

Revelation

of Jesus Christ

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of Jesus Christ

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Revelation of Jesus Christ - (Revelation 1:1)

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him..."

This one phrase, on one hand so full of rich meaning, and on the other a source of so much misunderstanding, misinterpretation and false teaching. I dare say, this single phrase is the very -key- to understanding the rest of the book of Revelation. If this phrase is misunderstood, the entire teaching of the rest of the book is prone to pitfalls and errors. But when it is correctly understood and received into the mind and heart, it opens up the rest of the book, like nothing else.

First of all, let us understand something this phrase does not mean. The Greek word for "revelation" is "apokalupsis"; the root to our English word, "apocalypse". Looking up the word in English dictionaries (American Heritage & Random House) reveals many definitions, the primary ones related to this book of Revelation, other Jewish writings, and to concepts of "total devastation and doom". Finally, after those definitions, almost as though lost in what precedes it, is the true meaning: "prophetic disclosure: revelation"

When looking up the matter in the Greek lexicon there is -NO- aspect addressing "devastation or doom". It is all about "laying bare, disclosing something previously unknown, manifestation, appearance". Is it possible that those other English (dictionary) definitions are a result of years of continual use and association with false teaching? I notice the Webster's 1828 dictionary does not include the "doom" definitions. A more 'recent' phenomenon, perhaps?

There are many references throughout culture and literature to the "four horsemen of the apocalypse", indicating terror, dread, doom, devastation, annihilation, etc. And many prophecy teachers speak of a coming time, "the seven years of tribulation"...of tragedies and doom.

Well, the book of Revelation contains the word/s "tribulation" (or "affliction"; depending on what translation you read from) only five (5) times; and four of those are in chs 2-3, dealing with the Seven Churches. And the one mention in 7:14 might also easily be speaking of the Church; we'll discuss that when we get there. Thus, does it not seem strange to label the entire book of Revelation, as being -about- "The Tribulation"?

As you read this, if you are already beginning to shake your head at this writing, assuming this writer is "whacked-out-crazy" because this does not agree with the popular trendy teachings, please quote from Scripture a single passage, for all of us, that speaks of a "seven year" PERIOD OF TIME -called- "Tribulation"; or even a remote suggestion to such a title. There is none. And yet, the prevailing famous prophecy teachers that people flock to by the thousands, who sell their snake oil books, proclaim

the coming time of the "seven years of tribulation". The expression is so-well-known that pretty much 'everybody' uses it (I used to, as well); even though it is in error.

Certainly, there is a coming period of time of seven years; the 70th week of Daniel 9:27 as it relates to Israel. Certainly there are coming some times of devastation and doom, called the time of "Jacob's Trouble". (Jer30:7) And the book of Revelation also correlates to Daniel when it speaks of periods of time corresponding to the seven year period being split in half, etc. And certainly there is much Scripture speaking of the annihilation of humanity, earthquakes, famine, objects from the heavens pummeling earth, etc. But there is no Scripture suggesting that this devastation is a seven-year-period of nothing-but-plagues, as many teachers would have people believe.

The book of Revelation certainly -contains- prophecy about catastrophe and doom; lots of it. But the book is NOT -about- that. Doom and gloom is -NOT- the primary focus of the book! Please understand this clearly. If all the reader sees is judgment and devastation, they have entirely missed what the book is about!

What -is- the book about? The opening words tell us. As a person reads through the rest of the book, this opening phrase should always be mentally at the head of the page.

"The revelation of Jesus Christ..."

What (who) is it about? The book is -about- JESUS CHRIST.

The Bible begins with the words, "In the beginning God..." (Gen1:1) The N.T. begins with "...the genealogy of Jesus Christ" (Mt1:1) "In the beginning was the Word...the Word was God" (Jn1:1) "God...has... spoken to us by His Son...the express image of His essence" (Heb1:1-3) "That which was from the beginning...the Word of Life" (1Jn1:1) The Bible begins with God, many of its books begin with God; and the last book of the Bible begins with God; and its ending message is, "Even so come, Lord Jesus" (Rev22:20)

The gospel of John speaks of the Deity of the 'man' Jesus (Jn8:58), and Hebrews addresses Jesus as our High Priest. (Heb8:1) But the book of Revelation -reveals- Jesus Christ for everything that He is. Most people like to limit Jesus as merely a "loving friend". Some might even see Him as Redeemer; the One whose grace does not condemn. (Jn8:11) But how many see Him with "power and great glory" (Mt24:30), full of wrath and judgment? The "wrath of the Lamb"? (Rev6:16) Oh, bbbut: a "loving God wouldn't..." One of the things that this book shows us is that God, indeed, -would-! Where Jesus appeared on earth in human form (Heb2:14) this book shows us what is meant by: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God" (Heb10:31) The old chorus used to be sung around

campfires: "Everybody ought to know who Jesus is" and the words would continue along, "He's the lily of the valley...He's the bright and morning star...He's the fairest of ten-thousand" but did not address, 'the Lamb of wrath and vengeance'. They like to sing, "Jesus loves me, this I know..." but do not realize that there is also a "judgment seat of Christ". (2Co5:10)

Where does this revelation come from? From God. You know what they say about the person who "toots his own horn". When I was a kid some of the adults used to joke, "If a man tooteth not his own horn, wherewithall shall it be tooted?" as they would also joke about the book they had written, "Humility, and How I Obtained It" Jesus said, "If I glorify Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say that He is your God." (Jn8:54)

This revelation "God gave Him". For what purpose? For Jesus to sit there at the Father's "right hand", revelling and gloating in Himself? No. Even in His humanity the Scripture said, "He will not strive nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth judgment to victory" (Mt12:19-20) He did not impose Himself upon people; when asked to leave a certain region after casting out the demons, He "got into the boat and returned" (Lk8:37) He complied. When the demons cried out: We know who You are, the Son of God; He would tell them to shush it. (Lk4:34-35) At Laodicea He "knocks" on the door; He does not ram-rod His way into the heart. (3:20)

