

The Revelation of John The Divine

The Prophecies to the Church: Chapters 1-3

Introduction

Chapter 1

- 1- The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show his servants what must by necessity¹ happen quickly² and He made it known³ sending His messenger⁴ to His servant John.
- 2- Who has born witness to the Word of God and the testimony Jesus Christ of all that he saw.
- 3- Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy and keeps the things written in it for the time⁵ is near.

¹ The Greek word 'dei' may simply be understood as 'necessity' or 'destiny' but in this context it would be divine destiny.

² The Greek word 'taxos' means 'swiftly, speedily quickly, without delay'. We may understand this word to mean that when it is time for Jesus to come and the subsequent unfolding of the Tribulation it will all happen very quickly. The first time that the Greek word 'taxos' occurs in the New Testament in Luke 18:8 it invokes the meaning of an event that would not necessarily happen soon with respect to a timeline but when it was time for the Son of Man to come the judgment would take place quickly. This Greek word is used one more time in the book of Revelation in 22:6. In this scripture Jesus says, "behold I come quickly." It is obvious today that Jesus did not mean that he would come in the very near future but when He does come it will happen quickly. The fact that Jesus did not know the time of His coming concurs with the fact that Jesus would not have been referring to a timeline but to a quick and speedy event (Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36,50; 25:13).

³ The Greek verb 'semaino', has a variety of meanings but more than anything else it refers to the use of a symbol or a sign to cause something to be understood. When Jesus talked about His death by crucifixion He said "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to me" (John 12:32). Instead of coming right out and saying "If I be crucified" He used a word that describes what happens when one is crucified thus he was able to both refer to being lifting up as the serpent in the wilderness and His own crucifixion (John 3:14). This Greek word may be translated 'to give a sign, to make clear, signal, to command, rule; to show a sign, point out, announce, prove. It is used 6 times in the New Testament and each time it carries the meaning of 'to signal' or 'to announce' (John 12:33; 18:32; 21:19; Acts 11:28; 25:27).

⁴ An angel also accompanied and helped Daniel with the visions and revelation of the last days. However, it is important to note that 'aggelos' may refer to any messenger whether man or angel. At the end of Revelation John falls to the feet of this messenger and was rebuked for doing so. It was at this time that the messenger was revealed to be a fellow servant to John and one of the prophets. The Greek verb 'adelphos' (brethren) may be understood as kindred or nationality as it is used when Peter addresses the crowd or Israelites in Acts 2: 29.

⁵ The Greek word 'kairos' may refer to a definite or specific time and in this case a time of crisis or decisive moment as such it is viewed as one of the chief eschatological (study of the last days) terms. Kairos is a common word occurring 85 times in the New Testament and 485 times in the Septuagint. The Jews did not recognize the 'kairos' or Messianic times when Jesus came (Luke 19:44). The 'kairos' that Jesus spoke of concerning Himself was the time of His death (Matthew 26:18). Now in the same since the decisive moment or critical time for everyman is near.

- 4- John to the seven churches that are in Asia. Grace to you and Peace from Him who is and was and is to come⁶ and from the seven spirits that are before His throne.
- 5- And from Jesus Christ the faithful⁷ witness the firstborn from among the dead⁸ and the ruler of the kings⁹ of the earth. The One who loves us and has freed¹⁰ us from our sins with His own blood¹¹.

⁶ The Septuagint also refers to God as "He who is" (Gr- ho on). God describes Himself in the Old Testament as "I Yahoah am the first and I am He who will be with the last" (Jeremiah 1:6; 14:13; Isaiah 41:4c).

⁷ The adjective 'pistos', 'faithful' is from the noun 'pistis', 'faith'. Jesus is referred to as the faithful witness in Rev 3:14 and Psalms 89:37.

⁸ Jesus being the firstborn from the dead refer to the fact that He is the first one who was resurrected from the dead with an immortal and eternal body. Paul also gives the exact same title for Jesus in Colossians 1:18 "And He is the head of the body the church, who is the beginning, **the firstborn from among the dead** the he might hold first place in all things." Jesus is also referred to as, "the first fruits of them that sleep" 1 Corinthians 15:20,23 and "the first that should rise from the dead," Acts 26:23.

⁹ That Jesus Christ our Lord should be the King over all kings is found in both the Old and New Testaments, "Also I will make him a firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." Psalms 89:27, Which in its own time he shall show the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;" 1 Timothy 6:15

¹⁰ One of the most important doctrines that is essential for salvation is "Faith in the Blood of Jesus to Cleanse from Sin." We find a word used here in Revelation 1:5 that emphasizes the radical effect that the blood of Jesus has on sin, the blood looses it from off of us or frees us from its hold. The Greek verb that is used is found 43 times in the New Testament. The basic meaning of 'luo' is to set free, untie, or loose. The opposite of 'luo' is 'deo' which means to bind (Matthew 18:18). One of the many ways that it can be translated is 'destroy' as in 1 John 3:8, "...that he might destroy the works of the devil." The verb occurs in its "arost active" form 20 times (Mark 11:2; John 2:19; 11:44; Acts 7:33; Rev 9:14; Acts 22:30; Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; Acts 13:25; Rev 5:2; 1:5; Matt 21:2; Luke 19:30; Acts 2:24; Eph 2:14; Matt 5:19; 16:19; 18:18; John 1:27; 1 John 3:8). In all of these verses it is primary translated, destroy, loose and untie. Other Greek words that are used to express the effect of the blood is 'katharitzo' which is also used many times in the gospels to describe lepers being cleansed after Jesus had headed them. The word is used concerning our hearts having been purified (Acts 15:9); a people purified for God (Titus 2:14), the blood that purifies the conscience (Hebrews 9:14,23); that cleanses from sin (1 John 1:7); and that cleanses from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). There is a striking change of tense in this verse that helps to underscore the fact that the blood of Jesus has freed us from every sin. The change in tense is between 'agaponti' (loves) and 'lusanti/lousanti' (loosed/washed). While 'love' is in the present tense 'loosed' is in the past tense. This alludes to the fact that Jesus freed us from our sins at the moment that we received His forgiveness yet His love is present and forever ongoing. By the blood of Jesus we were set free to go out from the land of bondage and captivity just as the children of Israel were set free from slavery on the night of the Passover. They were not being set free every day little by little but God gave them a complete deliverance when He came and saved them from their oppressors. He set them free so that they could serve Him, be His people and live in His inheritance. We were equally set free from our sins when we called upon the name of the Lord Jesus. Each of us had as it were our own individual Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). When we were set free we came into the realm of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is the realm of our inheritance where we are protected, guided and provided for by God. Here in this place of His goodness we grow and mature in every dimension of Gods goodness through the activity of His love that has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). In this grace and provision of God if we sin and confess our sin the blood of Jesus will purify us from any contamination of sin that would separate us from God so that we can continue on in the fellowship of being in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:7,9; 2:1). The Greek word 'louein' is used for washing the whole body and the noun 'loutron' is a term used for baptism (Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5), thus making 'lousanti' an allusion to baptism. However, the idea communicated by 'lusanti' denotes the release from slavery and freedom from the tyrannical reign of Satan. (*The Textus Receptus has*

- 6- And has made us kings and priests¹² to God and His Father¹³; glory and might to Him unto the ages of the ages. Amen.
- 7- Behold He comes with clouds¹⁴ and every eye shall see Him and they which pierced¹⁵ Him. Yes, and all the tribes of the earth shall wail¹⁶ on account of Him amen.

'lousanti' (washed) based on P 046 82, 2059, the Koine tradition, later uncials whereas most of the minuscules, manuscripts associated with Andreas of Caesarea, and few earlier versions, albeit even some suspect versions, read 'lusanti'.

¹¹ The blood of Jesus is the means by which the sins of every willing person are removed. In the Old Testament we discover that the blood purges (Leviticus 17:4), cleanses (Leviticus 14:1-9, 14 and sanctifies (Exodus 19:20-21). These types in the Old Testament revealed what Christ Jesus would do for all mankind when He offered up His own soul as the Lamb of God for everyman. His blood is the representation of our life and the means by which all past sins have been removed having been justly executed. Most scholars agree that the sprinkling of the blood on the altar and the ascending smoke of the sacrifice symbolize union of the one making the offering with Yahoah. That Jesus is the fulfillment of these sacrifices and offerings is clear from the following verses (Hebrews 1:3; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 9:9,14; 1 Peter 1:2,19; 1 John 1:7; John 1:29; 1 John 3:5; Hebrews 10:1; Hebrews 2:11; Hebrews 13:12; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 3:25; Romans 5:9). Our sins having been removed by the offering of the blood of Jesus we are brought into the family of God and our elected position as priest and kings.

¹² The idea of God's people being a kingdom of priest and a holy nation is communicated in Exodus 19:6 and Isaiah 61:6. The same privilege is extended to those of the New Covenant, which of course fulfills rather than replaces the Old Covenant (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Matthew 5:17).

¹³ Central to the New Testament is the fact the Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. God is called the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ three times in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3). Jesus calls God His Father 65 times (Matthew 10:32,33; 11:25,26,27; 12:50; 15:13; 16:17,27; 18:10,19,35; 20:23; 24:36; 25:34; 26:29,39,42,53; Mark 14:36; Luke 2:49; 9:26; 10:21,22; 22:29,42; 23:34,46; 24:49; John 2:16; 5:17,18; 6:32; 8:19; 8:28,38,49,54; 10:17,18,25,29,30,32,37; 12:26; 14:2,7,20,21,23,28; 15:1,8,10,15,23,24; 16:10; 18:11; 20:17,21; Revelation 2:27; 3:5,21). Jesus is also called God's Son 69 times (Matthew 1:23; 4:3; 4:6; 8:29; 14:33; 16:16; 26:63; 27:40,43,54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; 5:7; 15:39; Luke 1:32,35; 4:41; 22:70; John 1:14,18,34,49; 3:16,17,18,36; 5:25; 6:69; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4,27; 19:7; 20:31; Acts 3:13,26; 8:37; 9:20; 13:33; 1:4,9; 5:10; 8:3; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 15:28; 2 Corinthians 1:19; 2:20; 4:4; Ephesians 4:13; Titus 1:4; Hebrews 1:8; 4:14; 6:6; 10:29; 2 Peter 1:17; 1 John 3:8; 4:9,10,15; 5:5,9,10,11,12,13,20; 2 John 3,9; Revelation 2:18.) Jesus is the eternal God who was both God and with God throughout eternity whom John referred to as the Word (John 1:1,14; Revelation 19:13). God created everything by Jesus Christ who Himself also was and is God (Ephesians 3:9; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2). God the Word became the only begotten Son of God by being born of a woman to redeem all mankind making us kings and priest to God and heirs and joint heirs with Himself (Romans 8:17).

