

PREACHING THROUGH REVELATION

THE KING'S ART GALLERY!

In word pictures, full of symbolisms which at times escape the understanding, but always challenge the interest, there is presented in this book the message of the glory of God and His Christ, and the ultimate triumph of His church. As serious art, the book attempts to convey ideas rather than material presentation of fact.

THE APOSTLE JOHN

The writer was the Apostle John, who spent his later days in and about the city of Ephesus in Asia Minor. The book was God's message to the Christians in that area as they faced the rigors of persecution inflicted by command of the Roman emperor Domitian, about A.D. 96. John received his visions while in exile on the rocky island of Patmos, his exile being a part of the current attempt to stamp out Christianity.

TODAY'S READERS

Present readers of the book fall into two distinct classes. There are those who love the spectacular, and love to speculate. They dwell greatly on this book, as they do also on the Old Testament Apocalypses, Ezekiel and Daniel. There are those of more practical mind who admit that they cannot understand it, and neglect it almost entirely. Both are wrong. Revelation is a part of the Bible, neither more important nor less important than other parts. It has an inspiring message for all, not depending upon the detailed interpretation of its images.

UNDERSTANDING REVELATION

Interpretations of Revelation fall into four general lines:

(1) The Preterist (past), which holds that the book deals only with things which "must shortly come to pass" following the writer's own time.

(2) The Historical, which finds in Revelation a pre-figuring, in more or less detail, of world and church history from the time it was written to the end of the world.

(3) The Futurist, which holds that most of the events described in Revelation will take place in literal and material form in the last seven years before the consummation of all things.

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(4) The Spiritualist, which denies any special reference to historical events in the figures of Revelation, but holds that they present spiritual principles which apply with equal force to the events of any age.

All agree that the book deals with the sufferings and trials of the faithful, and inspires them to continued faithfulness in order that they may share in the final glory of God.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

- Chapter 1 Introduction: John's vision of Christ.
2,3 Special letters to the seven congregations in Asia.
4,5 Christ the Lord and Ruler of all.
6-11 Judgment: opening of seven seals, and sound of seven trumpets.
12-14 Enemies of the faithful.
15-16 Judgment and wrath poured out.
17-20 Overthrow of the enemies and of Satan.
21-22 Eternal glory of heaven.

Sermon Outlines Provided:

- "The King's Art Gallery" (Rev. 1)
"The Spirit and the Day" (Rev. 1:1-11)
"I Know Thy Works" (Rev. 2)
"A Crown for the Faithful" (Rev. 2:8-11)
"Worthy Is the Lamb" (Rev. 5)
"A New Song" (Rev. 5:1-14)
"Measuring the Temple" (Rev. 11:1, 2)
"What Keeps God's People Going?" (Rev. 13:1)

Other Sermon Topics Suggested:

- "Out of Great Tribulation" (Rev. 7:9-17)
"The Accuser and the Friend" (Rev. 12:7-12)
"Her Name Is Mystery" (Rev. 17:1-7)
"The Bride" (Rev. 19:6-10)
"The Completed Word" (Rev. 22:16-21)

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QUESTIONS OVER REVELATION

1. Revelation 1:1 says it is a revelation of whom?
2. What did the seven candlesticks represent? (1:20)
3. What church had left its first love? (2:1, 4)
4. Which church had a name that it was alive, but it was dead? (3:1)
5. Which was the lukewarm church? (3:14, 16)
6. Who was worthy to open the sealed book? (5:5, 6)
7. Those who had come out of the great tribulation had had their robes washed white in what? (7:14)
8. Who ate the little book the angel held? (10:9, 10)
9. How long did the two witnesses prophesy? (11:3)
10. Those saved overcame the accuser of the brethren by what three things? (12:11)
11. What is said about those who die in the Lord? (14:13)
12. What is inscribed on the forehead of the woman in Revelation 17? (17:5)
13. The Lamb is Lord of lords and King of kings and those with Him are the what? (17:14)
14. Of the one on a white horse called Faithful and True Revelation 19:13 says his name is called what?
15. What happened to the beast and the false prophet? (19:20)
16. What happened to Satan before he is loosed to deceive the nations? (20:1-3)
17. What will become of those whose names are not found in the book of life? (20:15)
18. What is the last invitation in the Bible? (22:17)

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE
THE KING'S ART GALLERY
(Revelation 1)

INTRODUCTION — A VISIT TO AN ART GALLERY.