This revelation is "...to show to His servants"

You know, as I see that phrase, it suddenly dawns on me why the world speaks of "apocalypse of doom". That expression is uttered by those who typically don't know God. And those prophets and teachers who speak of the "seven years of tribulation" are false prophets (or are following what they've heard from false teachers). They are not Believers. This book, in reality, isn't even -for- all of them. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, He took only Peter, Jacob and John; the three closest disciples. (Mt17:1-2) And they were warned to not reveal to the rest what they had seen, until after His resurrection. (vs9) Thus, this book really is only for Believers. The rest of the world will come to understand as the future events in the book are fulfilled. But the reason most people misinterpret it is because it is not for them. It is a book of the things of God, of the essence of Jesus Christ; things which the "natural man" cannot discern. (1Co2:14)

It is the revelation of Jesus Christ, and, yes...also about "things which must happen quickly". It is a book of "revealing". It is also a book containing prophecy. Could it not be said that most teachers, once they get past the first three chapters, treat the entire rest of the book as "prophecy"; things to happen in the future; especially during that presumed "seven years of tribulation"? But if the book is revelatory as well as prophetic, is it not

understood that its entirety is -not- "prophetic"? We cannot do as many do: lay out the book as one huge prophetic (seven-year) "timeline". If it were all prophetic, where would be the "revelation"? And after all, the book's -title- is "Revelation". Its -primary- topic is "Revelation" -of- Jesus Christ. Yes, the book -contains- 'prophecy'...but always remember (never forget this!) that it is -about- 'Jesus Christ'. If we come to fully understand the book, we will then be that much closer to knowing Jesus Christ.

John Bearing Witness - (Revelation 1:1-3,19)

This Revelation: God "sent and signified it by His Angel to His servant John." (vs1)

First of all: Where does this book originate? Who is sending the message? God...the Father. Remember, it is the revealing -of- Jesus Christ. When something or someone is disclosed to others, it is not typically the thing or person, itself, that does the disclosing. Somebody, typically, unveils and brings the thing out into full view. Thus, if Jesus Christ is the One being manifested, He is not manifesting Himself. The Father is.

When Jesus was on earth as flesh-and-blood, Jesus was manifesting to mankind the Father. Philip asks to be shown the Father, and Jesus replies, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father". (Jn14:9) Jesus was the revealed essence of the Father. (Heb1:3) Jesus proclaimed that His words were not His own, but "...as My Father taught Me, I speak these things" (Jn8:28)

Now, the table is reversed. The Father is now showing us the Son. This book is all about what Paul wrote: "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in Heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Php2:9-11) Jesus came, humbled Himself to be born as a human baby, suffered a cruel death, and carried our sins to the cross where He was "despised and rejected by men" (Is53:3) But now we are shown the glories of Jesus, and who He really is.

Who is this "angel"? God promised Israel that He would send His Angel to lead them through the wilderness. (Ex23:23) Paul tells us that it was Jesus Christ who led them. (1Co10:4) And throughout the O.T. the "Angel of Jehovah" appeared to people demonstrating attributes of God Himself, speaking with God's (original) authority. (Gen16:7,13, Ex3:2,6, Num22, Jug13:16-22, etc) Thus, God is revealing Jesus Christ; who better to reveal Jesus Christ, than with Jesus Christ, Himself?

So, John, the one who at the Last Supper was "leaning back on Jesus' breast" (Jn13:25), the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn21:20), is being called upon to "bear witness" to what Jesus, Himself, is about to reveal to him. Keep this little picture of 'intimate' friendship in your minds as we progress further down this chapter.

John is "bearing witness...to all things that he saw" (vs2) And what did he see? There are some translations (e.g. KJV) that entitle the book the "Revelation of John the Divine". That is inaccurate on two counts: 1) it is not -about- John, and the fact that he was "on the island called Patmos"

due to persecution. (vs9) Some make a big deal of that. 2) Nor does the book 'originate' -from- John. Just as the Scriptures did not originate from "personal exposition" or "by man's choice" (2Pt1:20-21); so, too, this book John was -commanded- to write; as we shall see a bit later, under some rather fantastic circumstances. John is shown some series of visions as he "came to be in the Spirit". (vs10) Just as the rest of Scripture was written when holy men of God were "propelled along by the Holy Spirit", so is this book.

And while we already know, from the opening heading, that the book is about Jesus Christ; what are the parameters for John's writings? Please pay close attention to this, as well. Just as it is paramount to understand that the book is a revelation -of- Jesus Christ, it is every bit as necessary to understand the 'rules' for John's account, because in understanding the rules of the writing is understanding of the book:

"Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things" (vs19)

"which you have seen" -HISTORY

"things which are" -CURRENT EVENTS

"which will take place after these things" -PROPHECY

Note this well. Remember? We already observed that Revelation -contains- prophecy; but that is not its primary entity. This is where so many teachings in eschatology (study of end events) get off-track, because they assume the (entire) book is 'prophecy', and so, when they come to passages that are either History or Current Events, they find themselves "twisting" (2Pt3:16) what they see, in order to -force- it into their prophetic (timeline) mold.