¹⁴ When God came to rescue Israel out of the land of Egypt He appeared in a cloud, Gr-nephele, (Exodus 13:21-22). When Yahweh God came to speak with Israel so that all of the people could hear His voice He came in a cloud (Exodus 19:9). When Yahweh God called Moses to come up into the mountain to meet with Him Moses went up into a cloud (Exodus 24:15-18). The event that most clearly captivates the fact the person Yahweh God was actually in the midst of this cloud is found in Exodus 14. When the cloud of God stood between Israel and Egypt to prevent the Egyptians from overtaking the Israelites Yahweh God looked out of the cloud at the host of the Egyptians. Evidently, the Egyptians were able to see Yahweh when He poked His head out of the cloud for the scripture says He caused a destructive panic among the army of the Egyptians (Exodus 14:24). The cloud of God was seen in Israel after Solomon had finished building the temple. His presence so overwhelmed the people that the priest could not perform their priestly duties (2 Chronicles 5:14). The last time that the glory cloud of God was seen in the Old Testament times was when Jerusalem was overthrown by Babylon (Ezekiel 10:4). When the prophet Daniel prophesied of the the last days and the coming of the Messiah he pictured the Son of man coming with the clouds to the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:13). The cloud of God was not seen again until Jesus went up into the mountain to pray with Peter, James and John. The glory cloud overshadowed them and Yahweh God spoke out of the midst

- 8- I am the alpha and the omega, beginning and ending¹⁷, says the Lord who is and who was and who is to come the Almighty¹⁸.
- 9- I John, also your brother and fellow-partaker in the tribulation¹⁹ and in the kingdom and patient endurance²⁰ of Jesus Christ, was in the island which is called Patmos²¹ because of the Word of God and because of the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The Things Seen By John (The Vision of Jesus)

- 10- I came to be in Spirit²² on the Lords day and I heard a loud voice as a trumpet behind me,
- 11- saying “I am the Alpha and the Omega the first and the last²³ and what you see write in a book and send to the churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus and to

of the excellent glory and said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Mark 9:7; Luke 9:34-35; 2 Peter 1:17) The cloud of God is associated with the return of the Lord Jesus at the time of the first resurrection and the catching away of the church and also at His second coming (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Matthew 24:30; 26:40; Mark 13:26; 14:26; Luke 21:27).

¹⁵ The Greek word ‘ekkentēō’ (pierced) only occurs here and in John 19:37. The prophet Zachariah saw and spoke this same message more than 400 years earlier “and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him” (Zachariah 12:10).

¹⁶ Zachariah 12:10, was fulfilled in part at Calvary because it is written, “For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture says, They shall look on him whom they pierced,” (John 19:36-37). However, there is a broader application given here in Revelation 1:7 which is not limited to the house of Israel but extends to every tribe of the earth. The wailing in this case is probably not due to remorse but to the pending judgment. Jesus will not only be visible when He comes to meet the saints in the air in order to hide them from the day of wrath but He will be seen throughout the period of the day of vengeance and the wrath of God (1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 6:15-16).

¹⁷ Jesus now makes known that He is the one who is the sum total of everything and fills everything by describing Himself as the Alpha and Omega and thus implying everything in between. He too is the one “who is and who was and is to come” a description given of God the Father in verse 4.

¹⁸ Jesus is also the Almighty, the ‘pantokrator’, which is a common Septuagint description of Yahoah (Yahweh). In the Septuagint ‘pantokrator’ translates ‘Elohei TZevaot’ and ‘Yahoah TZevaot’ which literally means “God of armies”. It only appears one time in the New Testament outside of the book of Revelation and that is in 2 Corinthians 6:18.

¹⁹ The Greek word ‘thlipzin’ may be translated tribulation or suffering but it is most commonly identified with tribulation. It is this word that appears in John 16:33, wherein Jesus told his disciples that “in this world you will have tribulation”.

²⁰ The Greek word ‘hupomone’ is usually translated patience in the Authorized Version and first occurs in the New Testament in Luke 8:15. It is translated from the Hebrew word ‘mekveh’ in the Septuagint and may be rendered hope or abiding as in its first occurrence in 1 Chronicles 29:15.

²¹ The Island of Patmos is a small rocky island that is about 10 mile long and 5 miles wide in the Aegean Sea. It is reported to be about 40 miles southwest of Ephesus. Tertullian wrote that after John “suffered no hurt from being plunged in boiling oil” he was exiled to Patmos. Ignatius and Irenaeus also concur with Tertullian’s account of John, that John was exiled to Patmos by Domitian emperor of Rome.

²² The phrase found here “egenomen en pneumati” (I came to be in Spirit) is different from the normal state of the believer “este en pneumatic” (are in Spirit) Romans 8:9. John had come under a special anointing or influence of the Holy Spirit as he was empowered to be taken up into heaven and experience this vision.

²³ Jesus now states that he is not only the “arche kai telos” (Beginning and End) but also the “oh protos kai oh eschatos” (The First and The Last) Revelation 1:8, 11.

- Sardis and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
- 12- And I turned to see the voice, which spoke with me, and having turned I saw seven golden menorahs²⁴.
- 13- And in the midst of the seven menorahs like a Son of Man²⁵ with a robe reaching to His feet²⁶ fastened at the chest with a gold belt.
- 14- And His head and hair were white as if wool as white as snow and His eyes as a flame of fire²⁷.
- 15- And His feet like fine brass as if glowing in a furnace²⁸ and His voice as the voice of many waters²⁹.
- 16- And having in His right hand seven stars and a sharp two-edged sword³⁰ was going forth out of His mouth and His countenance was as the sun shines in its power.

²⁴ When John turned to see Jesus he first encountered His church, which is His body the fullness of Him who fills all things and His representative on the earth. God instructed Moses to make a seven-branched Menorah (Gr-luchnia), which was to be placed in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:31-37). The Tabernacle on earth was a figure and representation of the heavenly one, which John saw in this vision. A new dimension of meaning was given to the lamps by this revelation. We discover that the churches are symbolized by the menorah (Revelation 1:20). The church is the light of the world as Jesus said “a city set upon a hill that cannot be hidden” (Matthew 5:14-16). The prophet Zachariah saw a similar vision in Zachariah 4:2; the seven-branched Menorah was associated with the fullness of the Spirit of God and with the eyes of Yahoah (Zachariah 4:6,10). A similar revelation is also drawn out here in the book of Revelation where we observe the seven Spirits indirectly associated with the menorah. The difference is that the church is now revealed and the seven Spirits are associated directly with the seven churches rather than the menorah. When we consider the seven Spirits of God we may either understand it as the fullness of Gods Spirit or more specifically as seven attributes of the Spirit. The prophet Isaiah revealed that the Messiah would come in the fullness of the Spirit of God and listed these seven attributes of the Spirit: 1-The Spirit of Yahweh; 2- The spirit of wisdom; 3- The spirit of understanding; 4- The spirit of counsel; 5- The spirit of might; 6- The spirit of knowledge; 7- The spirit of the fear of Yahweh. God placed the fullness of His Spirit and power in the church inasmuch that He refers to the church as the fullness of Him that fills all things (Ephesians 1:23; 1Corinthians 12:28). It is through the church that God communicates His will and makes Himself known revealing Jesus by His Spirit (John 16:13-15; Colossians 1:18,24; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

²⁵ When God showed Daniel a similar vision concerning the last days he saw the Son of Man come with clouds of heaven and coming to the ancient of days was given dominion and glory and a kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14). We may conclude that there is an intentional connection between these two passages.

²⁶ This is the only time that the Greek ‘poderes’ is found in the New Testament. However, it is found seven times in the Septuagint and refers to the robes of the High Priest in every case except for one. We may view Jesus as the Great High Priest who has passed into the Heavens and now stands in the midst of His church watching over the affairs and order of the church with a jealous care and affection. A description of the robes of the High Priest are given in Exodus 28 and 29. The appearance of the golden belt at his chest reminds us of the breastplate of Judgment worn by the Priest.

²⁷ Once again there is a note of judgment in the description of His eyes being as a flame of fire. The idea of these images describing anger and judgment are further emphasized when the church at Thyatira is being rebuked for allowing Jezebel to teach and mislead His servants to commit fornication (2:18).

²⁸ Daniel described many of these same features in Daniel 7:9 and 10:5. We are also reminded of the appearance of Jesus as He was transfigured before Peter, James and John (Luke 9:29).

²⁹ This same description of the voice of God is given in Ezekiel 43:2 and Revelation 19:6.

- 17- And when I saw Him I fell as His feet as dead³¹ and He laid His right hand upon me saying to me, “Fear not³²; I am the first and the last³³,”
- 18- And the Living and I became dead and behold I am alive to the ages of the ages, Amen and have the keys of hell and of death.
- 19- Write therefore what you have seen and the things that are and the things that are about to take place after these things³⁴.
- 20- The mystery³⁵ of the seven stars which you saw upon my right hand and the seven golden menorahs. The seven stars are the seven messengers of the seven churches; and the seven lamp stands, which you saw are the seven churches.

The Things That Are (The Church)

Chapter 2

³⁰ The sharp two-edged sword is the word of His mouth that utters divine judgment both to the church at Pergamum whom He warns that He will come and fight against with the sword of His mouth unless they repent and the nations that are gathered against Him (2:16; 19:15,21).

³¹ The encounter with the divine presence had the same effect on all Israel, Daniel, Ezekiel, Peter, James, John and Paul (Leviticus 9:24; Daniel 8:17; 10:15; Ezekiel 1:28; Matthew 17:6 and Acts 26:14).

³² John who during the days of Jesus earthly ministry had rested his head upon the chest of the Lord now is overcome with His awesome glory. He then hears the Master speak the same comforting words that He spoke when He approached the disciples walking on the water and when they saw Him transfigured before them, “Fear not” (Matthew 14:27;17:7)

³³ It has been noted by Greek scholars that the word for “last” is not the neuter ‘eschaton’ but the masculine ‘eschatos’ indicating that the end is not an event but a person, Christ Jesus. Yahoah God used this same expression to comfort His people in Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12 now Jesus His only begotten Son identifies Himself in the same absolute sovereignty.

³⁴ The Gospel of John is organized as a chronology giving us the necessary information that allows us to understand the length of the ministry of Jesus. Without the gospel of John we would not have the evidence to support that Jesus ministry was any more than a year and a half in length. The book of Revelation is also organized in a logical chronology of events. The first indication of the chronology of the book of Revelation is given in this verse, which is also the key to understanding the way that this book of prophecy is organized. The book of Revelation if organized into three sections: First- “What you have seen”, which was the vision of the Son of Man and is recorded in chapter 1. Second- “The things which are”, concerning the church recorded in chapters 2-3. Third- “The things that are about to take place after these things”, which begins in chapter 4. One obvious fact that underscores these three divisions is that in chapters 2 through 3 the word church occurs 7 times. However, from Revelation 4:1 to 22:21 the word church totally disappears. The chronological order of the book of Revelation is further served by the fact that there are 7 seals, seven trumpets and the seven vials that are dealt with sequentially through the events of this book. Other than a few obviously parathetical statements the chronological sequence has no interruptions. The Greek phrase “meta tauta” which means “after these things” and marks the final section of the book of Revelation appears in 4:1 The beginning of chapter 4 verse 1 also opens and closes with these words “meta tauta” underscoring the transition that has been outlined here in verse 19.

³⁵ This is in fact the nature of the book of Revelation to make known the mystery or hidden symbol. The Hebrew/Aramaic word that the Septuagint translates ‘musterion’, is ‘raz’ and first occurs in Daniel 2:18.

- 1- To the messenger³⁶ in the Ephesian³⁷ Church write, This is what He says who grasp³⁸ the seven stars in His right hand who walks in the midst³⁹ of the seven golden menorahs.
- 2- I know your works⁴⁰ and your hard labor and your patient enduring and that you cannot⁴¹ tolerate⁴² evil. And you examined⁴³ those who claim to be apostles⁴⁴ and are not and found them to be liars.
- 3- And you have borne and patiently endured and you have labored and have not grown weary for my Name.
- 4- But I have this against you that you have left your first love⁴⁵.
- 5- Remember therefore where you have fallen from and do the first works⁴⁶. But if not I will come to you quickly and I will remove your menorah out of its place unless you repent.
- 6- But this you have that you hate the works of the Nicolaitanes⁴⁷, which I also hate.

