *Luke 16:19-31*). The second raising of the dead will come when Christ returns (*verse 11*) and all the dead will be raised *both body and spirit* (soul)! See notes on *verses 12-13*. **They will rule with him for a thousand years.** Not only shall these souls rule with Christ, they will also worship God in Christ as priests all during the thousand years (gospel age). See *Rev. 1:6; 4:10; 5:10; 7:15; 14:4*.

7-10. **Satan will be set loose.** Any interpretation of this must take into account the fact that there will be Christians alive and waiting when Jesus returns (*1 Thess. 4:17*); and that the "church" does not terminate, but continues on into Eternity (*Rev. 19:7-9*). These verses present Armageddon - an event which takes place again and again during the entire gospel age. But here they seem to represent one final all-out effort of Satan, just before the Second Coming. But notice the sequence of events! Satan is

from heaven and destroyed them. <sup>10</sup>Then the Devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown; and they will be tormented day and night, forever and ever.

### The Final Judgment

<sup>11</sup>Then I saw a large white throne and the one who sits on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and were seen no more. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, great and small alike, standing before the throne. Books were opened, and then another book was opened, the book of the living. The dead were judged according to what they had done, as was written in the books. <sup>13</sup>Then the sea gave up its dead. Death and the world of the dead also gave up the dead they held. And all were judged according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup>Then death and the world of the dead were thrown into the lake of fire. (This lake of fire is the second death.) <sup>15</sup>Whoever did not have his name written in the book of the living was thrown into the lake of fire.

devoured them. And the 10  
devil, who deceived them,  
was thrown into the lake of  
burning sulfur, where the  
beast and the false prophet  
had been thrown. They will  
be tormented day and night  
for ever and ever.

### The Dead Are Judged

Then I saw a great white 11  
throne and him who was  
seated on it. Earth and sky  
fled from his presence, and  
there was no place for them.  
And I saw the dead, great 12  
and small, standing before  
the throne, and books were  
opened. Another book was  
opened, which is the book of  
life. The dead were judged  
according to what they had  
done as recorded in the  
books. The sea gave up the 13  
dead that were in it, and  
death and Hades gave up  
the dead that were in them,  
and each person was judged  
according to what he had  
done. Then death and Hades 14  
were thrown into the lake of  
fire. The lake of fire is the  
second death. If anyone's 15  
name was not found written  
in the book of life, he was  
thrown into the lake of fire.

set loose. He goes out to deceive the nations. He brings them against the camp of God's people. Fire comes down from heaven and destroys them! The Devil is thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur! No BATTLE IS FOUGHT! (Compare *Rev. 11:7-13; 16:12-16; 19:19-21*.) We see Jesus and his mighty angels, with a flaming fire, coming to punish all who do not believe (*2 Thess. 1:7-10*). [Some believe the events of *Matt. 24* will be seen again, just before Jesus comes. If so, this must be balanced with the fact that Jesus will come "like a thief" when everything seems quiet and safe (*1 Thess. 5:1-4*).]

11. **Then I saw a large white throne.** This is the Second Coming of Christ! We shall all stand before Christ (*2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:31; Matt. 25:31; Rev. 14:14*).

12-13. **And I saw the dead.** This is the raising of all the dead, both soul (spirit) and body. See *John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Rev. 1:7*. The apostles stressed the resurrection of the complete man (see *1 John 3:2; Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:35-57*). Paul continually preached about Jesus and the resurrection (*Acts 17:18*). *In the vision*, John sees the sea give up its dead, and Death and the world of the dead [Hades] give up the dead they hold. Every one of the dead are raised to live again: some in Eternity with God; some in the lake of fire with Satan.

14-15. **Were thrown into the lake of fire.** We see the doom of the unbeliever! The unbeliever and the unrighteous share the doom of the Devil, in a place never intended for them. [Book of the living: ancient cities kept the names of their legal citizens in a book. The names of the dead were erased from the book, also the names of criminals.]

### The New Heaven and the New Earth

**21** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. <sup>3</sup>I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne, "Now God's home is with men! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. <sup>4</sup>He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief, crying, or pain. The old things have disappeared."