1. The serious artist has a message in each piece of his work, not necessarily photographic.
2. The pictures may be related, but they are not connected.
3. There is symbolism (See in Hoffman's picture "Gethsemane," rough rock, sharp lines, dark, thorn.)

Much of this is not known to the casual observer, and not noticed. Nevertheless it makes an impression which grows with the study of the picture.

Revelation is the King's art gallery—all these things apply.

I. TO UNDERSTAND IT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THE BACKGROUND.

- A. Time of Domitian's persecution of the church A.D. 95.
- B. Province of Asia, rich and favored, sought still more favor by enforcement of emperor worship.
- C. Business boycotts successfully used.

II. WRITTEN TO THE CHURCHES THEN UNDER PERSECUTION.

- A. Must be delivered, censored, by soldiers of the Empire.
- B. Message to tell of the final overthrow of the Empire, success of the church.
- C. Spoken in figures that the intended readers would know, and that the soldiers (and we) would not.
- D. Record that it did have a powerful effect in stiffening faith.

III. IMMEDIATE MESSAGE IS ALSO A MESSAGE FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH.

- A. Three different views of interpretation.
 1. Preterist—things past and passing at time of writing.
 2. Futurist—things wholly in the future.
 3. Historic—outline of all history of the church.
- B. Our own thought that it dealt especially with things rather close to the time at hand.

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- C. Secondary application to later circumstances.
 - 1. History repeats—and as often as it repeats, this message is applicable.
 - 2. The Alpha and Omega—principles are eternal.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PICTURES PAINTED.

- A. That God is the King and ruler of the universe.
- B. His majesty, power, and judgment are uppermost.
—We need this emphasis in a day which would make him a kind of Santa Claus.
- C. Christ the Lamb, glorified, Son of God and Son of man. —Atonement plainly taught.

V. THE FIRST PICTURE.

Couldn't put it on canvas, any more than you could photograph any other word picture.

- A. Christ among the churches—"Lo, I am with you."
- B. The stars—the messengers of the word in the churches
—are in His hand.
- C. Long robe—Priest—"after the order of Melchizedek."
- D. Golden girdle—accoutred as king.—"Hosanna, thy king cometh."
- E. Brightness of glory of His countenance—Compare Moses at Sinai.
- F. Feet as of bronze—glorious and strong.
- G. Voice as of many waters—to be heard everywhere.
- H. Sword proceeding from mouth—Sword of spirit, which is word of God.

CONCLUSION — I fell at his feet!

"The head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now;
A royal diadem adorns
The mighty Victor's brow.
The highest place that Heaven affords
Is His, is His by right;
The King of kings, and Lord of lords,
And heaven's eternal light."

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THE SPIRIT AND THE DAY

(Revelation 1:1-11)

How inclusive is Christian worship!

I. THE WORSHIPER.

- A. John—exiled to Patmos. Tradition says that he labored in the quarries.
- B. The Lord's Day—he is the first to go on record with that term.
 - 1. Others—Barnabas, Ignatius, Dionysius, Justin Martyr followed.
 - 2. Day of the resurrection, first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2).
- C. In the spirit—at worship, but more.
 - 1. His apostleship demanded more in this occasion.
 - 2. Visions took him out of time and place (Cf. Peter, Acts 10:10; Paul, II Cor. 12:2).
 - 3. Messages were given to the churches.
 - 4. Christ's promise fulfilled by the Spirit:
"For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:13, 14).

II. HIS LINK TO THE PAST.

- A. This event harks back to another first day of the week about sixty-five years before.
- B. Then it was not John alone, but other Ten apostles, and more.
- C. The Day—Pentecost. (See Lev. 23:15-17.)
 - Implored blessing in the harvest.
 - Recognized the giving of the Law.
 - (Here was a new law and a new harvest.)
- D. The coming of the Spirit—prepared for by a period of prayer.
 - 1. Evidenced by sight and sound.