³⁶ The Greek word 'aggelos' may be translated 'angel or messenger'. Because it is apparent that Christ Jesus is writing to the one who is responsible for setting things in order in the church, aggelos has been translated messenger. The first time in the Old Testament that aggelos and its Hebrew counterpart malach are used of a man is in Genesis 32:3,6, "Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau" and then again in Numbers 20:14, "And Moses sent a messenger (aggelos) from Kadesh unto the king of Edom". In fact of the 219 times that malach occurs in the MT about 96 times it refers to a human messenger.

³⁷ Historically we believe that John was an overseer at the Church of Ephesus. We also know that Paul had a significant impact on the spiritual climate of Ephesus, having as he said, "fought with beast at Ephesus" (1 Corinthians 15:32; Acts 19:8,10). The Temple of Diana (Artemis), which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was located there. The worship of Diana was one of the major religious practices during the time of the Roman Empire (Acts 19:35).

³⁸ The Greek 'kraton' may be translated 'govern, grasp, take possession of, hold fast, hold in ones power'.

³⁹ Jesus is walking in the midst of the churches inspecting and guarding His church against corruption by instructing, correcting and executing judgment.

⁴⁰ This is the opening statement that Jesus makes to everyone of the churches "I know your works" (Textus Receptus). If our works were not important to Jesus it would not be so emphasized. However we know that works these kind of works are inseparable from faith for as James said, "faith without works is dead" why? Because the works that God desires are produced by faith.

⁴¹ The Greek verb 'dunamai' which is translated 'able, can, do or have power'.

⁴² The Greek verb 'bastatzo', means 'to bear, carry, put up with, tolerate'

⁴³ The verb 'peiratzō' may be understood as try, make a trial of, put to the test, discover what kind of a person someone is and thus to examine.

⁴⁴ Paul had warned the church of Ephesus that after he was gone savage wolves would creep in and would not spare the flock (Acts 20:20). Evidently the leadership at Ephesus had been vigilant in this area and had run the wolves off.

⁴⁵ The first love is the love that the Father has for us, "Herein is love not that we loved God but that He first loved us..." 1 John 4:10. The love that we have for God is the love that He has given us, having poured it into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, (Romans 5:5). It may be that the church at Ephesus had become so focused on their works and so guarded against the invasion of false doctrines that they had left off being focused and intimate with the Lord Jesus Christ. There must be a balance both of these must be done but love must be first. Above everything else God has called us to worship him in Spirit and in Truth. As we walk with God in the Spirit the love relationship is held supremely above everything else. The Holy Spirit gives us insight and revelation as to whom we should run off and the proper way to deal with sin and deception. A very important rule to remember is that, "knowledge buffs up but love edifies", (1 Cor. 8:1). The knowledge and judgment that we should exercise should come from the overflow of love predominating our life, "I pray that your love will abound more and more in knowledge and judgment" (Philippians 1:9). Barclay concludes that "heresy-hunting had killed love and orthodoxy had been achieved at the price of fellowship" does this sound familiar?

⁴⁶ Contrary to the opinion of many in the church today, works are important to Jesus who will judge everyman according to his works (1 Peter 1:17).

- 7- He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches⁴⁸. To him that conquers⁴⁹ I will give him to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise⁵⁰ of God.
- 8- And to the messenger in the Smyrneans⁵¹ church write: This is what the first and the last says who became dead and lives,
- 9- I know your works and your tribulation and poverty but you are rich also, the slander⁵² of those who claim to be Jews and are not but are a synagogue⁵³ of Satan⁵⁴.
- 10- The things that you are about to suffer do not fear at all. Behold the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried and you shall have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life.
- 11- He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He that conquers shall in no way be injured from the second death.
- 12- And to the messenger in the Pergamos church write: this is what He says who has the sharp two-edged sword.

⁴⁷ From what we can understand about this Gnostic group is that they claimed that it was there Christian liberty that gave them the right to practice idolatry and sexual immorality. The fact the Ephesus was a center for the most immoral and wicked practices is well attested in ancient writings. It appears that many of the Christians at Ephesus were being overcome by the influences of their modern and affluent culture. Ephesus was not only one of the great cities of the Roman Empire it was at the cross roads of world commerce. The pressures from their social environment and affluence would have weight heavy on them to compromise.

⁴⁸ This is another common phrase spoken to all seven churches “He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”. It is this plea of the Lord Jesus Christ that calls out to all churches in every generation to listen to the judgment of Jesus Christ concerning His church.

⁴⁹ The Greek verb ‘nikao’ means to win a victory over, to conquer.

⁵⁰ This is the same Greek word used in the Septuagint for “garden”. It first occurs in Genesis 2:8 “And Yahoah God planted a garden east in Eden”. It is used 12 times in Genesis chapter 2 and 3 to describe the Garden of Eden where God had planted the tree of life, in the midst of the garden.

⁵¹ Smyrna is the modern city of Izmir. It is the only city of the seven that still survives until this day. It is located about 35 miles north of Ephesus on the Aegean Sea. It was a great city in the days that this letter was delivered to them by John. It is the city that claimed to be the birthplace of Homer, also coins have been found describing the city as being “First of Asia in beauty and size.” Smyrna is a famed city of persecution against Christians for it was here that the elderly Polycarp, the twelfth martyr of Smyrna was burned for refusing to confess that Caesar was Lord. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Smyrna became a favorite place for Jewish people to settle.

⁵² The Greek word used is ‘blasphemian’ and may be translated, ‘blasphemy, slander, defame, revile’. Certainly the Jews blasphemed the name of Jesus and also slandered the Christians of Smyrna. The context definitely supports the translation of both blasphemy and slander, In that the persecution is being leveled directly at the Christians it seems appropriate to use the word slander for the translation.

⁵³ Synagogues were the equivalent of modern day churches. The synagogue was the place where Jews gathered together to worship. Jesus and Paul ministered in the synagogues and more than likely all of the other apostles and ministers did so as well for it was there commission to go to the house of Israel first (Acts 3:26). The Greek word synagogue is first found in the Septuagint in Genesis 1:8 and translates the Hebrew ‘kava’ gathered, “let the waters under the heavens be gathered”. There is little doubt that the Jews of Smyrna severely persecuted the Christians. In the Martyrdom of Polycarp 12.2, after that Polycarp had confessed he was a Christian “the multitude of heathen and Jews living in Smyrna cried out with uncontrollable wrath”. The Jews then joined in and gathered wood to burn Polycarp even though it was a Sabbath day. Had the Jews been willing to be fundamentally obedient to the law they would have not been guilty of this terrible evil.

⁵⁴ The first time that the Greek word ‘satana’ is used in the New Testament was during the time that Jesus was being tempted of the devil in Matthew 4:10, Jesus said, “Get away Satan”.

- 13- I know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is. And you cling⁵⁵ to my name and have not deny my faith even in the days in which Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed among you where Satan dwells.
- 14- But I have a few things⁵⁶ against you because you have there those clinging to the teachings of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the sons of Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication⁵⁷.
- 15- So⁵⁸ you also have those clinging to the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, which I hate.
- 16- Repent, and if not I am coming to you quickly and I will make war with them by the sword of my mouth.
- 17- He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches to him that conquers I will give to him to eat of the hidden manna. And I will give to him a white pebble and on the pebble a new name written which no one has known except he who receives it⁵⁹.
- 18- And to the messenger in the Thyatira church write: this is what the Son of God says who has eyes as a flame of fire and His feet like fine brass.
- 19- I know your works, love, service, faith and your enduring patient and also your last works to be more than your first.
- 20- But I have a few things against you because you allow that women Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess to teach and mislead my servants to commit fornication⁶⁰ and to eat things sacrificed to idols.
- 21- And I gave her time that she might repent of her fornication and she did not repent.
- 22- Behold, I cast her into a bed and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation unless they repent of their works.

⁵⁵ The Greek word 'krateo' used of the Christians holding on to the name of Jesus is the same word used of Jesus holding on to (grasping) the stars in His right hand, (Revelation 2:1).

⁵⁶ Jesus only had one thing against the Ephesus church but He has a few things against the church of Pergamus. This time it is not about relationship issues but doctrine. Jesus will fight against them with the sword of His mouth, which also may be viewed as His word. He will smite the nations and slay the armies of the antichrist with the sword of His mouth (Revelations 19:15, 21).

⁵⁷ Evidently, this was a common practice among Gentiles and perhaps even among some Jews; it was the most important issue addressed by the first council at Jerusalem in Acts 15:20. The evidence to these details of Balaam's doctrine are recorded in Numbers 25:1-3; 31:15,16.

⁵⁸ The Greek adverb 'outos' translated 'so' associates the doctrine of Balaam with the practices of the Nicolaitanes.

⁵⁹ Jesus will also receive a name that no one knows except Him (Revelation 19:12).

⁶⁰ To most people it may seem absolutely absurd that a doctrine like this could be accepted by any serious Christian. Those who were being mislead were truly born of God as Jesus calls them His servants. The doctrine that these Gnostics like the Nicolaitanes taught was so deceptive and confusing that it destroyed the defense that the servants of God had against temptation. One of the primary things that they taught was that the spirit it saved not the soul or body. It was there belief that it did not matter what one did with the soul and body so long as they did not sin with their spirit. It was believed then that fornication was insignificant because it was done with the body because the spirit was not involved it was permissible. They also believed as Cerfaux referring to related sects describes that they believed that it was fine to sacrifice to the idols to escape martyrdom since true confession was with the heart and not with the lips. They also held that Grace would be violated if a person made an effort on their own to please God and that effectively they should continue to sin so that Grace may abound which Paul speaks against in (Romans 6:1). These people such as Jezebel would claim to know the deep things of God by the spirit through their practices but in reality all they knew was the depths of Satan (1 Cor 2:10).

- 23- And her children I will kill with death and all of the churches will know that I am the one who searches the inner being⁶¹ and the hearts and I will give to each of you according to your works⁶².
- 24- But to you I say and the rest who are in Thyatira as many as do not have this doctrine and who have not known the depths of Satan, such as they express; I will not cast any other burden upon you.
- 25- But what you have cling to until I come.
- 26- And he that conquers and he that keeps my works until the end I will give authority over the nations.
- 27- And he shall rule them with a rod of iron as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces⁶³ just as I also have received from my Father.

⁶¹ The Greek 'nephros' means 'kidneys', however, it is used figuratively of the inner life or mind. This word only occurs one time in the New Testament. However, it is found 31 times in the Septuagint and first occurs in Exodus 29:13 translating the Hebrew word 'kilyah' which is the word for kidney. Of the 31 times that 'kilyah' is found 13 times it is translated 'reins' by the Authorized Version but is thought to refer figuratively to the inner being or seat of emotions and affections, i e, heart, mind, spirit or the core of the inner person. It is first used with respect to the inner life in Psalms 7:10. The fact that the kidneys were always offered to the Lord as an offering that He breathed in may serve to emphasize the relationship of our thoughts to fellowship with God. Those things, which we think and meditate on, have a greater significance in our communion with God than what we have considered.