<sup>5</sup>Then the one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!" He also said to me, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted." <sup>6</sup>And he said, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To anyone who is thirsty I will give a free drink of water from the spring of the water of

### The New Jerusalem

**21** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the

*The redeemed universe in Eternity as symbolically pictured in the messianic community of the redeemed in the present!*

1. **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.** New - in the sense of being radically changed. [KAINOS, not NEOS, "entirely new, unused"] Creation is to be *set free from its slavery to decay* (Rom. 8:21). Our present universe is to be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:10). But God has promised new heavens and a new earth (2 Pet. 3:13; Acts 3:21).

2. **The new Jerusalem.** Not the old material city. This is the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18), "like a bride dressed to meet her husband."

3. **Now God's home is with men.** This is true now (Eph. 2:22). God lives in his church through the Holy Spirit. But the Church Triumphant will receive a greater fulfillment in Eternity! (Compare Isa. 65:17; 66:22; Ezek. 11:20; Zech. 13:9; Matt. 13:17; 2 Cor. 6:16.)

4. **He will wipe away all tears.** This is fulfilled now in the "peace which is beyond human understanding" which God gives the Christian (Phil. 4:5-7). Again, the Church Triumphant will receive a greater fulfillment in Eternity (see notes on Rev. 7:13-17).

5-7. **And now I make all things new.** This is God's promise! We become *new* when we are joined to Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Those who *win the victory* will share in the *new heaven and new earth* when God makes all things new! (See Rev. 19:9; 22:6; Psalm 36:8; Rev. 7:14-17.)



life. <sup>7</sup>Whoever wins the victory will receive this from me: I will be his God, and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup>But the cowards, the traitors, and the perverts, the murderers and the immoral, those who practice magic and those who worship idols, and all liars—the place for them is the lake burning with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

### The New Jerusalem

<sup>9</sup>One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came to me and said, “Come, and I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” <sup>10</sup>The Spirit took control of me, and the angel carried me to the top of a very high mountain. He showed me Jerusalem, the Holy City, coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup>shining with the glory of God. The city shone like a precious stone, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup>It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and with twelve angels in charge of the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of the people of Israel. <sup>13</sup>There were three gates on each side: three on the east, three on the south, three on the north, and three on the west. <sup>14</sup>The city’s wall was built on twelve stones, on which were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup>The angel who spoke to me had a gold measuring stick, to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.

water of life. He who over- 7  
comes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolators and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

One of the seven angels 9  
who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its

8. **But the cowards.** Notice that the COWARDS head the list of those who are to be punished for their sin. Read what Jesus said in *Matt. 10:32-39*. Those who have done these things must meet God’s Wrath! See *Rev. 20:15*.

9-23. **Come, and I will show you the Bride.** Under the symbolism of [spiritual] Jerusalem, *the New Jerusalem*, the wife of the Lamb [the church of Christ] is described. This Holy City is the Church Triumphant [the glorified church of the future]. Even the Church Militant [the church here on earth] gleams with this *glory*, SINCE THERE IS BUT ONE CHURCH! To show the VALUE of Christ’s Bride [his church], the Holy City is constructed out of everything this world thinks so valuable. Gold, every kind of precious jewel and stone - these things are used like common brick and mortar to build this city! The city is a perfect cube, 1,500 miles on a side, symbolic of the *perfection* of Christ’s church [the Kingdom of God]. The Most Holy Place in the Jewish Temple was also a perfect cube. The city shines with the glory of God, and has no need for a “sun” or a “moon” (*verse 23*). The great, high wall is symbolic of protection and safety. God’s people will be free from worry and sorrow forever (*see Rev. 7:14-17*).

<sup>16</sup>The city was perfectly square, as long as it was wide. The angel measured the city with his measuring stick: it was 1,500 miles long and was as wide and as high as it was long. <sup>17</sup>The angel also measured the wall, and it was 216 feet high, according to the standard unit of measure, which he was using. <sup>18</sup>The wall was made of jasper, and the city itself was made of pure gold, as clear as glass. <sup>19</sup>The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with all kinds of precious stones. The first foundation stone was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup>the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh yellow quartz, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chalcedony, the eleventh turquoise, the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup>The twelve gates were twelve pearls; each gate was made from a single pearl. The street of the city was of pure gold, transparent as glass.