If it seems to you like I'm spending a lot of words establishing these couple of initial foundations, you are correct. When a foundation is straight and firm, the rest of the structure is more likely to be true. But when the foundation is shaky, the rest is prone to toppling over. And the errors about this book that exist, I really seriously doubt that those teachers have actually spent any time in chapter 1, here, but have delved on into the "juicy stuff" later on, that impresses their hearers, because global population is annihilated, and a star called "wormwood" falls from the heavens, and all sorts of fantastic things are spoken. They typically, essentially, ignore this entire first chapter. But this first chapter is like the color code. If you are familiar with electronics, and are working with resistors, they are striped with a color code, to know their resistive value. If you want to know the resistor's value, and its tolerance levels, being minus an ohmmeter you first need to know the color code (blk=0, brn=1, red=2, etc) Awhile back somebody gave me a bag-full of LinkSys/Multishare printer network interconnect modules. First time I tried to check them out, they didn't work. But then I found/downloaded a file (with drivers) with its accompanying "readme" file, which explained a special wiring polarity for

what otherwise looked like normal telephone wires and connectors. You see, first time around, I had connected things up with standard telephone wires...and the system was short-circuited. I needed the -fundamental- concept of the correct wiring polarity. When that was corrected, the modules worked perfectly. And from there, then, I was able to experiment with different configurations to see what they were capable of, and work out a configuration for my own purposes.

To understand the rest of this book, we need to be 'plugged in' with wires 'untwisted', not shorting out. We must approach everything that follows with the correct fundamental premise (Jesus Christ); and with correct investigative observational methodology (past/present/future).

Thus: If we spend this time now, to gain a proper understanding of the 'rules' for the book, then, the rest of the book will be, relatively, a 'breeze'. I think we'll find it to be not nearly as 'mysterious' as many people think it to be.

Why is all this so important? Because of the "blessing". Most people, viewing the book as one huge account of God's judgment, miss God's righteousness, where the angels proclaim: "true and righteous are Your judgments" (16:7, 19:2)

Here is the blessing: "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near" (vs3)

How can the reader receive God's blessing for obedience, if he has not rightly understood what is written? If there is not correct understanding, then obedience is impossible. Yes? The word "keep" means the same as "obedience". In other words, this book is not to merely be read, to be 'wowed' over the signs and wonders that are about to take place, whilst trying to pre-speculate about every last little detail of their implementation; nor is the reader to find someplace "out from the city" where they build themselves a "booth" to sit comfortably in the shade, to watch God's destruction on "Nineveh" (Jonah4): Go, Get 'em God! Go, God, Go!

No!

The result of reading this book should be 'obedience'. Regarding the expectation of seeing Jesus "just as He is" the exhortation is: "And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." (1Jn3:3)

And just as Genesis is at the beginning of our Bibles, and Jesus' crucifixion is closer to the middle, Judas (speaking of near-end events) is near the end, and Revelation, speaking of the end events, is at the end. Earlier John writes, "even now many antichrists have risen up, by which we know that it is the last hour" (1Jn2:18); here he says, "for the time is

near" (vs3b) As the days and weeks have gone by, eventually history comes up to the "last hour", often dubbed the "eleventh hour". Now, we are well into the eleventh hour, and it's JUST ABOUT TIME. Most-any-minute, now; most-any-second! That is the timeframe for which this book is written. And as we progress, if you weren't already aware of it, you -will-become so.

In the prior years of this ministry it was not the Lord's time for us to address this book, even though many others purporting to be for "the last days" were doing so; and subscribers would periodically request that we study the book. But now it is. As we watch our daily evening news, we see events related to Israel continuing to become more and more intense, and this year (2004), LIKE NO OTHER, the world's primary super-power nation, somewhat symbolic of prophetic "babylon", has -jumped- off the cliff into moral depravity in the likeness of the "days of Lot". Up until this year, it has been quickly 'running' towards depravity...but this year it has (as I say) jumped off the cliff, and it seems that various magistrates here and there cannot get on the homosexual 'marriage' bandwagon fast enough (breaking all established laws)...thumbing their noses and challenging society to do something about it (if they dare!!).

So, indeed, "the time is near".

Greeting - (Revelation 1:4-8)

"John, to the seven churches..." (vs4)

Remember? The "revelation" is -to- God's "servants". (vs1) This book is to the church. Believers. Those who have been "washed from our sins in His own blood" (vs5) The world may read this book. But they do so as 'outsiders', because it is not addressed to them.

"Grace to you and peace..." The world continues intoning the "peace, peace" mantra. But in the context of some end-time events, Paul informs us, "For when they say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall by no means escape." (1Th5:3) That is for "they" (the unsaved world), who will not escape God's wrath. But to the Believers is "grace and peace". As we shall see later, "they" will be made to come and bow at the feet of the Believers they had persecuted, while the Believers will be "kept from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth". (3:9-10) "Those", for whom the world is their home, compared to the Believer whose "citizenship is in Heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.." (Php3:20)

For you who still doubt that doctrine called "pre-trib" (pre-70th-week): you see, this entire book, which is typically associated with the 70th week (but as we've already spoken, is so much more), is enshrouded in a spirit of "grace and peace" to the Church. It certainly speaks of judgment upon Babylon and the Beast; but upon the 'overcomers' of the Seven Churches (ch2-3) it is about "grace and peace".

From whom is this Grace and Peace? From "Him who is and who was and who is to come" (vs4) That's God. "...even from everlasting to everlasting, You are the Mighty God." (Ps90:2b)

"..and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne" (vs4b) Of the various things we will see in this book, this is one that is yet a mystery. Jesus spoke of "-the- Spirit of Truth" (Jn14:17, 15:26, etc) Use of the definite article "the" suggests a 'singular' entity. But these "seven" are called "the seven Spirits of God" (3:1, 4:5, 5:6) Thus, as God is comprised of "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Mt28:19), is the Holy Spirit further-comprised of 'Seven'? Since I don't know of any Scripture that explains the matter, other than mentioning their existence, I'm going to leave it right there. A question. A 'mystery' yet to be understood when we see the Lord and understand "face to face" (1Co13:12)

"..and from Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn out from the dead, and the Ruler over the kings of the earth; to Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (vs5) Jesus was the Faithful Witness of the Father to the world; as He proclaimed, "...I always do those

things that please Him" (Jn8:29b) In His resurrection, He was the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep". (1Co15:20,23) Jesus Christ is the very -definition- of the resurrection: "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn11:25) And He is Ruler over the kings of the earth. He is the One who is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16) He is the "only Potentate" (1Ti6:15) He is the one deserving of all praise: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (5:12) It is -this- "Jesus" from whom Grace and Peace is bestowed to the Church.