⁶² This is very close to Jeremiah 17:10, "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

⁶³ Jesus is coming to bring down everything contrary to the will of the Father and the culture of the kingdom of God. Everything that opposes the will of the Father will be crushed with the same ease that a rod of iron can shatter a vessel of clay. The Father has given Jesus the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, He shall break them with a rod of iron; He shall shatter them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psalms 2:8-9). The kingdom of God is being demonstrated and revealed through the church. We are the light of the world that shine bright for all to see the way to freedom and liberty. Our voices shout with the proclamation of the Father come be healed of your disease, come to the place where there is liberty and justice for all. Unfortunatley many turn a deaf ear and refuse to see the love of God. In their defiant and rebellious hearts that believe they know a better way. Soon God will no longer tolerate the wickedness and the defiance of men and Jesus will come again to execute judgment and righteousness on the earth. Jesus will come with His saints and out of his mouth will come a sharp sword, and with it He will smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:15). The throne of Gos will be forever and ever and the septer of His kingdom is the right septer!

There are so many people today who believe they are right yet they still live the rebellious and disobedient life of sin. They have been deceived into believing that religion makes them right. God demands complete conformity to His will and ways and has given us the change of heart and the power to obey. Those who refuse to obey will be cast into a place called hell because sin and death have no place in Gods kingdom. When Jesus comes the people that remain on the earth will be brought under His absolute and sovereign rule. Christ and His saints will command the will of the Father with a rod of iron that smashing everything contrary to God's holiness and righteousness (Psalms 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

The kings and the princes of the earth try to remove the restraints of God's ways, they try to break off the rule of a Holy God but they will not succeed (Psalms 2:2). They believe that liberity is the right to do what ever wicked thing they may choose and probagate death and destruction through the world. They refuse to recognize that the earth and all of its fullness belongs to God who created it and He is the One who sets the rules. But God in His love an mercy will not allow this evil to exist forever. He will come in rihteousness and judgment and crush to pieces this evil plague. The governments of men will fall before Him like a potter's vessel before a rod of iron. Every evil and wicked way that is an offense to life and the ways of God will be destroyed.

God's laws of life were established to protect all of life and these laws cannot be compromised. There are many who have a problem with the severity of God as though in someway His laws are unjust (Romans 11:22; 2 Corinthians 5:11). However, His laws are the laws of life and without Him everything would cease to exist. God desires to rule over us in His loving kindness and tender mercies but as the protector of life

28- And I will give to him the morning star⁶⁴ .

29- He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Chapter 3

1- And to the messenger in the Sardis⁶⁵ church write: this is what he says who has the seven spirits⁶⁶ of God and the seven stars. I know your works that you have a reputation of being alive but you are dead.

and the innocent He will destroy the transgressors who through their sins and iniquity violate the sacredness of His life.

The rulership of Jesus has already begun, His winnowing fork is in His hand. He separates the wicked from the righteous (Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17). His axe is laid to the root and every evil tree that does not bring for good fruit He will be cut down (Matthew 3:10; 7:19; Luke 3:9; John 15:6). God's hatred burns hot against sin and iniquity and His love and mercy He restrains His wrath until all men have an opportunity to change. The Holy Spirit has come to show us the ways of life and the beauty of holiness so that we may agree with God about the need to destroy all unrighteousness. God's righteous cause will become our cause too if we will allow the Spirit of truth to reign over our lives.

We have been appointed by God to rule and reign with Christ Jesus and that reign must begin in our hearts right now (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 20:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Revelation 3:21; 5:10). We must beat down and destroy every spiritual power, authority and rule that is unlike God. Everything that would attempt to lead us into sin must be resisted and every power of the wicked one cast down. We have been given authority as the sons of God to crush every power of darkness and every realm of iniquity. As the priest and kings of God we cannot allow those things that God has condemned to exist in our lives. How can we demand others to refuse what we would allow. How can we crush those things in someone else's life that we have allowed to dominate our own.

Today God shepherds us with a pastoral rod, which both protects and corrects us. The opportunity is given to everyone to come under the rule of Jesus Christ and the governance of the Spirit of Holiness. He is a loving and merciful Savior who died to set us free from the slavery of sin. His rod and staff can be a comfort to you if you will simply submit to His corrections and reproof that are given to perfect your life. If we refuse to allow Christ Jesus to rule us and the Spirit of Holiness to teach us we will be destroyed. It is certain that all sin and rebellion will be eradicated and the plague of death will be no more (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).

All of mankind rejoiced when small pox was eradicated but a far worse plague exists in sin. There is nothing more evil and vial than the plague of iniquity. It is the power behind every terrible thing socially, physically and morally. It is sin that causes the disease of diseases the ruin of every man, death. Jesus received power and authority to wipe sin out forever and deliver men from the plague and pain of eternal death (Acts 13:33; Psalms 2:7; Romans 1:4; Hebrews 1:2,5; 5:5; 7:28; Hebrews 2:14; 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 John 3:8). As the representatives of God who have received divine authority we are commissioned to drive out and smash the powers of darkness wherever we encounter them (Luke 10:19; John 1:12; John 3:1; Revelation 1:5-6, 9; 2 Corinthians 2:15-21). We have the cure, the double remedy for all disease both spiritual and physical. The name of Jesus crushes and destroys every power of sin and death. Every opposing force is little more than a fragile clay pot that is easily smashed when struck by the iron rod of His authority.

⁶⁴ This is somewhat of a mystery. The morning star may actually refer to a position of authority or perhaps some other dimension of Jesus person or position. Jesus is the Star that rose up out of Jacob fulfilling the prophesy or Balaam in Numbers 24:17. Peter describes the Day Star that will arise in the heart of the believer who takes heed to the word (2 Peter 1:19). Finally, we may also understand it as a position given to an angel long ago who rebelled against God (Isaiah 14:12).

⁶⁵ Sardis was a city steeped in immorality with the lascivious worship of the nature goddess Cybele. Also, located in Sardis were two gymnasia where the athletes played naked. In the midst of a pagan religious system that glorified and worshiped the physical attributes of man and whose pity was measured by their immorality the church was to be pure and holy. Many of the same modern day pressures and temptations to be involved in sexual immorality weighed heavily upon the saints at Sardis.

⁶⁶ The seven spirits of God may also be related to the fullness of the Spirit of God in the church which is symbolized by the seven branched menorah (Revelation 1:12; Ephesians 1:23; 1 Corinthians 12:13,27).

- 2- Arise, wake up! And strengthen⁶⁷ what remains, which is about to die for I have not discovered⁶⁸ your work to be perfect before my God.
- 3- Remember then what you have received and heard and keep it and repent. However, if you do not watch⁶⁹ I will come like a thief⁷⁰ and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.
- 4- You have a few names also in Sardis that have not stained their garments and they shall walk with me in white⁷¹ because they are worthy.
- 5- He who conquers will be clothed in the same way with white garments⁷² and I will not blot out⁷³ his name from the book of life and I will confess his name in front of my Father⁷⁴ and in front of His angels.
- 6- He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- 7- And to the messenger in the Philadelphia church write; this is what he who is Holy and True⁷⁵ says, who has the keys of David, who opens and no one shuts and who shuts and no one opens⁷⁶.

⁶⁷ The Greek word 'sterizo' may be translated 'strengthen or establish'. In view of the backsliders at Sardis being dead they must strengthen what remains which is on the verge of dying.

⁶⁸ The Greek word is 'eureka' which means find or discovery.

⁶⁹ This is the call of the church to revival a call to wake up or to be watchful. The Greek word 'gregoreuo' was found at the beginning of verse 2. This same word was used by Jesus in Matthew 24:43, "if the man of the house knew the time when the thief would come, he would stay awake." It may also be understood as "to be alive" as it is used in 1 Thessalonians 5:10, "whether we are alive or dead". Another figurative meaning of this word is "to be alert" as found in 1 Corinthians 16:13, "be alert, stand fast in the faith".

⁷⁰ The Greek word is 'kleptes' which means 'thief'. The doctrine of Christ is that He will come as a thief in the night for those who do not watch or remain awake concerning the will and purposes of God (Matthew 24:42-46; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-9; 2 Peter 3:10).

⁷¹ The faithful saints who conquer this world's evil and endure temptation shall be dressed in white. In chapter four the 24 elders that are seated around the throne are dressed in white. The martyrs who are awaiting vindication in chapter six are given white robes. Then again in chapter seven there is a great multitude who have been washed in the blood and are dressed in white (7:9-10) and in chapter 19 the armies are clothed in fine linen white and clean. The white robes may be symbolic of the glorified body of the saints that is like unto the glorified body of Christ Jesus. One thing is certain white garments represent purity. In Isaiah the Lord calls for His people to come and reason together, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

⁷² The garments represent the spiritual man that has been purified by the blood of Jesus and made spotless through redemption and forgiveness of sins. Those garments are to be kept unspotted from the world and Jesus pronounces those who keep their garments as blessed (Ephesians 5:27; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Peter 3:14; Jude 23; Revelation 16:15). Jesus offered himself for our sins without spot in keeping with the perfect sacrifice that was required in the Old Testament (Hebrews 9:14; Numbers 28:3)

⁷³ The book of life is first mentioned in Exodus 32:32-33 when Moses interceded on Israel's behalf after they had made the golden calf. Moses so felt responsible for Israel that he requested that God blot out his name if he had decided to destroy the Israelites. The reply of Yahoah was, "Whosoever sins against me I will blot out of my book." The book of life is mentioned seven times in Revelation (Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19). It is also mentioned in Luke 10:20, Hebrews 12:23 and Philippians 4:3. It is very clear from this passage that if God's people refuse to be obedient there comes a time that their rebellion results in their names being blotted out of the book of life and those whose names are not found in the book of life will be cast in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15).

⁷⁴ Perhaps the social pressures in Sardis had caused the church to retreat to the point that they were afraid to confess the name of Jesus. Jesus had already given word to the churches that if they would confess His name that He would confess their name before the Father and His angels (Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8). It may be that this promise is highlighted to remind the church at Sardis of their responsibility.

⁷⁵ Holy and True are two key attributes of God. Yahoah God is called the Holy One in Psalms 71:22; 78:40; Isaiah 1:4; 5:19, 23, in fact He is called the Holy One 28 times in Isaiah. He is called the God of Truth in Deuteronomy 32:4; Exodus 34:6; Psalms 31:4; Isaiah 65:16. Jesus Christ is the one who is True if He has promised something then it will certainly come to pass.

- 8- I know you works, behold I set before you an open door⁷⁷ and no one can shut it because you have a little power and you have kept my word and not denied my name.
- 9- Behold I will give them from the synagogue of Satan that say they are Jews and are not but are liars⁷⁸; behold I will make them come then and worship before your feet⁷⁹ and they shall know that I have loved you.
- 10- Because you have kept the word of my patient I also shall keep you from the hour of temptation⁸⁰ that is about to come upon the whole inhabitants to try the inhabitants upon the earth.
- 11- Behold I will come quickly, hold strong so that no one takes your crown.
- 12- I will make the conqueror a pillar in the temple of my God and he will never go out anymore. And I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the

⁷⁶ The authority that is ascribed to Jesus was also used of Eliakim who was master of the palace under Hezekiah. When God gave him power and authority over Jerusalem and Judah He said, “ And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open (Isaiah 22:22). God gave the kingdom of Israel to David insomuch that he made it an eternal kingdom (2 Chronicles 13:5). The prophet Isaiah prophesied of the coming Messiah whose government would be upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from now on even forever (Isaiah 9:7). When God raised Jesus Christ from the dead he set Him at His own right hand in the heaven far above all principalities and powers and might and dominions; God gave to Him a name that is above every name, a name greater than every name in this world and in the world to come. The authority of Jesus is such that all things are under His feet (Ephesians 1: 20-21; Philippians 2:9; 1 Peter 3:22).