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2. Tongues of fire and tongues of speech.
 3. Power given to the Word—but no conversion without the Word.
- D. On that day there came into being the Church, to help which John wrote.
(Perhaps John wrote to some of the same people who were among the original three thousand.)

III. HIS LINK TO OUR PRESENT.

—The important things of that Lord's Day continued through John to us.

- A. The day—the resurrection day.
 1. Time of worship; time of stewardship; time of service.
 2. All is in the name and for the sake of the risen Lord.
- B. Same Spirit working through the same Word.

Promised to all—abiding in all; giving life to all.
- C. The same Gospel, completed, sealed, unchanged.
- D. The same Church, identified by plan of pardon, ordinances, life.
- E. The same blessing to those who will be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.
 1. It takes preparation.
 2. It takes participation—public and private worship, two arms of one body.
 3. Blue Monday denotes wrong colors mixed on Sunday!

CONCLUSION — the message of the Day and the Spirit is Christ.

Baptisms took place at Pentecost—Today?

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I KNOW THY WORKS

(Revelation 2)

INTRODUCTION — A preacher in Michigan made headlines — and trouble — with his claims to know the doings of his neighbors, and the members of his church.

— In Christ the claim is real, perfected, and for the good of all. In all the letters of Revelation 2 and 3 there is the same outline.

I. I KNOW THY WORKS.

(Compare Psalm 139:1-12.)

- A. Concern of the average man for what the preacher knows. It is a concern misplaced.
- B. See special troubles of these churches—Persecution and pagan and heathen infiltration.

II. TAKE NOTICE OF AND APPROVE THE GOOD.
Christ's sense of value.

- A. Ephesus' toil and patience—(2:2).
 - 1. Would not bear with bad men; tried false apostles and found out.
 - 2. Hated the works of the Nicolaitans—evidently licentious Gnostics.
- B. Smyrna's tribulation and poverty (2:9).
- C. Pergamos did not deny the name of Christ—Antipas the martyr (2:13).
 - Pagan authorities sought to make them curse the name of Christ.
- D. Thyatira held to love, faith, and patience.
 - Her last works were greater than her first (2:19).
- E. Sardis had a few faithful in spite of the general decline of the church (3:4).
- F. Philadelphia had a little strength (3:8).
 - Kept the word of patience.
- G. Even Laodicea had the potential for repentance (3:19, 20).

III. TAKE NOTICE OF EVIL AND CONDEMN IT.

- A. Ephesus left her first love (2:4, 5).
 - 1. She no longer loved *what* she did at the beginning.
 - 2. She no longer loved *as* she did at the beginning.

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- B. Pergamos suffered false teachers in the midst. Baalam, Nicolaitans (2:14).
- C. Thyatira "suffered the woman Jezebel"; claimed to be prophetess, mistaught (2:20).
(Some say a sybil, half heathen, half Christian—false church.)
- D. Sardis had a name for being alive, but was dead. No works completed before God (3:2, 3).
- E. Laodicea neither hot nor cold (3:15-17).
Boasted of wealth and felt no need.

IV. I KNOW YOUR NEED FOR REPENTANCE.

- 1. Ephesus: repent and do first works (or I take candlestick away) (2:5).
- 2. Smyrna: be faithful unto death (2:10).
- 3. Sardis: be watchful, and establish what remains (3:2).
- 4. Philadelphia: hold fast that which thou hast (3:11).
- 5. Laodicea: "Buy of me gold, . . . and raiment."

V. MY VERY CHASTENING IS AN EXPRESSION OF TENDER LOVE.

CONCLUSION — Not only, "I know thy works," but "I know the end of things."

- A. Two were not chided: Smyrna and Philadelphia (little strength). The cities remained as centers of Christian population. Gibbon says Philadelphia "a column in the sea of ruins, a pleasing example that the paths of honor and safety may be the same." Smyrna is to Mohammedans a "city of infidels."
- B. Two were warned. Pergamos and Thyatira, still stand and have Christians.
- C. Ephesus (capital); Laodicea (wealthy) and Sardis long ceased to exist. "I will take thy candlestick out of its place."
- D. "He that confesses me, him will I confess."