Last time the world saw Him, He was hanging on a cross. And today's babylon 'church' keeps Him there, forever bleeding. But notice that "He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will wail because of Him" (vs7) You see... all the cataclysms that are prophesied in this book are actually the lead-in and introduction to -this- event, when Christ returns in power. Zec12:10 tells us that Israel will "mourn" for Him at His coming. But it was Roman soldiers who "pierced" Him. He will be revealed to Jew and Gentile, alike. And they will -WAIL- because of Him.

But for the Believer this is not a time of calamity. Those 'clouds' Jesus returns with (Zec14:5) include the Believers who are returning to reign with Him a thousand years. (20:6) Thus, while the unregenerate world will be beating their breasts in horror and terror, the Believer will know Christ's righteous justice.

Thus, the response to the world's calamity is: "Even so, Amen!" (vs7b) Why? Because we have been made "kings and priests to God" (vs6) But this is not a rulership, as today's self-proclaimed 'gods' are, who, in their delusion, imagine themselves "commanding" God this and that. No! "To Him [the Father] be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (vs6b)

Who is this God? "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (vs8) The very definition of the Most High is He who -DECLARES- "...the end from the beginning, and from antiquity things which are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure;" (Is46:10)

Are you picking up on a pattern, here? One of God's names is the "Alpha and Omega". (vs8) The greeting is from Him who is, was and is to come. (vs4) This One who is the very embodiment of eternity, who in O.T. praise and worship they proclaimed of Him, "His mercy is eternal" (1Ch16:34) This book is a 'revelation' of Jesus Christ, and as such John is instructed to write about the things Seen, Now and After these things. In looking at the past, present and future of history one is also looking at part of the very essence of God... of Jesus Christ.

the Son of Man, the Alpha and Omega - (Revelation 1:10-18)

"I came to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet." (vs10)

Here, now, we come to the third foundational principle regarding this book. Remember what the first two are? 1) Revelation -of- Jesus Christ; 2) Past, Present, Future; and now, 3) Vision. This entire book is a record of this fantastic vision God gave to John, to "write". (vs19) As such, we are going to see much allegory. From our recent series in "Bible Study Methods" we remember that an allegory is a symbol, representation, example, etc. But it is not the -actual- real thing.

Joseph interpreted for Pharaoh's two servants what would happen to them after three days, depicted by three objects on their heads. (Gen40) Pharaoh dreamed about seven cows and corn, where the dream spoke of coming seven years of famine. (Gen41) Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about a huge statue and tree. (Dan2,4) Ezekiel had visions of wheels, and of God's glory; and he uses much the expression "in appearance like". (Ezk1:14,26,etc) When he says that above God's glory was the "appearance like a sapphire stone" (1:26) it doesn't mean that there was - a- sapphire stone, but that he didn't know what it was, but his closest explanation for what he saw was "like" a sapphire.

In this passage it says Jesus' feet were "like fine brass". (vs15) This it not to suggest that any time we see some highly refined, shiny brass, that we are seeing "Jesus". No. When it says that His appearance was "like the sun shining in its strength" (vs16) does that mean we are to engage in sun-worship? No! With these visions that many had of God's glory, it was so indescribable that they could only suggest 'similarities' to things we know on this earth.

As such, here is our fourth principle for this book: Not everything we read will be answerable to us at this time. Paul says that right now we only "know in part and prophesy in part" because we only "see through a mirror dimly". We are not yet "face to face" where/when we "shall fully know" (1Co13:9,12) Even Daniel, in all his wisdom, whom God used to explain dreams and visions to Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, when God showed him visions, some of it was told to him, "shut up the words and seal the book, to the time of the end" and Daniel expresses, "And I heard, but I did not understand" (Dan12:4,8) So you see, we will be seeing a lot of things we will not know for sure; we will not have definite answers; we will have to conclude, "I don't know". Some things we will even be left to speculate about, not concluding decisively whether or not the matter is 'literal' or 'allegory'. And there is nothing wrong with that; it only proves that

we are yet 'human', and yet subject to the "corruption" of being "flesh and blood". (1Co15:50~)

And so, John hears a loud voice, "as of a trumpet". (vs10) This does not mean that John heard an actual 'trumpet'. But the voice was not the kind of sound he was used to hearing. The voice was piercing and clarion-like. When Paul says that Christ comes for the Church with the "trumpet of God" (1Th4:16) is it this same sort of voice? Just a question... But this is John's 'call' to write. This was not the "whisper of a small voice" by which Elijah heard God. (1Ki19:12) This is a major announcement; an important message; something to which the churches will be exhorted: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (2:7) with the warning that, if they will not be obedient, that their lampstand (their existence as a church 1:20) will be removed, unless they "repent". (2:5)

So John turns to see 'who' is speaking to him. He sees One "like the Son of Man". (vs13) John recognizes a 'resemblance' to Jesus; remember, John is the one "whom Jesus loved". But what John sees here is so fantastic. Please read this passage for yourselves. Jesus is appearing like nothing John had ever seen before: eyes like a flame of fire, a two-edge sword coming out His mouth, with a voice like the "sound of many waters". So awesome was the sight that John (the one whom Jesus loved, who leaned back on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper) collapses in a faint "as dead". This is the usual response when a man-of-God was shown God's glory. Isaiah wails, "Woe is me!" (Is6:5) Ezekiel says, "I fell on my face" (Ezk1:28) In Ezekiel's case God calls to him "stand on your feet" and the Holy Spirit enters him and "set" him on his feet. (2:1-2)

Here, Jesus comes and touches John with "His right hand". (vs17) And how does Jesus calm him? "Do not be terrified; I am the First and the Last."