⁷⁷ Because of the faithfulness of the saints at Philadelphia Jesus opened a door for them. In keeping with the context of the application of this allegory with Isaiah 22:22 it was a door of authority and power. Similarly, Peter promised the saints, by the Holy Spirit, that if they remain faithful and persistent in the things of the Spirit that an entrance would be made known to them into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:11).

⁷⁸ These supposed Jews of the synagogue in Philadelphia are the adversaries of Christ; as such they belong to the Synagogue of Satan. These Jews hardened their hearts against God and became the instrument of Satan and are thus viewed by God as the house of Satan instead of the household of faith. Jesus informed many of the Jews that they were of their father the devil in John 8 because they had refused the truth and had hardened their hearts against God (John 8:44). In Romans 2:28-29 when Paul seems to be referring to Deuteronomy 30:6 he makes it known that a Jew is not a Jew because of his natural birth but because of a spiritual one.

⁷⁹ The Word of God had made known that the nations would come and bring their wealth to Israel and become their servants (Isaiah 45:14; 49:23; 60:5-16; Zechariah 8:23). Now Jesus reveals that the Jews themselves will be the ones who come and worship before the feet of those who are of the household of faith, the Church of Jesus Christ.

⁸⁰ If we limited this message to the church at Philadelphia then they were part of a worldwide calamity that we know nothing about; or perhaps Jesus was referring to the persecution that would sweep over the church in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. However, we may also take this in context to the church age. By viewing these churches as typical of the churches in every generation since Christ then we may understand that there is a promise of be delivered from the events of the tribulation that is about to be described in chapters 4 through 19. The Greek phrase “tereso ek tes oras” which would be rendered “kept from the hour (time)” implies that the church of Philadelphia does not have to experience the tribulation because they are “kept from it”. Those who would argue that this could mean “safekeeping through the trial” would have to add meaning to the text. The Greek preposition ‘ek’, has as a primary meaning ‘from’ or ‘from out of’ or ‘away from’, this preposition denotes separation. If the text said “tereso dia tes oras” then one may correctly say that the church of Philadelphia would be “kept through the hour” which then would imply that they would have to go through the tribulation but would not be in jeopardy of its cruelty and deception. Every man should be very cautious not to add to or take away from the text of the Bible and especially this book (Revelation 22:18).

- city of my God the new Jerusalem which shall come down from heaven from my God and my new name.
- 13- He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- 14- And to the messenger in the Laodicea Church write, this is what the Amen⁸¹ says the faithful and true witness the origin⁸² of the creation of God.
- 15- I know your works that they are neither cold nor boiling hot. I would that you were cold or boiling hot.
- 16- Therefore because you are lukewarm and are neither boiling hot⁸³ nor cold I am about to vomit you out of my mouth.

⁸¹ Jesus is the Amen God! He is the One who has made promises and declared the divine will of the Father. He is also the one who has vowed Himself to perform those things which He has promised (Romans 4:21). As the one who is the Amen He is the faithful and true witness. Amen is a Semitic equivalent to both 'pistos' (faithful) and 'alethinos' (true) bore out by the way that the Septuagint translates it. It is also used as a word of praise being paired with Hallelujah (1 Chronicles 16:36; Nehemiah 5:13, 8:6; Revelation 19:4; 7:12). It may be used as a statement of acknowledging that what was spoken was directly from God or a faithful transmission of what God had said (1 Corinthians 4:16). It can be used as a declaration of divine authority as in 1 Kings 1:36; Jeremiah 28:6. It is a declaration that God is faithful and true concerning His promises (2 Corinthians 1:20; Rev 5:14). Jesus used amen to establish the absolute certainty of what He had spoken (John 1:51; 3:3; 5:19).

⁸² Another scripture that describes Jesus in a similar way is found in Colossians 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Jesus is the one by whom God created all things and therefore is the origin of all things. He is the beginning of the resurrection life and the age that is now free from the law of sin and death.

The Greek word 'arche' may be translated 'beginning, origin, chief, head, ruler. God is arche kai to telos- beginning and the end (Rev 21:6; 22:13). In the Greek thought of cosmic physics arche denotes the material from which everything has evolved. In the Septuagint arche often translates rosh- head. Arche is also used of 'dominion and power as in Genesis 30:13, 20; 1 Chronicles 26:10; Daniel 7:12,14,26,27. The first occurrence in the Bible is in Genesis 1:1 where it translated the Hebrew 'resheet', which means 'beginning, first, best choice, firstfruits' it is thus incorporated into the name of the first book of the Bible 'Beresheet' which means 'in the Beginning'. However, it also translates 'memeshalah' in Genesis 1:16, which means 'rule, dominion, power, authority' and is translated "...the greater light to rule the night". The next time 'arche' is found in Genesis 2:10 it is translated "heads" from the Hebrew word 'rosh' which means 'head'. We see then that 'arche' is not an exclusive word for 'beginning' and that if we are not careful with the translation it could be misleading.

In the New Testament arche is most frequently translated beginning. It is used of creation (Hebrews 1:10; 19:4,8; 24:21; Mark 10:6; 2 Peter 3:4) and of the first encounter with Jesus or the truth (Luke 1:2; 1 John 1:1; 2:24; 3:11; 2:7; 2 John 5,6; John 6:64). Arche is also used in the sense of dominion (Revelation 1:5; Luke 2:11; Titus 3:11; Ephesians 1:21; 6:12; Romans 8:38; Colossians 2:15) Arche is found in Ephesians 1:21 and Colossians 1:16 with respect to who Jesus is in relationship to all things and in both instances 'arche' is translated 'principalities' by the Authorized Version. Therefore, knowing that Jesus Christ is the Word who has existed forever (John 1:1, Ephesians 3:10) it is better to translate 'arche' as 'ruler, head, chief or origin'.

⁸³ There are those who struggle with what the Lord Jesus means by hot. The Greek word 'zestos' (boiling hot) is applied to the type of works that was demonstrated by the church at Laodicea. The only way that we can appropriately define hot in the New Testament is to understand that God has ordained and predetermined that we be baptized in His fire (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; John 7:38-39). Jesus counsel the church at Laodicea to buy faith that was on fire in the fire (Revelation 3:18). When we think of the expression and glory of God in our lives we should think of the fire of God as it was revealed in both the Old Testament and in the New (Exodus 14:24; 1 Kings 18:24; Acts 2:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). The allegory reveals how intimately Christ Jesus is associated with our works. As we drink of those things that His heart supplies He drinks of that which flows from our hearts. The Lord demands that those things that flow from our lives be produced from the fire of the Holy Ghost. The Laodiceans were not on fire with the power of the Holy Spirit and thus their witness of Him was merely innocuous.

- 17- Because you say that you are wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.
- 18- I advice you to buy from me gold set on fire⁸⁴ in the fire⁸⁵ that you may be rich and white garments that you may be clothed and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen and rub⁸⁶ your eyes with eye salve that you may see.
- 19- As many as I love⁸⁷ I rebuke and correct. Be zealous then and repent.
- 20- Behold I stand at the door and knock if anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and will dine⁸⁸ with him and he with me.
- 21- He who conquers, I will give him to sit with me in my throne as I also conquered and sat down with my Father in His throne⁸⁹.

⁸⁴ Gold is compared to faith in 1 Peter 1:7. The means by which gold is purified or strengthened is through fire. The fire that God has called us to come and stand in is the fire of his glory and presence. In the midst of this fire there is no evil thing that can touch us (1 John 5:18). The Greek word 'puroo' means to "set on fire, burn"; it is translated fiery in Ephesians 6:16 and burn in 1 Corinthians 7:9 (Authorized Version). It is translated from the Hebrew word tzaraph in 2 Samuel 22:30 which means to 'smelt, refine or test' a word which describes the metal being burned in the refining process. The word that is used for the gold refining process in the Septuagint is 'dokimos' which translates the Hebrew word 'tzakak' which is the specific Hebrew word for refining or purifying and may be viewed as the final product of the process, as in 1 Chronicles 28:17. The same word, 'dokimos' is found in the New Testament in James 1:12, "Blessed is the man that endures temptation for when he is tried (refined) he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him". A similar word 'dokimion' is used in James 1:2 and 1 Peter 1:7 which describes the testing of the metal after it has been refined. However, gold is in its purest state when it is on fire in the fire.

⁸⁵ The faith of the saints is likened unto gold in 1 Peter 1:7 that has been refined and is being tested for its purity as denoted by the Greek word 'dokimion' (see the previous footnote). In this case Jesus invites the Laodicians to by gold that is on fire in a melted and pure state. Jesus wants them to be boiling hot, a state that is only possible if they are willing to stay in the midst of the fire. This spiritual refining process is viewed in James 1:3-12 as the trials and temptation that assails the saints. The circumstances of life and the pressures that run contrary to the promises and blessings of God only serve to prove the purity of the faith that has been given to the saints.

⁸⁶ The Greek word 'egchrio' used here is very unique it is used only one other time in the bible in Jeremiah 4:30

⁸⁷ The Lord choose to use the Greek word 'phileo' which may be said to refer to an affectionate expression of love. What is certain is that the Lord Jesus is talking to family friends that had been born by the Spirit and received adoption into the family. Throughout the scripture the Lord has made it very clear that those he loves he will disciple so that they may come into all of the blessings of life. " My son do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father his son he delights in" (Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:5-6).

⁸⁸ In the Oriental lands when two people shared a meal it was a symbol of a strong bond of affection. The Lord Jesus as a good shepherd is constantly seeking those sheep, which have gone astray. His loving kindness and tender mercies is persistently calling out to all who will listen.

⁸⁹ At every point that Jesus was confronted by demonic power, He defeated it (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15). Through His conquest He has given us the authority and the power to defeat every demonic influence that we encounter. Through the grace of God, if we fail and are overcome by temptation - we are allowed the opportunity to be restored, and go at it again. However, we must all recognize that the temptation we encounter must be endured, and the sin that would try to overwhelm us must be defeated (1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:12; Romans 6:12). Sin and the ways of the demonic cannot have any place in our lives. We must submit to the Holy Spirit who teaches us obedience, and be consecrated to the will of God so that nothing belonging to the world finds any place to function in our members (Titus 2:11-12; Romans 6:13-21). The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life must be taken down at every point that we encounter them. It must be our absolute resolve and commitment to do the will of the Father and walk in perfect obedience. We can be certain that God is dedicated to making our way perfect and establishing us in

22- He who has ears let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The Throne Room Vision
The Things Which Shall be Hereafter (After the Church)
Visions of the Lamb

Chapter 4

1-After these things⁹⁰ I looked and saw a door open in heaven and the first voice like a trumpet which I heard spoke to me saying come up here⁹¹ and I will show you what must happen after these things.

every good work to do His will, working in us those things that are well-pleasing in His sight; and God demands our cooperation (Hebrews 13:20-21).

Jesus told us that we would have tribulation, but that we could rejoice because He defeated the world (John 16:33). He has secured and guaranteed our success, if we will simply submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We have the overcoming power of the indwelling presence of Jesus, which is greater than anything that Satan can throw at us (1 John 4:4). We can be strong in the power of the sovereign Ruler of the universe, and in His own ability to throw down and tread upon all of the influences of Satan (Ephesians 6:10-11; Luke 10:19; 2 Corinthians 10:4). If we will follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit, He will show us how to walk in the authority of Jesus and in the power of God - so that no evil spirit will be able to ensnare us with deception and sedition against the kingdom of God. God will bring maturity into our lives and we will be those who are strong, who have the word of God abiding in them, and who have overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:14). It must be made known by our conduct that we want nothing to do with the satanic realm and its iniquity, but that our desire is for the ways of God and the ways of His life.