<sup>22</sup>I did not see a temple in the city, because its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup>The city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God shines on it, and the Lamb is its lamp. <sup>24</sup>The peoples of the world will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their wealth into it. <sup>25</sup>The gates of the city will stand open all day; they will never be closed, because there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup>The greatness and the wealth of the nations will be brought into the city. <sup>27</sup>But nothing that is impure will enter the city, nor anyone who does shameful things or tells lies. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of the living will enter the city.

gates and its wall. The city <sup>16</sup> was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He <sup>17</sup> measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. The wall <sup>18</sup> was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the <sup>19</sup> city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve <sup>21</sup> gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

I did not see a temple in <sup>22</sup> the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does <sup>23</sup> not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates <sup>25</sup> ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22. I did not see a temple in the city. God and the Lamb are its temple, and their glory fills the whole city! Compare *Jer. 3:16-17; 31:33-34; Heb. 8:7-13*. In other words, the *redeemed* who live in this city have no need to go to a specific location to meet God. God fills all and is with them in contact so indescribable that we have no words to express it! [It would be useless to dissect the "picture-symbol" given in *verse 12-21* to make each jewel have a specific meaning. It intends to *symbolically describe* those things which human language cannot express! The *eternal reward* for God's people is far beyond human imagination! And the church itself is "*what no man ever thought could happen*" (*1 Cor. 2:9*).]

**22** The angel also showed me the river of the water of life, sparkling like crystal, which comes from the throne of God and of the Lamb, <sup>2</sup>and flows down the middle of the city's street. On each side of the river was the tree of life, which bears fruit twelve times a year, once every month; and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup>Nothing that is under God's curse will be found in the city.

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>There shall be no more night, and they will not need lamps or sunlight, because the Lord God will be their light, and they will rule as kings forever and ever.

### The Coming of Jesus

<sup>6</sup>Then the angel said to me, "These words are true and can be trusted. And the Lord God, who gives his Spirit to the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants what must happen very soon."

<sup>7</sup>"Listen!" says Jesus. "I am coming soon! Happy are those who obey the prophetic words in this book!"

### The River of Life

**22** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

The angel said to me, <sup>6</sup>"These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

### Jesus Is Coming

<sup>7</sup>"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

### COMPLETE VICTORY!!! *Romans 8:37-39.*

1. **The river of the water of life.** Water means many things in the Bible. It is symbolic of: separation (see *1 Pet. 3:20-21*); making pure (see *Heb. 9:19*); life (see *Psalms 107:35-37*); the Holy Spirit (see *John 7:37-39*); salvation (see *Eph. 5:26; Col. 2:11-12*). Note that here it comes from the throne of God and of the Lamb. God accepts as righteous all who "reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make themselves part of it" (compare notes on *Acts 2:38*). The emphasis in these verses is perfect fellowship with God!

2-3. **Was the tree of life.** No more curse! The "Paradise" which was lost through Adam, has been regained by those who belong to Christ! **The throne of God and of the Lamb.** God is LOVE to all in his city! [God is wrath to all who are outside his city!]

5. **There shall be no more night.** The Christians rule on earth (*Rev. 5:10*); in heaven with Christ a thousand years (*Rev. 20:40*); and in the New Heaven and New Earth as kings forever and ever!

6. **Then the angel said to me.** The angel affirms that these words are true and can be trusted. This book [the whole Bible, as well] is of divine origin! Compare *Heb. 1:1-2; Rev. 1:1-3; 19:9; 21:5*.

7. **Happy are those who obey.** One of the "beatitudes" of Revelation. See note on *Rev. 14:13*.

<sup>8</sup>I, John, have heard and seen all these things. And when I finished hearing and seeing them, I fell down at the feet of the angel who had shown me these things to worship him. <sup>9</sup>But he said to me, "Don't do it! I am a fellow servant of yours, and of your brothers the prophets, and of all those who obey the words in this book. Worship God!" <sup>10</sup>And he said to me, "Do not keep the prophetic words of this book a secret, because the time is near when all this will happen. <sup>11</sup>Whoever is evil must go on doing evil, and whoever is filthy must go on being filthy; whoever is good must go on doing good, and whoever is holy must go on being holy."

<sup>12</sup>"Listen!" says Jesus. "I am coming soon! I will bring my rewards with me to give to each one according to what he has done. <sup>13</sup>I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

<sup>14</sup>Happy are those who wash their robes clean, and so have the right to eat the fruit from the tree of life, and to go through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup>But outside the city are perverts and those who practice magic, the immoral and the murderers, those who worship idols, and those who are liars, both in words and deeds.