Well...isn't that part of the very thing that has terrified John? Jesus proclaiming Himself the "Alpha and Omega"? Well, yes, with that loud trumpet-like voice. But Jesus further confirms His identity to John, the one who had written Jesus' words, "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn11:25) and the disciples' conclusion that with Jesus were the "Words of Eternal Life" (Jn6:68), like this: "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen." (vs18) Remember, John had seen the cocoon-like empty burial clothes: he "saw and believed" (Jn20:8) Here, Jesus reminds him of his faith, and says, essentially, "It's Me"...only, with considerable grandeur!

Notice also: "And I have the keys of Hades and of Death". Perhaps this explains to us better the "Rock" upon which Christ's Church is built, and exactly to 'whom' the keys were given in Mt16:18-19?

Notice the imagery. The lampstands being "the seven churches" (vs20); and "in the MIDST of the seven lampstands" is where the Son of Man is

seen. (vs13) Jesus had said, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (Mt18:20)

This Jesus, the One who called the disciples His "friends" (Jn15:14), the One about whom all our 'love songs' are written: "Jesus loves me", "My Jesus I love Thee", etc.; indeed He comes and touches us, giving us strength.

But how many from the Church know the eyes as a flame of fire, the clarion-like voice, the two-edge sword, the brightness that is blindingly intense, the purity that is the white hair, the uncleanness purged out like refined brass? When Isaiah heard the seraphim calling out, "Holy, Holy, Holy is Jehovah of Hosts" (Is6:3) he wailed at his own corruption. The Church used to sing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" Now that which calls itself "church" (whose lampstand is about to be vomited out 3:16) sings, Holy, holy..."I lift Your name on high"...as I make myself -feel- holy in worship and emotional swooning and cooing. There is no trembling before the Holy God! Remember folks, John was as close to the earthly Jesus as any man was, used of God to record Jesus "Deity" in the Gospel of John...and yet this man, who had known Jesus as well as any would, when he saw Jesus in His glory, faints at His presence. Kinda like when the Queen of Sheba saw all of Solomon's glory it says "it took her breath away". (1Ki10:5) Well, here, Jesus' splendor not only took John's breath away...he fainted cold-out. It was more than his human senses could fathom.

And so, where does today's so-called "church" come off, assuming this certain 'familiarity' with Jesus Christ, as they come in all their sin and perversity ("just as I am"), assuming that Jesus is now their "buddy" who is just eager and waiting to roll around in the dirt with them, as though He doesn't care about their sin?! Or they swoon about Him in their emotions as though they were walking hand-in-hand, barefoot on the beach at sunset, as He caresses them and becomes an object of the fulfillment of their lust?!

People who view Jesus in these ways... DO NOT KNOW JESUS the CHRIST!

Summary of Interpretational Foundation

Before we go any further, let us review the prime points of interpretational understanding for this book. A good many prophecy teachers, when addressing this book, typically don't spend much time with the first chapter. Chapter 1 does not contain all the "drama" of the blockbuster movies like "Deep Impact" or "Armageddon", that draws the crowds that makes them (the teacher) famous, for the telling.

It tells us of JESUS CHRIST.

But just like that "readme" file I mentioned earlier, which was key to making the printer network work; so, too, is this first chapter. Without it, the rest of the book is typically greatly misunderstood.

Summary:

Revelation -of- Jesus Christ: While the book -contains- prophecy, history and current events, the primary focus is not those things. All those things 'reveal' to us JESUS CHRIST.

Past, Present, Future: Jesus' very essence is the One who is and who was and who is to come. (1:4,8,18,etc) The book certainly contains prophecy; but that is not its only function. It reveals to us Jesus Christ, who encompasses all time and eternity and contains a record of:

History,
Current Events
Future Events (vs19)

Vision: The book is the writing down of the vision (or series of visions?) given to John. As Scriptural visions go, proper understanding recognizes the use of allegory. Many things in the book are literal. But also, many things are allegory.

Not everything is understandable at this time: Things that are history or current events may be understood. But as with all prophecy, even the prophets recording God's Words did not always understand everything they wrote about. (1Pet1:10-12) Many details of prophecy are for those living at the time of fulfillment. And some prophecies are revealed 'after' their fulfillment; just as Jesus, after His resurrection "...opened their mind to understand the Scriptures" (Lk24:44-45) regarding all the things about Himself, and how they had been fulfilled.

Thus... Essentially everything in the book that follows, can be adjudged by some or all of these principles.

The Seven Churches: Introduction

There are essentially three traditional views regarding interpretation of the letters to the Seven Churches.

1) These were seven "actual" churches that John wrote to. His letters were actually delivered to these churches in western Asia Minor, and they read them; during the first century AD.

2) The Seven Churches represent epochs of time over the past two millenia. That these seven periods of time traversed in chronological order, beginning with Ephesus and ending, in our times, with Laodicea. That each "church" represents the prevailing religious/spiritual "climate" during their respective epoch.

3) The Seven Churches represent the various elements that can be found during any period of time; from the time it was written, through, and including our time.

There could be some merit to #2, as I have seen scholarship by those who know history, to indicate its possibility. I believe it would be preposterous for anyone to say that #1 was not the case. These seven cities/churches existed at the time of writing in western Asia Minor. However, in looking at the church today, it is obvious that #3 has merit for today. Thus, I see all three views being valid...together.