The Lord Jesus wants us to share His throne of righteousness and truth. He wants us to rule and reign in holiness and purity throughout eternity. We now have the opportunity to be trained and equipped for such a task (1 Peter 4:1; 2 Timothy 2:12). He has equipped us with everything that we need to break all ties with demon spirits and the sin that they inspire. He has given us His word of life, poured out His blood of cleansing, and has given us His Holy Spirit. He came and by Himself destroyed Satan and His power so that we can walk in the glorious liberty (Hebrews 2:14; 2 Timothy 1:10). God now stands waiting for all who will choose to come over onto His side and choose the ways of life. God will change your nature and fill you with the power and the glory of His own life; all you must do is believe and obey the gospel.

⁹⁰ The Greek phrase 'meta tauta', after these things' signifies a shift in events. This phrase 'meta tauta' which on its own may be considered a chronological marker is definitely a chronological marker in Revelation. This chronological marker is emphasized in this verse by the fact that it both begins and ends this verse. In Revelation 1:19, God gave John the instructions of how the book of Revelation was to be organized, "Write therefore what you have seen and the things, which are and the things, which are about to take place after these things". At this point the events of the church have come to an end and the church will not be addressed again in the book of Revelation except in the final exhortation in 22:16. What John has seen up to this point concerning the churches he was able to view from an earthly position but now God must call him up into heaven in order to show him the "things which shall be hereafter". The first time the Greek phrase 'meta tauta' is used in the book of Revelation is in 1:19 where it is identified as the marker for the last section of the book of Revelation. John wrote about the "things that he saw", in chapter 1 and the "things which are", in chapters 2 and 3 and finally the things which shall take place hereafter beginning in chapter 4. The Greek phrase 'meta tauta' was first shown to be a chronological marker in John 3:22, designating the event that followed Jesus' visit to Jerusalem. It is also used as a chronological marker in John 5:1; 5:24; 6:1; 7:1; 13:7 and 21:1. The first time that 'meta tauta' is found in the New Testament is in Luke 5:27 where once again it serves as a chronological marker. If 'meta tauta' of Revelation 1:19 refers to the 'meta tauta' of Revelation 4:1, then the church must be removed before the tribulation begins. The first time that these catastrophic events of Revelation 4 through 19 are mentioned in the New Testament is in Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20, which refer to the events of Daniel 11:31; 12:11; Revelation 13:5 and 2 Thessalonians 2:4. Revelation chapter 4 begins the series of events that will take place over the course of seven years. The first in these series of events in Revelation focuses on the revealing of the Man

2- Immediately I was in the Spirit⁹² and behold a throne was set in heaven and there was One seated upon the throne.

3- And He who set there was like the appearance of a jasper and a sardius⁹³ stone and a rainbow was around about the throne appearing as an emerald.

4- And around about the throne 24 thrones and upon the thrones are seated 24 elders⁹⁴ dressed in white garments⁹⁵ and wearing crowns of gold.

of Lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:3; Revelation 6:1). Now there is only one primary event that must take place before the revelation of the man of sin and that is the “one who now withholds” must come (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7). There are only three powers that may be viewed as hindering lawlessness: Human Government, The Holy Spirit and The Church. We know for certain that through Revelation 4 through 19 we see the working of both Human Government and the Holy Spirit. Human Government is represented as the nations warring against each other, the Ten Kings, which are also represented by Daniels vision as the Ten Toes of the Great image (Daniel 2:34, 44; Rev 16:12; 17:12; 18:9). These governmental powers will ultimately be destroyed when Jesus returns with His saints and fights against the kings of the earth who are lead by the Man of Lawlessness or the Antichrist (Dan 2:34, 44; Rev 19:15). The Holy Spirit will still be present because there will be many who will turn to Jesus and there will be the working of miracles all of which are the function of the Holy Spirit. The only power that remains to be taken out of the way is the Church. In Luke 21:36 Jesus tells his disciples to pray that they may be worthy to escape all of the catastrophic events of Revelation 4 through 19 and stand before the Son of Man (Jesus). Of course we know where Jesus is standing before these disasters begin to take place for this is primarily what chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to, He is in heaven (Rev 4:3; 5:9). The point of convergence for all of these passages of scripture is the revealing of the Man of Lawlessness or the Antichrist who will commit the abomination that makes the temple of God desolate by proclaiming himself to be God. We know that when Paul spoke of these final days of the church on earth it was revealed to him that not everyone would die because there would be an event for those who were alive which would cause them to be caught up into heaven (1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). There are no reasons to believe that this catching away takes place at any other juncture in the book of Revelation than here.

⁹¹ Although, this call of John up into heaven by the voice that sounded as a trumpet reminds us of 1 Thessalonians 4:16 “He shall descend with a shout with the voice of an archangel and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ will rise first, and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...” there is no conclusive proof that this represents the event of the catching away. This is the second time that John hears the voice of Jesus as the sound of a trumpet (Rev 1:10), and in that this is the ‘meta tauta’ event the catching away would have had to already taken place prior to Revelation John 4:1.

⁹² The word of the Lord had an immediate effect on John he was overcome by the Spirit and experience rapture into the vision.

⁹³ This picture describes the brilliant and radiant light of God, who cloths Himself with light as with a garment and dwells in the light that no man can approach unto (Psalms 104:2; 1 Tim 6:16). The jasper stone is a stone, which is clear as crystal and the sardius stone is a blood red stone named after Sardis where it is found.

⁹⁴ The 24 elders resemble the 24 courses of the Levite priest who officiated in the temple. However, as many other theologians and writers have acknowledge this may represents the 12 tribes of Israel which is the foundation of that nation and the 12 apostles which is the foundation of the church being united in heaven by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Thus we see in heaven both Old and New Testament saints all of whom are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, Revelation 5:9-10. However, Professor David Noel Freedman of the University of California San Diego, argues that these more than likely represent the reuniting of the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel both of which may have had 12 administrative districts. Dr. Freedman’s point is well taken in that the focus of Revelation 4 through 22 is directed towards Israel and is utilizing Old Testament themes. J. Massyngberde Ford of the University of Notre Dame rightly points out that the book of Revelation has four hundred allusions to the Old Testament, “Moreover, it shows a heavy influence from Jewish apocalyptic works but very little from the Christian apocalypses. Clearly, Revelation is more akin to Jewish apocalyptic literature than to Christian” The Anchor Bible-Revelation, page 27. She further points out that there are no Christian interpolations woven into the text with the exception of chapters 1-3 and 22:16-17, 20-21. An apparent explanation for the shift that takes place between chapter 1-3 and 4-22 is because of a transition from the Church to Israel as a nation. In that

5- And from the throne came forth lightning's and voices and thunder's⁹⁶ and seven torches of fire burned before the thrown which are the Seven Spirits⁹⁷ of God.

the church is removed from the earthly scene and God's focus is on the redemption of Israel, how these events of chapters 4-12 effect the church is meaningless. The fact that these are the final dealings of God with Israel as a nation places the focus entirely upon that culture. Daniel describes this time period as the final week in the history of Israel as a nation , "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Daniel 9:24, 27). This is the time of Father's pleading with Israel to bring them to salvation in Christ Jesus (Romans 11:25-26; John 5:43; Matthew 24:15-22; Daniel 12:9-12).

⁹⁵ The identity of the 24 elders must be deducted from those things associated with them. Sitting upon thrones with crowns on their heads indicates that these elders have been both judged and rewarded (Revelation 2:10; 26-27; 3:11, 21; 1 Corinthians 9:25; 1 Peter 5:4). They are dressed in white which is another proof that they have been judged and rewarded (Revelation 3:4-5, 18). We know that God has made the redeemed both kings and priest who will rule and reign with Christ forever (Revelation 1:6; Revelation 5:9-10). The symbolism of the priesthood is captured by the fact that their are 24 elders a number that was established by God in 1 Chronicles 24:5; 25:1-3 to govern the sanctuary. They also offer up the prayers of the saints as priest (Revelation 5:8). We may conclude that if the 24 elders have received their rewards of crowns, thrones, white raiment and their position as priest and kings that they are a part of the first resurrection that has already taken place before the events of the Tribulation unfold. The curious thing that leaves us somewhat mystified is why God did not choose to show us a vast company of the redeemed. One possibility is that all of the redeemed are hid in Christ. Another possibility is that the company of Revelation 7:9 represent the whole of those redeemed in both Old and New Testaments. The confusing issue is that this vast number of the redeemed are identified as those who came out of great tribulation. Now in the context of the book of revelation the Great Tribulation has not yet begun for it will be in the last 3.5 years of the seven year period of the Tribulation during the "beast kingdom" (Revelation 13:1-18; 14:9). In Revelation 20:4-5, two companies of saints are identified: First- those who are seated upon thrones who were given authority to judge and secondly- those who had been beheaded for Jesus and the Word of God (those who had not worshipped the beast or its image nor received its mark). One must ask why such a distinction would be necessary other than to reveal those who were part of the first resurrection and those who were gathered unto God through the events of the Tribulation. There are a total of eight companies of saints identified in the book of Revelation: 1- The 24 elders seated in heaven before the Tribulation begins. 2- The souls of those who were killed during the opening of the seals and required to remain under the altar until the end of the Tribulation (Revelation 6:9-11). 3- The company from every tribe, tongue and nation which no man could number that came out of great tribulation (Revelation 7:9). 4- The 144,000 Jews from the twelve tribes of Israel who are caught up to God before the Great Tribulation begins (Revelation 14:1-5). 5- Those who had gotten victory over the beast and his mark who sang the song of Moses and the Lamb (perhaps a way to identify those Israelites who stood faithful during this period), (Revelation 15:3). 6- A great voice of a multitude of people the Lambs wife (Revelation 19:1,6 -8) 7- The armies of the saints that come with Jesus to fight against the armies of the beast and to rule the nation (Revelation 19:14- 15). 8- The two companies which include those seated on thrones and those beheaded during the Tribulation (Revelation 20:4-5).

⁹⁶ This is reflective of the first Pentecost when God came down on Mount Sinai, Exodus 19:16.

⁹⁷ This is the second time that we see the Seven Spirits of God in Revelation. The first time in Revelation that it is revealed that Jesus is the one who possesses the Seven Spirits of God is in 3:1. This may be related to the fact that the Father gave him the fullness of the Spirit or the Spirit without measure. In Isaiah 11:2 the anointing received by the Messiah is sevenfold and in fact each are named as spirits: 1- The Spirit of YHWH; 2- The Spirit of Wisdom; 3- The Spirit of understanding; 4- The Spirit of counsel; 5- The Spirit of might; 6- The Spirit of knowledge; 7- The Spirit of the fear of YHWH. The seven torches are first viewed in scripture as the Menorah that was placed before the curtain that separates the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place in the Temple (Exodus 25:37). The seven torches are referred to as the eyes of YHWH that run throughout the whole earth in Zachariah 4:2,10. Finally Jesus is the one who baptizes the believer in the Holy Spirit and in fire (Luke 3:16; Acts 2:3-4).

6- And in front of the throne was as it were a sea of glass appearing as crystal⁹⁸ and in the midst of the throne and around the throne four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back⁹⁹.

7- And the first of the living creature's resembled a lion and the second living creature resembled a calf and the third living creature had the face of a man and the fourth living creature resembled a flying eagle.

8- And the four living creatures each one of them had six wings they were full of eyes around about and within and they do not rest day and night saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty who is and who was and who is to come.

9- And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the One seated upon the throne who lives unto the ages of the ages.