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A CROWN FOR THE FAITHFUL
(Revelation 2:8-11)

INTRODUCTION —

- A. Tribulation and poverty.
- B. The church in Smyrna—
 - 1. A proud and wealthy seaport, 100 miles north of Ephesus.
—Wore its crown of beautiful buildings about a rounded hill.
 - 2. In contrast, materially and spiritually, the church. Last stronghold of Christianity in Asia Minor when Moslems overran “the infidel city.”

I. I KNOW.

—There is acknowledgment as well as knowledge. Comfort in the words.

- A. “The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous”—comfort to believers.
- B. Contrast “Depart from me, ye that work iniquity; I never knew you.”

II. FEAR NOT.

- A. There is little that is bright in the picture of persecution, but there is the assurance of God’s presence.
- B. There is not the dread of the unknown.
- C. See Luke 12:4, 5.
- D. “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them” (II Kings 6:16).

III. BE THOU FAITHFUL.

—Full of faith in Christ according to His word (not credulity, nor confidence only in power over God).

- A. Belief. “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me” (John 14:1).
- B. Trust. “Be like the bird, That pausing her flight, awhile on boughs too slight, Feels them give way beneath her and yet sings, Knowing that she hath wings.”

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C. Obedience—"The acid test of faith"

"One dared to die; in a swift moment's space
Fell in war's forefront, laughter on his face;
Bronze tells his fame in many a market place.
Another dared to live the long years through,
Felt his slow heart's blood ooze like crimson dew
For duty's sake, and smiled, and no one knew."

IV. UNTO DEATH.

- A. It is more than "until death do us part."
- B. "If we be dead with him we shall also live with him; if suffer, we shall also reign with him" (II Tim. 2:11, 12).
- C. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Heb. 12:4).

V. I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE.

- A. The reward is not earned, but it is prepared for.
(A son prepares to take over his father's business.)
- B. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:8).
- C. David Livingstone underlined Matthew 28:20: "These are the words of a gentleman, and I know that they are fulfilled."

VI. CROWN OF LIFE.

- A. Contrast second death (Rev. 20:6, 14; 21:8)—Powerless over faithful.
- B. (*I Cor. 9:24, 25.*)

CONCLUSION — Polycarp of Smyrna: "Eighty and six years have I served my Master and He has done me no wrong; how can I now deny Him?"

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WORTHY IS THE LAMB
(Revelation 5)

INTRODUCTION —

Another of the portraits of Christ from the divine art gallery. — Bold and symbolic. They show, not Jesus of Nazareth the great Teacher, but the King of kings, the Prince of Heaven in His glory.

I. THE BOOK THAT WAS TO BE OPENED.

- A. The revelation of the things that were soon to be — the mysteries which God has in store for men. It was in the hand of Him on the throne.
- B. Written within and on the back — *a scroll* — regularly written on one side.
 - 1. This is written full — the message is complete.
 - 2. Part seen by the eye of man, part is not.
 - Things which are seen are temporal, things not seen are eternal.
- C. Close sealed with seven seals.
 - 1. Completely sealed from the unworthy.
 - 2. Part opened at a time.

II. NONE FOUND WORTHY TO OPEN IT.

- A. Who is worthy to open the book of the mysteries of *your* life?
 - 1. Not yourself; you have made it less than it should be.
 - 2. No man can perfectly advise; many will betray confidence.
 - 3. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels."
- B. "Wept much."
 - 1. Because the mystery was not to be known?
 - 2. Because of the unworthiness of all.

III. PORTRAIT OF THE WORTHY ONE.

- A. Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David — Jesus' kingly line.
 - "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, till Shiloh come."

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- B. Hath overcome, to open the book.
“Fear not, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).
- C. In the midst (between) the throne and the four living creatures.
“One mediator between God and man” (I Tim. 2:5).
- D. In the midst of the elders—“God with us”—never aloof.
- E. The Lamb, slain (John looked for a Lion).
(Be not materially literal.)
“Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).
- F. Seven horns—“All authority hath been given unto me” (Matt. 28:18).
- G. Seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth—
“Lo, I am with you always.”