This brief series will assume all three views to have merit, but will concentrate on view #3, for the days we live in. The Last Days just before the Rapture (1Cor15:51-52,1Ths4:17) of the "Church," after which nothing more is said about them in the rest of the book of Revelation, after the Redeemer has "taken possession" (Rev3:20) of that which He "escrowed" to Himself (Eph1:13-14) and has now said, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." (Rev4:1)

The series is in two parts. An outline of each church which was compiled a couple years ago, which arranges in systematic fashion, all the minute analytical detailed elements of the church, and might be useful for further personal study; and a (current) narrative. The narrative, while not following the outline nor touching all details, is intended to address overall broad concepts. (It is recommended that the reader first look up the passage in Revelation before reading the narrative.)

In typical prophetic fashion, you will note that the good and bad are intermingled with each other, proving out Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of heaven being like the "wheat and tares." When the servants asked if the tares should be pulled out, the master said, "No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them." (Mt13:29)

If you are a Christian, or make any claim at all to christendom, you will find yourself somewhere in at least one of the seven churches. As the churches contain the good and the bad, you will find yourself falling into one of those two categories, also.

The One Who says to each church, "I know your works" also exhorts, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Judgement is assured for the wicked, unless there is repentance; and blessed promises for "him who overcomes."

Ephesus: - First Love (Revelation 2:1-7)

Nearing the completion of his last missionary journey where he has been establishing these churches in Asia Minor, at his final reunion with the leaders and elders, Paul warned, "Take heed to yourselves and to the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock..even from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples..therefore watch and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears."(Acts20:28-31)

It would seem Ephesus learned the lesson well. The Spirit says to the Angel of Ephesus, "I know your works." The labor, patience and abhorrence of evil. The careful scrutiny to ferret out the false teachers. The tireless persistence in faithful service. All these things they are doing well.

But they lack one thing. They have "left [their] first love."

What IS "first love?" It can be that which came First-in-Time. The love that was at the beginning. Such as, the first girlfriend, the first kiss, etc.

It can also be, that which is Most-Important. Such as, the love for one's wife is more important than one's love for his job or his hobby, or what-have-you.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." (Deut6:5) "If you love Me, keep my commandments."(Jn14:15) "Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." (Jer15:16)

Do you remember the joy when your sin rolled away when you repented and then realized you were forgiven? People react differently. Some jump up and down. Others cry. But one thing is certain, there is peace and joy...and a LOVE for our Lord Jesus Christ for all He's done for us, and for His mercy and grace extended to us. Many cannot contain themselves...they are compelled to tell everybody they can.

After a while, the "novelty" of the new-birth wears off. And God becomes "ho-hum" humdrum in the person's mind/heart. As time moves along, one even becomes loath to mention the Name of the Lord, perhaps? ...first love; in "time."

Then, there are some who militantly maintain "the right!" They staunchly support God's Word, God's laws, holy living...and will very carefully scrutinize everything and everyone, and judge them against certain criteria. After all, "we must be TRUE to God's Word."

This is AS IT SHOULD BE.

However, when the "certain criteria" is found to be flawed in little ways when compared to God's Word, what is maintained? What do we love more...God's Word or a "version" of God's Word? Do we love "Thus says the Lord" ...or thus said Calvin, Wesley, Moody, Graham, Swindol... ABOUT what God's Word says. ..?

There are many trappings to the "church." The building. the crusades. the large attendance/membership numbers. the respect and adulation from men. The love is for the SYSTEM. the militance. the dogma (as distinguished from "doctrine" and "faith").

The Spirit says, "Remember from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place."(Rev2:5) The lampstand representing the church.(1:20)

Jesus asked Peter, "Peter, do you love Me more than these?"(Jn21:15) Peter was at a low point, having just denied his Lord, and had "now" returned to fishing. After being restored, his boldness and martyrdom proved out his love for Christ.

God says to David, Remember back when you were nothing in your own eyes? And I took you from the sheep, to lead My people Israel.(2Sam7:8) Pastors/leaders need to remember, it is not "their" ministry. But God's flock. In the beginning each sermon was with trepidation, and trusting the Lord. Now, it is "old hat" and quickly "whip something together" at the last minute..and go on instinct.

The Spirit says, Remember that beginning. You were little in your own eyes then, and felt that you were lowly and nothing, and you Loved God with all your being. But, as your "self-confidence" has grown, and you've become a successful "somebody" in your own strength...you have actually "fallen." You were doing well in your zeal. But the goals of your zeal have changed, as your love has been mis-directed. Remember from where you have fallen, and repent.

In the psalmist's words: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation." (Ps51:12)

Smyrna: Suffering and Persecution (Revelation 2:8-11)

There has been a mentality in American "churches" which elevates the suffering, persecuted Christians of Russia, China, Muslim countries, etc. Often, someone will sponsor former Russian or Chinese persecuted Christians to visit this country, and put them on "display." As though, imprisonment, beatings or other such physical torture is a "worse form" of suffering, to somehow be held in greater awe.

Jesus promised, "In the world you will have tribulation." (Jn16:33)

The reason: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you..because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you..A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (Jn15:18-20)

Persecution comes in all forms and varieties. The most easily discernable forms are found in books like Fox's "Book of Martyrs." Beatings, dismemberments, burnings, drownings, filleting and putting salt in the wounds, rape, imprisonment, etc. The forms that are physically agonizingly painful.

The forms not so readily recognized are the mental, psychological, spiritual forms, and don't usually get classed as "persecution." One cannot see the severed limb sitting there, or the dead corpse.

The Spirit says, "I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."

Objections come quickly if one uses expressions like, "so-called-christian," or "claiming-to-be-christian" when referring to apostates. "How can you judge?!" Well, the Holy Spirit judges. Paul said, "from among yourselves men will rise up."(Acts20:30) And Jesus said, "Be ware of false prophets..by their fruits you will know them..I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me.'" (~Mt7:13-23)

This persecution is so much more subtle. You will be labelled as "divisive, unloving, judgmental" ...in the churches and by church leaders. ..By "christians." (small "c") And the apostates will constantly harague you, always getting in the "last word" as they spout off with Scripture, mis-read and mis-applied. ..as they CLAIM to be "Christian" and are so full of Luuuuv and Graeeesss. You are actually the one made to FEEL like the non-Christian for your faithfulness.