10- The twenty four elders fall down before the One seated on the throne and worships Him who lives unto the ages of the ages and they cast their crowns before the throne saying,

11- Worthy is the Lord to receive glory and honor and power for you have created everything and by your will¹⁰⁰ they are and were created.

The Throne Room Vision The Book

Chapter 5

1- I saw at the right of Him seated upon the throne a book written within and without sealed up with seven seals.

2- And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and loose its seals?

3- And no one was able in heaven nor upon the earth nor under the earth to open the book nor to look at it.

4- And I wept very much because no one was found worthy to open the book neither to look at it.

5- And one of the elders said to me do not weep behold the Lion being of the tribe of Judah the Root of David overcame to open the scroll and to loose the seven seals.

⁹⁸ The first throne room scene in the Bible is found when Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders went up into the mountain to meet with YHWH. They saw Him and under His feet was a floor like transparent sapphire "as it were a pavement of sapphire stone like the very heaven for clearness", Exodus 24:10 RSV. In Isaiah 6 God reveals to the prophet that His throne is high and lifted up and above it stood the seraphim. The seraphim cry out similar to the living creatures saying, Holy, Holy, Holy is YHWH of host the whole earth is full of His glory. The vision that Ezekiel had of YHWH' mobile throne described an expanse like shining crystal and above the expanse which would be equivalent to the pavement was a throne like sapphire and the one who sat upon the throne had the appearance of a man. Similar to Revelation 4, His appearance is as amber and fire (Ezekiel 1-26-27).

⁹⁹ The throne scene is an awesome splendor where everything is revealed. The floor is as transparent crystal with nothing to obscure the foundation and the depth of it. The angels of God are full of eyes so that nothing escapes their sight but everything is revealed.

¹⁰⁰ The Greek word for pleasure is 'eudokia' as in Ephesians 1:5 and the Greek word for will is 'thelema' which is also found alongside of 'eudokia' in Ephesians 1:5. The Greek word used here is 'thelema' therefore, the decision was made to translated it 'will'.

6- And I saw in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a little Lamb standing as though it had been slain having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent into all of the earth.

7- And he came and took the book from the right of the One seated upon the throne.

8- And when he received the book the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the little Lamb each one of them having a harp and a golden bowl full of incense which are the prayers of the saints.

9- And they sang a new song saying, You are worthy to take the book and to open its seals because you purchased us for God with your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation.

10- And made us kings and priest to God and we shall reign upon the earth.

11- And I saw and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders and the number of them was ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands.

12- Saying with a great voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and praise¹⁰¹."

13- And every creature in heaven and upon the earth and under the earth and upon the seas and in it, I heard all of them saying to Him seated upon the throne and to the Lamb, blessings and riches and glory and might unto the ages of the ages.

14- And the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders said amen.

The Seven Seals

Chapter 6

¹⁰¹ When we behold Jesus and understand who He is and what He is done, then surely our response must be the same as this great number of saints and angels. As they behold the One who created all things and then redeemed them, they shout with all that is within them: "Power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory and praise belongs to You!" It all belongs to Him, and He is worthy of it all, because He both created it and redeemed it. The One who owns it all and reigns over it all has blessed us with all that we have; and He alone retains the power to make us great and to give us strength (1 Chronicles 29:11-12).

Many times we run the risk of holding back some part for ourselves in order to provide for our own needs; but when it comes to worship, the precedence has been set. The book of Leviticus opens with an invitation for all to come, and worship with an offering that is turned into smoke with the fire of God. There was no part of this offering left for the use of man; rather as a whole burnt offering it ascended up into the glory cloud of God, where the smoke of the offering became indistinguishable from the cloud of glory. It was with this whole burnt offering, of which no part was held back, that a man could draw near to God. God's express desire then was as it is now: He wanted them to absolutely trust Him, and depend upon Him for everything that they needed. In a love relationship with the Almighty, He would supply all their needs and even make them great upon the earth; and they were to love Him with all that they possessed spiritually, physically and materially: "And you shall love Yahoah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your everything" (Deuteronomy 6:5; Deuteronomy 10:12; Deuteronomy 11:13; Deuteronomy 30:6).

He is not only worthy of all the glory and praise; He is also worthy of all our riches. When the early church discovered who Jesus was, they gave all they had for the Kingdom, and "no man called anything which he possessed his own" (Acts 4:32). When His majesty was revealed to the Macedonians, they with a similar voice of praise gave everything they had (2 Corinthians 8:2-5). The cry of the Spirit to the Romans was a plea to surrender their whole being as a living sacrifice; holy and acceptable (Romans 12:1). Should we hold the Kingdom of God and His righteousness as the most important things in our life, and then trusting God surrender all that we have to Him; we shall not only discover true worship, but also provision from the One who reigns over all, and in whose hands is power and might; and in whose power alone is the decision to make great and to give strength (1 Chronicles 29:11-12; Philippians 4:19).

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with the voice of thunder, come!

2 And I saw and behold a white stallion and he that was seated upon him had a bow and to him was given a crown and he went out conquering also that he may conquer.

17- For the day of His great wrath¹⁰² has come and who shall be able to stand?

Chapter 11

6- They have authority to shut up heaven that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying and they have authority over the waters to turn them to blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they desire¹⁰³.

¹⁰² The Tribulation is not just a time of great world calamity this is the time that all of Gods wrath will be poured out on sin and iniquity. This is not the final judgment which will take place 1000 years later but this will be the greatest judgment of devastation and disaster ever to take place on the earth. It is at this time that the sin of man will have grown fully ripe as grapes ready for harvest. Deception will have reached its zenith and mans rebellion and defiance its greatest depths (Romans 2:5). It is know as the indignation (Isaiah 26:20; 34:2; Nahum 1:5-6); the day of God's vengeance (Isaiah 34:8; 63:1-6), the time of Jacob's sorrow (Jeremiah 30:7); the overspreading of abominations (Daniel 9:27); the time of trouble such as never was (Daniel 12:1); the great day of his wrath (Revelation 6:17; Zephaniah 1:15); the hour of judgment (Revelation 14:7). This will be a time of great suffering such as has not been since the beginning of the world and never will be afterwards (Matthew 24:12). The tribulation is not about bringing men to repentance although the opportunity for men to repent exist. The tribulation is about God's judgment on the nations whose sin cannot get any worse (2 Timothy 3:13; Joel 3:13; Revelation 14:18-19; Isaiah 61:1-4; Revelation 19:13). The hardness of the hearts of men will be so great that they would rather have the rocks fall upon them and hide them from God rather than repent (Revelation 6:14-16). This is also highlighted by the fact that four times (in some of the most severe punishments) they still refused to repent (Revelation 9:20,21; 16:9,11). The inhabitants of the earth recognize that these calamities are the wrath of God poured out upon them but they are so insolent and defiant that there is not one single plea for mercy. The ultimate act of defiance and statement of rebellion and deception is discovered in the battle of Armagedden. These nations realize that they are going to fight against God and not only are resolved to do so but have an ambition to win (Revelation 16:14; 17:14; 19:19; Psalms 2:2-6; Daniel 2:44; Psalms 149:7-9).

¹⁰³ Although the Bible does not specifically name these two prophets, they are more than likely to be Enoch and Elijah. What we know is that these two witnesses have stood before the Lord in heaven since Old Testament times (Zechariah 4:3; Zechariah 4:11-14; Revelation 11:4). We also know that Elijah will return before the second coming of Christ (Malachi 4:5). Both of these prophets are mortal and will be put to death - at the end of the tribulation or the 1260 days of prophesying (Revelation 11:3; Revelation 11:7-8).

Only Enoch and Elijah went to heaven without dying; and for them to return to earth and take up this particular ministry fits the description of these prophets. Enoch was the prophet who prophesied to the wicked people that were destroyed in the flood. These people were so wicked that God repented that He had ever made man (Genesis 6:4-7). These people were so vile that all the imaginations of their hearts were continually wicked. This was a time when angels and men cohabited together, and brought forth men that God never intended to exist (Genesis 6:4; Matthew 24:37-38; Daniel 2:43). It was against these people that Enoch prophesied, and although we do not have certainty about his prophecy in those days (as it is described in the book of Enoch), we do know from what was recorded in Jude that He prophesied of the coming days: when the Lord will return with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment on all the ungodly; which will also take place at the end of the 1260 days of the prophesying of these two witnesses (Jude 1:14-15).

Elijah prophesied to the Northern Kingdom of Israel during a time that they had turned their hearts from God to serve Baal-Zebub (1 Kings 16:31-33; 2 Kings 1:16). He was the prophet who called down fire upon the enemies of Israel, and also called down fire upon the offering of the Lord in a contest against the

Chapter 12

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back¹⁰⁴.

Chapter 14

prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:24; 1 Kings 18:36-38; 2 Kings 1:10). It was Elijah who executed the judgments and disciplines of God because of idolatry, and shut up the heavens so that it would not rain (1 Kings 17:1; Luke 4:25; James 5:17; Deuteronomy 11:16-17; Leviticus 26:19; Revelation 13:15). He stood during the time of Jezebel and the worship of devils, calling the nation of Israel back to the worship of the only true God (1 Kings 18:13; 1 Kings 19:2). Because the two prophets of Revelation 11 have the power to strike the earth with plagues, as did Moses, there have been those who have thought that Moses should be one of these prophets. However, Moses died; and his body was buried in Moab near Bethpeor (Deuteronomy 34:5-6). Yet if we desire to see a model of the authority to strike the earth with plagues, then Moses is certainly one of the most outstanding in the Bible.

During the last three and a half years of the tribulation (or 1260 days), they will preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus, protect Israel, and also execute the vengeance of God. God will be at war with the nations of the earth during this period of time, and will pour out the cup of His wrath upon their iniquity (Revelation 15:1,7; Revelation 16:1). Although things were terribly wicked in the days of Noah, it will be even worse in the last days; for the fullness of the mystery of iniquity will be revealed (Revelation 9:20-21; Revelation 14:14-19, Revelation 16:9,11; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12).

¹⁰⁴ Satan is identified as a demonic monster or 'drakontos' in this verse. He is not the aggressor but the one trying to hold onto his place in the heavens. Michael and the heavenly host are the aggressors. At this time in the future they will throw down the god of this world (Ephesians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4). All of the forces of evil that are in the heavens warring against the saints will at that time lose their authority and power in heaven.

Today Satan makes war against the saints (Ephesians 6:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:18). He goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8-9). The saints of God have been given authority in Christ Jesus to absolutely dominate every evil power. We have the power to cast out every evil spirit when we encounter them and to conquer every resistance of Satan and his influence in every dimension of life (Luke 10:19; Mark 16:17; Acts 26:18). Christ Jesus by Himself absolutely conquered all of the powers of darkness and stripped them of all authority (Hebrews 2:14; Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 1:21; 1 Peter 3:22). It is only in Christ Jesus that this absolute authority can be executed against the rebellious powers of darkness. Satan may fight against us and attempt to resist us but if we stand in the strength of the Lord and in the power of His might we always prevail (Ephesians 6:10; Matthew 28:18; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 11:23-27; 1 Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:37; Luke 18:8).