IV. RESPONSE TO THE WORTHY ONE.

- A. We consider the worthiness of Christ.
 - 1. His spotless life—“Which of you convicteth me of sin?” (John 8:46).
 - 2. His deeds of power—disease, demons, life and death, the natural forces subject to Him.
 - 3. His matchless teaching, plumbing the depths of the eternal soul.
 - 4. His works of mercy. He went about doing good.
- B. But what does the Word say?
 - 1. “God hath highly exalted him” (See Phil. 2:5-11).
 - 2. God provides that we may partake of His worthiness. (See I Cor. 1:22-25.)
“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:4-6).

CONCLUSION — Read verses 11, 13.

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A NEW SONG

(Revelation 5:1-14)

INTRODUCTION — They say the darkest hour is just before the dawn—and the greatest songs are sung at the dispelling of that darkness.

“O say can you see by the dawn’s early light what so proudly
we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous
fight,
O’er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
O say, does that star spangled banner yet wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?”

— *Francis Scott Key*

I. SONGS IN SCRIPTURE.

- A. Song of Moses and of Miriam, at the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod. 15:1-21).
- B. Song of Deborah, at the victory over the armies of Sisera the Canaanite (Judges 5).
- C. Song at the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (I Chron. 16:7-36).

II. OCCASION FOR SONG IN REVELATION.

- A. The scroll, written full of the mysteries of life and the world, close sealed with seven seals.
- B. John’s despondency that there was not one worthy to open and to reveal.
- C. There arises, according to promise, One who is worthy — there is a new song.

III. SINGING OF THE LAMB WORTHY TO REVEAL THE MYSTERIES.

- A. The first question: Why is evil in the world? Whence has it power? How shall the power be broken?

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“There was one who was willing to die in my stead
That a soul so unworthy might live,
And the path to the cross He was willing to tread,
All the sins of my life to forgive,
They are nailed to the cross;
they are nailed to the cross.
O how much He was willing to bear!
With what anguish and loss Jesus went to the
cross,
But He carried my sins with Him there.”

B. Second question: Does God care?

“Marvelous grace of our loving Lord;
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,
Yonder on Calvary’s mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.
Grace, grace, God’s grace;
grace that will pardon and cleanse within.
Grace, grace, God’s grace;
grace that is greater than all our sin.”

C. Third question: If a man die, shall he live again?

“I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And on the earth again shall stand.
I know eternal life He giveth,
That grace and power are in His hand.”

D. Fourth question: Why do the righteous suffer?

“There are days so dark that I seek in vain
For the face of my Friend divine;
But tho’ darkness hide He is there to guide,
By the touch of His hand on mine.
When the way is dim and I cannot see
Through the mist of His wise design,
How my glad heart yearns and my faith returns,
By the touch of His hand on mine.”

E. Fifth question: What is the meaning of life?

“All the way my Savior leads me;
What have I to ask beside?

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Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who through life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell,
For I know whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well."

F. How shall we sing when evil is rampant?

When England was at its worst, Isaac Watts wrote:

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing!"

IV. CHRISTIANS SING.

- A. Paul and Silas in prison, were heard singing hymns at midnight (Acts 16:25).
- B. "I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also" (I Cor. 14:15). (Concerning conduct of worship.)
- C. (In a passage that speaks of the Christian's home life):
"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:18).
- D. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).

CONCLUSION — The new event of Christ's coming again will be accomplished with the New Song. Till then:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name;
Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!"

PREACHING THROUGH REVELATION
MEASURING THE TEMPLE

(Revelation 11:1, 2)

INTRODUCTION — In his vision the apostle John was asked to take a poll.

- A. He was asked, not to learn what the people thought about an issue before them, but to learn and to tell what the Word of God said about the people before Him.
- B. His measuring of the temple could not be a material measure of the literal temple in Jerusalem; that had been destroyed some twenty years before John wrote.
- C. The measurement, then, must have a symbolic meaning, clear to Christians in first-century Asia Minor, to whom Revelation was addressed.
 - 1. The stick to be used in measuring was God's Word.
 - 2. The temple to be measured was the Church.
 - 3. The altar to be measured was the worship, its object and procedures.
 - 4. The worshipers to be measured were the people who made up the church.