The early Christians, "[rejoiced] that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."(Acts5:41) And would hold in high esteem a believer who had risked life and limb for the Name of Jesus.(Acts15:26)

It would seem that Christ also holds in high esteem those who suffer for His Name. Jesus Christ Who "sat down" at the right hand of God (Heb1:3) ..STOOD on the occasion of Stephen's martyrdom, to accept him into His presence. (Acts7:55)

The suffering Church Smyrna was given accolades. And NO CRITICISMS. The encouragement that, while they seemingly had "nothing" as far as the world could see, they were "RICH" in Christ.

Yes, the persecution will continue. All forms of it (depending on which part of the world you live in). But do NOT FEAR! You will have even more! But BE FAITHFUL, even unto death. "He that endures to the end shall be saved"(Mt24:13) "No temptation [trial] has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted [tested] beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape [exit-by-death], that you may be able to bear [endure] it. (1Cor10:13)

If you are faithful you will receive the crown of life, and the second death will not hurt you!

Pergamos: Satan's Dwelling (Revelation 2:12-17)

Is it possible for an individual to be in the Catholic or Mormon church and also be a Christian?

"I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. (Rev 2:13)

Probably the largest organization in the world. Its leader is the "vicar of Christ" lit. substitute or in-the-place-of [anti] Christ. It has been responsible for the incalculable martyrdom of Christians (those who believe in Jesus Christ by Faith). It has maintained the early religions of Babel and Nimrod in its variations throughout the centuries and now dresses the idolatries and harlotries with "christian" labels. When a person fully understands its scope, it could easily be understood, "where Satan's throne is."

Another organization adds to and replaces Scripture with "another testament" of Jesus Christ. Fulfilling Paul's curse, "Even if we, or an ANGEL FROM HEAVEN preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed."(Gal1:8) An "angel" appeared to J.Smith, giving the new laws. Not only do they "replace" Christ as the other group has done, they degrade Him to a position as "brother of Lucifer."

Is it possible for someone to be in these groups, and be a Child of God? The blood of the martyrs cries it! After all..where does Faith reside? Figuratively speaking, "he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God"(Rom2:29) And while a person's doctrine may be messed up due to false teaching received, salvation comes to "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."(Joel2:32) It is God Who does the saving, and not man's ability, wisdom, or perfect understanding, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."(Rom5:6)

You see..God has not left Himself without witness. Even though these organizations are most corrupt, the person who is drawn by God and seeks for God can find Him.(Jn6:44,Jer29:13) Jesus is depicted as having died on the cross. This is all the thief next to Jesus saw, and his faith saved him. Jesus is presented in the music and from Scripture. Even if Scripture is presented out of context and distorted by the purveyors, God is not frustrated, "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."(Isa55:11)

Two organizations have been selected for mention here. This scenario is not limited to these two.

At the counsel of Balaam, the Midianites intermarried with Israel and led them astray to idolatry. Solomon was led astray to idolatry by all his pagan wives. When a couple gets married, what church do they say their vows in? If one of them is from the region of Satan's throne, the edict is quite clear; vows are said before Satan, and his vicars do not compromise. "Two become one flesh." It is a marriage into the church.

Eucharist. The sacrifice of Christ upon the altar. And then consumed. We are told, "Christ was offered ONCE to bear the sins of many." (Heb9:28) ..that there is no longer an offering for sin"(10:18) And to sacrifice Him again would "put Him [Son of God] to an open shame."(6:6) Thus, every time Mass is celebrated, Christ is blasphemed. He is openly "shamed" ...again!!

Jesus says, "Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them.." Notice the words "you" and "them." Later on the voice from heaven says, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."(Rev18:4) And as He fights against "them," Babylon is destroyed.

Let there be clear understanding as to "who" is in the place "where Satan dwells." The forces of the world religions are moving and joining all together. Catholics, Evangelicals, Muslims...all...are joining together. And, the goal as planned, is to have a worldwide celebration of the MASS...blaspheming Jesus Christ...in the year 2000. The major religions are laying aside their doctrinal differences in order to accomplish this. Even ALL the major evangelical groups and leaders have signed into this adultery...and as a result, are bowing and marching up to that "throne."

So, the question which opened the article is now expanded. Is it possible for an INDIVIDUAL to be in the Catholic, Mormon, Baptist, Nazarene, AOG, Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, etc. churches and be a Christian? For those who "hold fast to My name, and do not deny My faith" ...Yes!

If you participate in the One-World religion, Christ will come quickly when you are not expecting. The world will blaspheme Christ with a united Eucharist.

If you are an "overcomer" Christ promises, "I will give some of the hidden manna to eat."

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!

Thyatira: Jezebel ...the depths of Satan (Revelation 2:18-29)

Not only is there the vicar (substitute) of Christ; there is an even "higher" authority. An authority that the Pope bows to. Who or what might that be? Jesus? God? The Holy Scriptures? ...No! ...The "blessed virgin."

Down through the pagan centuries, cultures worshipped variations of a female deity. When the Roman empire amalgamated "christianity" into the empire with the pagan rituals and beliefs, this female deity became called "Mary" in order to "beguile My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols."

Worship of the "virgin" has included all sorts of perversions, including the sacrifice of human babies, and eating them. Temple prostitution and sexual orgy-like rituals as part of worship, where the sexual partners were then killed and sacrificed in order to insure things like bountiful crops, fertility for cattle, and continuity of the human race. Out of these come things like festive evergreen trees in winter, and eggs in spring time.