I, John, am the one who 8  
heard and saw these things.  
And when I had heard and  
seen them, I fell down to  
worship at the feet of the  
angel who had been showing  
them to me. But he said to 9  
me, "Do not do it! I am a fel-  
low servant with you and  
with your brothers the  
prophets and of all who keep  
the words of this book. Wor-  
ship God!"

Then he told me, "Do not 10  
seal up the words of the  
prophecy of this book, be-  
cause the time is near. Let 11  
him who does wrong contin-  
ue to do wrong; let him who  
is vile continue to be vile; let  
him who does right continue  
to do right; and let him who  
is holy continue to be holy."

"Behold, I am coming 12  
soon! My reward is with me,  
and I will give to everyone  
according to what he has  
done. I am the Alpha and 13  
the Omega, the First and the  
Last, the Beginning and the  
End.

"Blessed are those who 14  
wash their robes, that they  
may have the right to the  
tree of life and may go  
through the gates into the  
city. Outside are the dogs, 15  
those who practice magic  
arts, the sexually immoral,  
the murderers, the idolaters  
and everyone who loves and  
practices falsehood.

8-9. **But he said to me.** Neither angels nor men are to be worshiped! Worship God!!!

10. **Do not keep the prophetic words of this book a secret.** See note on *Rev. 1:19*. This book lifts the curtain of both the present and the future. Revelation is not meant to be a sealed book! It is to be read and understood. It was to strengthen the suffering Christians in the first century, and in all the ages to come, up to the time when Jesus returns.

11-12. **Whoever is evil must go on doing evil.** A time is coming when men and women will not be able to turn back from the life they have chosen! Jesus will reward everyone on the basis of their choice in life.

13-14. **Happy are those who wash their robes clean.** A "beatitude." See notes on *verses 1 and 7*. Those who *belong to Christ* HAVE THE RIGHT to eat the fruit and to go into the city.

15. **But outside the city.** No impurity is allowed in heaven. Those who have followed Satan in this life, have no part in the Holy City! [Note that those allowed in have been accepted as perfect through the imputed righteousness of Christ. See note on *verse 1*.]

<sup>16</sup>“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to announce these things to you in the churches. I am the descendant from the family of David; I am the bright morning star.”

<sup>17</sup>The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!”

Everyone who hears this must also say, “Come!”

Come, whoever is thirsty; accept the water of life as a gift, whoever wants it.

### Conclusion

<sup>18</sup>I, John, solemnly warn everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to his punishment the plagues described in this book. <sup>19</sup>And if anyone takes away anything from the prophetic words of this book, God will take away from him his share of the fruit of the tree of life, and his share of the Holy City, which are described in this book.

<sup>20</sup>He who gives his testimony to all this, says, “Certainly so! I am coming soon!”

So be it, Come, Lord Jesus!

<sup>21</sup>May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

“I, Jesus, have sent my 16 angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

The Spirit and the bride <sup>17</sup> say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

I warn everyone who hears <sup>18</sup> the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if <sup>19</sup> anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

He who testifies to these <sup>20</sup> things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord <sup>21</sup> Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

17. **The Spirit and the Bride say, Come!** The call is to everyone in the entire human race (*John 6:44-45*). **Accept the water of life as a gift.** Jesus has already paid for it with his *act in history*. [“Christianity is not the preacher standing on Mount Sinai, thundering “Do this, or you will be damned;” but the Lord of Glory, from His Cross and from His Throne, saying to everyone: “Here is the *price* of heaven, the *key* to the Holy City, the infinite riches, instant pardon - if you will reach out and take it.”]

18-19. **I, John, solemnly warn everyone.** This is a warning against tampering with the Word. God is the author [through John]. Do not *add* or *take away*. Do not make fun of this book. Do not say it isn’t worth studying. It speaks to the entire Gospel Age, from Christ’s First Coming until he returns!

20-21. **I am coming soon!** Jesus answers the eager prayer of his church [the messianic community]. The church of the first century ended each prayer with the words: “*Come, Lord Jesus!*” **May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.** John is jubilant as he gives this benediction! He has seen *today* and *tomorrow* in the vision, but most important, he has seen the *day after tomorrow!* He has seen the vision of God’s people in Eternity!!! So should we all see this! **THE VISION OF THE AGES!!!**