I. THERE WAS NEED FOR MEASUREMENT (v. 1).

- A. Maintain constant reference to a divine standard.
 - 1. It can warn of departures as they develop.
 - 2. It can provide a basis of correction.
 - 3. The Lord's seven letters to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2, 3) served as such a measurement.
- B. The need for measurement becomes greater with the passage of time.
 - 1. Divisions and contradictions develop within the church.
 - 2. As the church is Christ's, it either pleases or disappoints Him; it needs a frequent report on what it is doing.
- C. Refusal to measure and be measured rests on human whim, not divine will.
 - 1. The immature ones say, "I am right and you are wrong."

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2. The humanists say, "I am right for me; you are right for you."
3. Christians must say, "Let's both get right with God."

II. THERE WAS AND IS A BASIS OF MEASUREMENT, GOD GIVEN (v. 1).

- A. The measuring rod has its counterpart in the "Little book" of Rev. 10:8-11.
 1. Scripture (the book or rod) has about it an attractive beauty, sweet and pleasant.
 2. Digested to discover its meaning, it disturbs with its rebukes and demands (See II Kings 22:10-13).
- B. For the New Testament church the given yardstick is the New Testament Scripture.
 1. It presents the Gospel and the commands of Christ.
 2. It leads the way to salvation in Christ.
 3. It instructs and corrects, directing the life in Christ.

III. THE TEMPLE—THE CHURCH—IS TO BE MEASURED BY THE GIVEN STANDARD (v. 1).

- A. Its message is to be compared with the words of Christ.
- B. Its creed is supplied in the apostles' confession of Christ (Matt. 16:13-18).
- C. Its name is that which identifies it with its Lord.
 - Forbidding Scriptural names is as wrong as adopting unScriptural names.
- D. Its organization is seen in the directions given in Acts and the epistles.
 1. Christ is the Head: under Him all are brothers.
 2. Elders and deacons (overseers and servants) minister to the church in a free and flexible society.
 - Flexible adaptation to the local scene is a part of the given pattern.
- E. Its necessary oneness is demanded by the oneness of God and His revelation (Eph. 4:1-7).

IV. THE CHURCH'S WORSHIP—THE ALTAR—IS TO BE MEASURED BY THE GIVEN STANDARD.

- A. Its ordinances—baptism and the Lord's Supper—are supplied by the example and direction of Christ.

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- B. The center of its worship—both attitude and action—is Christ, and especially the Christ of the cross.
- C. The manner of its worship—in spirit and in truth—is directed by Him (John 4:23, 24).
- D. The extension of its worship, in personal dedication, is the acceptable “living sacrifice” (Rom. 12).

V. THE CHURCH'S WORSHIPERS ARE TO BE MEASURED BY THE GIVEN STANDARD.

- A. In purity of life the measure is the example of Christ.
- B. In love of the brethren it looks to His insistent command (John 13:34, 35; see also I John 3 and 4).
- C. In Christian service it hears the Sermon on the Mount and the judgment prophecy of the Lord (Matt. 25:31-46).
- D. For spiritual growth it looks to Christ (Eph. 4:13).

VI. GOD'S SERVANT IS NOT AUTHORIZED TO MEASURE THE WORLD (v. 2).

- A. In John's vision the measuring stopped at the entrance to the holy place. — Outside was the court of the Gentiles, for which he was not responsible.
- B. Paul agrees: “What have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth” (I Cor. 5:12, 13).
- C. Christians waste much time trying to bring communities and their uncommitted citizens into conformity with Christian standards of faith and life. It can't be done. It is hard enough to get Christians to act like Christians, without expecting non-Christians to act like something they are not.
- D. Bring the citizen and Christ together; then measure according to the Word.

CONCLUSION — Ye are the temple of God, and thus subject to measurement! “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23, 24).

WHAT KEEPS GOD'S PEOPLE GOING?