We must recognize that the satanic weapons that are used against us are sin. He launches his strategic attacks with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. The weapons on the other hand that we have been given are the weapons of righteousness (Romans 6:13; 2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 6:13-18). As the army of God and the soldiers of Jesus Christ we must not give any place to the devil. If we do he overthrows the power and authority that we have against him. We must recognize that the protection that we have against all of the forces of darkness is the power and authority that has been given to us in Christ Jesus. If Satan successfully brings us under the influence of His satanic power and we submit to it by committing acts of iniquity then the satanic gains the upper hand to kill steal and destroy. Mercy and forgiveness awaits us in Christ Jesus who will forgive us of all our sins and cleanse us from all iniquity but that does not change the fact that the forces of Satan are fortified in their resistance against us. God has called us to live the most sanctified lives ever described in the Bible a sanctification of being filled with the Holy Spirit and baptized in His presence and in His fire. This is an impregnable and irresistible force that Satan has no power against nor ability to withstand (1 John 4:4; 5:18; Luke 10:19; John 14:30; 1 John 4:17).

8-And another angel, a second, followed saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon¹⁰⁵ the great! She made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Chapter 20

6- Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no authority but they will be priest of God and Christ and they will reign with Him a thousand years¹⁰⁶.

Chapter 21

¹⁰⁵ Babylon was first mentioned in Genesis 11:2 as Shinar. It was in this area that men first gathered themselves after the flood to build a city and a tower in mankind's first attempt to be unified. The first king of Babylon who led this rebellion against God attempting to unite the whole world under his power was Nimrod. Babylon has been represented with ever rebellion and sinful thing that has been propagated throughout the earth (Revelation 17:5). This is in part due to the fact that the beginnings of all idolatry can trace its roots to the practices that sprang up from this region of the world. It has been represented throughout the scripture as the city of iniquity in opposition to Jerusalem the city of God. It was from this place of rebellion and idolatry that God called out to Abraham who lived near to modern day Basra. It was in Babylon that the descendents of Abraham would be exiled when they had rebelled so grievously against the Almighty. Their return to Babylon was a declaration of God's rejection of them. It was in Babylon that king Nebuchadnezzar made an image of himself and commanded all of the world to bow down and worship it (Daniel 3:1-7). And it will be in Babylon that the Antichrist will make an image of himself and command everyone to worship it (Revelation 13:14-15; 14:9,11; 16:2; 20:4). Babylon will be sought after by the merchants of the world and become a center of worldwide trade (Revelation 18). Ultimately, Babylon will become the place that God will focus His wrath against the rebellion and sin of man and it will be destroyed and lie in ruins forever (Revelation 16:19; 18:2,10,21; Isaiah 13:19; 21:9-10).

¹⁰⁶ Jesus will come with His saints to defend Jerusalem and will set up a kingdom that will judge the nations for 1000 years (Zechariah 14:1:9; Joel 3:3; Daniel 2:43-45, 34-35; Revelation 16:16; Matthew 25:32). It is this coming of the Messiah to rule and reign over the earth that most Jews understand and look for in that much of the Old Testament prophecy is centered upon the glory of this occasion. For 1000 years Jesus and His resurrected saints will set on thrones judging the nations. This period of time is in some respects an extended time of God's mercy to bring forth a harvest from among the nations (Isaiah 66:19, 33; Zechariah 14:16). The 1000 year reign of Christ is a period of time between the seven year Tribulation and the final destruction of all evil including death itself (Revelation 20: 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:23-28).

The nation of Israel is the central figure during this time period. Christ Jesus will rule from His holy Temple in Jerusalem (Isaiah 24:23; Zechariah 14:8-9; Joel 3:16-17). It will be at this time that Jesus rules with a rod of iron while the Twelve Apostles judge the twelve tribes of Israel and the saints judge the world (Revelation 19:15, 2:27; Psalms 2:9; Matthew 19:28; 1 Corinthians 6:2). All of the nations will come to worship God in Jerusalem at this time (Isaiah 2:2; 66:23; Zechariah 8:23). The nations will also be required to come up and keep the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:16-19).

Both Zechariah, Ezekiel and Joel describe a river of living water that will issue forth from the Temple of the Lord that will be established in that day (Zechariah 14:8-9; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Joel 3:18). As Christ and His saints rule for 1000 years and the nation of Israel is exalted above the nations all creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption (Romans 8:19-21; Isaiah 2:4; Isaiah 60:14-16; 65:20; Romans 11:12,26). There will be an unparalleled prosperity and blessings upon all mankind as Jesus Christ Himself takes His power and reigns over all of the earth (Luke 1:32; Amos 9:13-14; Isaiah 27:6; 35:1-3; Revelation 17:14; 19:16; 20:6).

8- But as for the fearful and unbelieving the sinful and polluted and murderers and fornicators and magician and all liars shall have their part in the lake burning with fire and sulfur this is the second death¹⁰⁷ .

10- And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the city the great and holy Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God¹⁰⁸ .

¹⁰⁷ he second death is for all of those who do iniquity and refuse the only remedy that has the power to turn a sinner from iniquity unto righteousness (1 Peter 2:24; Romans 6:18). That remedy is provided for us through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus we are made pure and holy so that we can live righteously (Titus 2:14; Ephesians 4:24; Philippians 1:11; Revelation 22:11; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:15-16). God worked the miracle to give us a new heart and a new spirit so that we would be established in His own nature. He did this at a great expense and sacrifice to Himself. God has warned us over and over again that those who practice iniquity will die (Matthew 7:23; 2 Timothy 2:19; Titus 2:14). God who is loving and merciful is also true to His judgments (1 Peter 1:17; Colossians 3:25). The people who lived in the time of Noah or during the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah will not be judged differently from someone who attends church regularly (Isaiah 5:20; Ezekiel 44:33; Proverbs 20:10; 11:1; Deuteronomy 25:15; Matthew 12:41-42). God does not have one judgment for one class of people and a different kind of judgment for another. He has all the mercy and forgiveness that we could possibly ever need in Christ Jesus. There is all the strength, wisdom and ability granted for us by the Holy Spirit but we must be willing to see every form of iniquity and sin come to an end in our lives (John 5:14; 8:11; Romans 6:2; 1 Peter 2:24; 4:1; 1 John 1:6; 2:15-16; 3:5; 4:20; 5:4).

God has not left us to wonder what sin and unrighteousness is, He has named the deeds that He hates and has condemned them and all those who do such things. The list is found in the sermons of Jesus, of John, of Paul, of Peter, of James and Jude (Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-22; Romans 1:29-31; Ephesians 5:3-6; Colossians 3:5-8; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; Titus 3:3; James 3:14; 1 Peter 4:3; Jude 7-16). Everyone who was used by God to deliver His message to us, have all warned us and made it very clear what behaviors are condemned to an eternal judgment that is called the second death. Salvation is not by works but we can be certain that the works of righteousness are the evidence of salvation (James 2:20-26; John 15:2; Ephesians 5:9; Colossians 1:10; Matthew 7:16-23).

God has a great inheritance for us now and throughout eternity if we will just be willing to learn His ways. The ways of God are so lovely and wonderful full of love, joy and peace. His ways of life are so much better and full of far more pleasure than can be found in the ways of sin and darkness. God has freely granted to us both the desire and the ability to do that which is righteous, pure and holy. The first message of the gospel that we must hear is that we must turn from our wicked works to serve the living God. God has granted us the gift of repentance and made all the resources of heaven available to us for our success. What more could He do as He struggles to keep us from the eternal judgment of the second death? There is no promise of salvation for those who continue in sin anywhere in the Bible. Therefore, those who teach such things are deceivers and liars. Is it okay to commit adultery? Every honest child of God would say no. What must you do if you commit such and act of sin? One must repent and ask God to cleanse them from their sin and empower them never to do it again. What if you do not repent? Then you will die in your sins? Will a person hear Father say well done my good and faithful servant if they died in their sins? Certainly not therefore, today make a distinction between that which is good and evil and between the holy and the profane. Give yourselves over to the ways of God and He will make sure that you are established in them.

¹⁰⁸ The city that we all know of as Jerusalem located in Israel also has a counter part in the heavenly realm. The heavenly Jerusalem is described as a great and high mountain. Isaiah saw this heavenly city and described it as the mountain of Yahoah's house, which was placed in the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills (Isaiah 2:2; 40:9; Micah 4:1-2). The mountain of God will become the joy of the whole earth (Psalms 48:2). All of the nations of the earth will flow into the Holy City to be taught of the Lord (Micah 4:1-2; Isaiah 2:3). It is here that every tear shall be wiped away and God will swallow up death in victory (Isaiah 25:8). It is in this mountain that the throne of God will be located and all the nations will come and worship (Ezekiel 40:2).

This mountain of God exist right at this very moment and is revealed to be Zion, the dwelling place of God and all those saints who have already died (Hebrews 12:22-24) There are indications that this mountain had existed in the earth in ancient times and was called the paradise of God (Ezekiel 28:14,16). However, what we can be certain of is that it will once again come out of the dimension called

Chapter 22

1 And he showed me a river of life¹⁰⁹ of pure water radiant like crystal flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb

heaven and all of the nations of the earth will come under the rulership of the One who dwells in the midst of that city. There will be no need for the sun and the moon in the city because God shall be the light of it. Even upon every dwelling in Zion will be the cloud of glory by day and the shining of the flaming fire by night (Isaiah 4:5).

¹⁰⁹ The Bible refers to a river that produces life four times in scripture: the first time is in Ezekiel 47:1-12, the second is in Zechariah 14:8, then in John 7:37-39 and lastly in Revelation 22:1. The one thing that all of these rivers most definitely have in common is that they are rivers of living water that produce life. These water instantaneously impart the life of God to anything that is dead or dying and they are healed and restored. Now we may choose to be very analytical with the description of the river and say that two of these descriptions refer to the river of God during the millennial reign of Christ (Ezekiel 47:1-12; Zechariah 14:8; Joel 3:18); one is purely spiritual belonging to the flowing forth of the Holy Spirit through the New Testament saints (John 7:37-39; 4:14); and one belongs to the Eternal City the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:1-2). However, in doing this we must not lose site of the existence of this river now at this present time both flowing from God and through the New Testament saints. Furthermore, we must recognize that this river is given to bring forth the life of God and that in reality God has only one source of life and cleansing no matter what time period we choose to evaluate. If mankind is going to be healed whether Jew or Gentile, now or in the future, they must come to these waters. The life giving water flows out from the throne of God in every time period to bring healing to mankind spiritually, physically and materially. The rivers flow out to heal the waters of the earth (the environment) as well as the sociopolitical disease of the nations (Zechariah 13:1; John 4:10; 7:37-39; Revelation 7:17; Ezekiel 47:8-9,12; Revelation 22:2).

The source of this water is God the Father and the Lord Jesus who is the Lamb of God. The function of the river is to both cleanse and to renew. These waters are the life giving and life sustaining power of God. Its purifying and creative power is the very action of the Spirit of God upon all creation. It is the water that Jesus offered to the woman at the well (John 4:10). It is the water that Jesus offered to the masses gathered together at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:37-39). It is the water that testifies of redemption along with the Spirit and the blood in the earth today (1 John 5:6,8). The life giving water flows from the Fountain of Life, the Almighty God (Psalms 36:9; Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13; 1 Corinthians 10:4). This life giving water is being offered to all of humanity today. Just as Jesus offered it to all those gathered together at the Feast of Tabernacles so long ago even today the Holy Spirit is saying come, the bride is saying come, and those who hear are saying come and drink of the water of life. The water of life is the life of God and presence of God that flows into our life by the Holy Spirit. The life of God inside of those who receive becomes a fountain springing up and a river flowing out producing the manifestation of the Holy Spirit and the abundant life that is in Christ Jesus (John 7:39; Galatians 5:22-24; 1 Corinthians 12:7; Acts 1:8).