(Revelation 13:1-10)

INTRODUCTION — Do you ever feel that you have come to the end of your string, that you can't keep on as a Christian?

A. Consider the folk to whom the book of Revelation was first sent.

1. Bitterly persecuted for their refusal to worship the Roman Emperor.
2. Position, property, and friends taken from them, their lives were in jeopardy.

B. Consider the message that came from John on the Isle of Patmos.

1. It had to be delivered by officers of the Empire.
2. Thus it was written in symbols and figures the Romans could not understand, but were known to the Jewish Christians from such books as Ezekiel and Daniel.
3. The message in brief: You are on the ultimately winning side; keep on keeping on!

I. THE ENEMY IS DESCRIBED (vv. 1-9).

A. The ravening beast is the persecuting Roman Empire.

1. Coming up out of the sea: Roman forces approached Asia Minor through the Aegean Sea.
2. The ten horns conform to ten emperors who had reigned up to that time.
3. Seven heads, with blasphemous titles, conform to seven of the emperors who had been and were worshiped as gods.
4. The power to overrun and persecute was evident in the Roman military power.

B. The Roman persecution is limited.

1. Terribly severe, it was still but for a time and would end. "Time and times and half a time" comes to three and one-half years.
2. It is still not ultimate destruction: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul:

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but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

C. The Roman persecution was subtle.

1. It did not forbid the worship of God in Christ; it simply demanded the worship of the Emperor as one among many gods.
2. Christians' refusal to worship anyone or anything but God seemed intolerant and unpatriotic; but for this "intolerance" they gave all.
3. Application: What competing loyalties tempt *you* to less than complete service to God? Employment? Business? Peer pressure? Property? Social obligations?

II. THE ASSURANCE IS GIVEN (v. 10).

The basic text of Revelation 13:10 admits to two interpretations:

A. "Whoever makes captives, he will be led into captivity; whoever kills with the sword, he must be killed by the sword" (*The Berkeley Version*).

1. This reiterates Galatians 6:7: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."
2. The Empire that enslaved its captives would diminish its own freedom in the process, and would ultimately see its own citizens enslaved.
3. Recall Jesus' words to Peter in Gethsemane: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52).
4. "Woe to thee that destroyest, and thou was not destroyed: and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou hast ceased to destroy, thou shalt be destroyed; and when thou hast made an end of dealing treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee" (Isa. 33:1).
5. Christians were sustained by assurance of ultimate justice.

B. (Alternate interpretation) "If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed

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with the sword, with the sword he will be killed" (*New International Version*).

1. This accords with Matthew 6:25-34 in renouncing worry over matters beyond one's control; leave matters in the hands of God.
2. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath [God's judgment]: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). (Compare Deuteronomy 32:35-37.)
3. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps . . . who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Pet. 2:21, 23).
4. Christians were strengthened by assurance that God's control of the situation was adequate, and better than their concern (II Tim. 1:12).

III. GOD'S PEOPLE RESPOND (v. 10).

—The basic text of the final statement admits of two interpretations:

- A. "On this fact rests the endurance and fidelity of God's people" (Goodspeed, *An American Translation*).
 1. The assurance of ultimate justice makes patient continuance possible.
 2. "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (II Tim. 2:11, 12).
 3. So the courage, faithfulness, and mild behavior of persecuted saints has always amazed the persecutors.
 4. (The scoffing farmer bragged about receiving more for his crop than did his Christian neighbor. The Christian replied with a smile, "What ever gave you the idea that God settled all His accounts on October 1 each year?")
- B. (Alternate interpretation) "This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints" (*New International Version*).

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1. Unable to prevent or control their affliction, they would need strong faith to survive. Thus the passage becomes part of the exhortation, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).
2. Compare the stubborn faithfulness of the three Hebrews facing the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:17, 18).
3. It is the ultimate faith in God without specific promise of immediate help: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

CONCLUSION — We see a confrontation between two "eternal cities." Rome, which had lasted a long time, but its ancient ruins speak of final destruction; The New Jerusalem, to be the home of God's people forever.

Between the two is this distinction: "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship (the beast/Rome), whose *names are not written in the book of life* of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).