Many of these things have become an integral part of the "church" festivities down through the years. And now, what is the message of the virgin? The witch, Jezebel (2Kgs9:22), conjures up apparitions all over the world. Invitations into the "immaculate heart," to the "fires of love." Enticements to ALL to partitipate in the Eucharist...to blaspheme Jesus Christ.

And ALL church groups are joining together to follow her bidding! Racing toward the year 2000. The major evangelical leaders, names you all know, have signed into this unity to follow Witch Jezebel! Indeed! "These will be cast into great tribulation, unless they repent."

How are "evangelicals" preparing themselves? They are engaging in Prayer Summits. Who do they pray to? To Satan. e.g. "Satan, we have the victory over you now!! You had better start trembling before us!" Or..."Satan (or demons), I command you...!"(Compare this with Jude8-10,2Pet2:10-12) They revel in exorcisms, and talking with demons. They spend their time exploring the "depths" of Satanism and witchcraft and how to manipulate him, and dedicate their entire energies and ministries to research and propagation of information about all that is false. They invite other religions to join together, with "spirit guides" and other pagan beliefs.(And then they wonder why there's no revival!!)

In amongst all this confusion are those INDIVIDUALS whose hearts are pure before God. They sit in the pew hearing Jezebel's blasphemous, but are uneasy about it all, but don't know quite for sure "why" always. They faithfully meditate on Scriptures, and serve the Lord with their whole heart.

And quietly, they touch individual lives here and there. They are part of the "seven thousand...all whose knees have not bowed to Baal."(1Kgs19:18)

Sometimes service seems hopeless. "What's the use! We can never win!" But they persevere on through all the confusion of the blasphemers. The Spirit says, "I will put on you no other burden." Just hang in there. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1Cor15:58)

Many of those dealing in the "depths of Satan" do not believe in heaven or hell, and seek to establish an earthly kingdom by "fleshly" means.

However, To him who overcomes, "and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations..."

"He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces." And Jezebel's kingdom will be shattered. "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered..in the cup which she has mixed, mix for her double."(Rev18:5~)

"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!..Alleluia! ..her smoke rises up forever and ever!"

Therefore..."come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."(Rev18:4)

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!

Sardis:

Dead (*Revelation 3:1-6*)

"I don't know what you came to do...I just came to praise the Lord!" Words from a 70's hippy song. "Preacher don't want to talk about religion [teach-&-preach] no more...he just wants to praise the Lord"

There is a generation that does not want teaching from God's Word. They do not want doctrine. They don't want accountability. They just want to gather together and dance around, sing and clap, and shout "Praise the Lord! Bless you, Jesus!"

But...they are also experts. They have "authority." (so they think) They will command, "I command....!!" Or.."the Lord gave me a word for you." "The Lord told me to ... this or that."

Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, "Hear the word of the LORD!" Thus says the Lord God, "Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, "Thus says the LORD!" But the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed. Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, "The LORD says," but I have not spoken. (~Ez13:2-7)

They are really into signs and wonders. They will lament and complain if a meeting doesn't include some tongues and miracles. And of course, the all-important...healings. (e.g. Everyone must have both legs being the same length) All this, to them, is "power!"

All this comes, they say, as a result of being "spirit-filled." But, what "spirit" is this of?

He Who has the Seven Spirits of God...says, "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."

This group, now, is not without God's Word. They recognize Jesus' blood shed on the cross, and the need to receive Jesus as Savior. But they are not perfect before God. The edict to them is, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die...remember how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent."

Typically, too, this group does not believe that Jesus will return for His own before He judges the world. In fact, they REFUSE to do so, even though many try to show them from Scripture that it is so. Since their understanding of Scripture is so infantile and immature, they think everything in Scripture is for the "Church." They think "they" are the only

ones who exist in God's plans. Not realizing the greater picture, which includes Israel. But you see...they have been so busy "praising the Lord" that they haven't had time, or desire, to study God's Word and find out what He has told us...to understand Scriptures in the "big picture" of things.

He Who has the Seven Spirits of God says to them, "Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you." Yes. In accordance with their choosing they will remain, and He will COME UPON them in judgment.

You notice this group receives NO ACCOLADES!

Even though Sardis, as a whole, is dead...there are a few INDIVIDUALS who are not defiled. "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."(Mt7:14) They "shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." They will be clothed in white garments. Their names will not be blotted out of the Book of Life.

But, many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name..done many wonders in Your name...IN THE NAME OF JEEZZZUS!!! ..??" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; DEPART from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Mt7:22-23)

However, of him who overcomes Jesus says, "I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!

Philadelphia:

Faithful *(Revelation 3:7-13)*

A close relative of Smyrna, Philadelphia is the only other church which receives no criticisms. Where Smyrna is beset upon and physically oppressed, Philadelphia has freedom. Doors wide open for service. Much like the Churches experienced "peace and were edified" once Saul had been converted (Acts9:31), and Paul was encouraged by the Lord at Corinth regarding physical safety, to continue speaking without fear. (Acts18:9-10)

Philadelphia has been responsible for sending missionaries into all the world, translating Scriptures into the languages of the remotest parts of the earth, setting up Bible schools to train indigenous pastors, smuggling Bibles for Smyrna to use.

The accolades: You have a little strength. But you have kept the Lord's command to persevere, and your "little" strength has been multiplied by His mighty power. (2Cor12:9-10,Eph1:19)

You have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Yes, you have been taunted by the pretend "christians" who are liars from Satan's synagogue. He pretends to be an "angel of light" and his servants pretend to be "christians."(2Cor11:13-15) Many of whom are from Sardis.

These liars come along with other doctrines. They continue to harrass you with little changes in Scriptural teaching. They point to great "men of God" and "historical perspectives" from the teachings of other pretend "christians." But you have stuck to God's Word for "Thus saith the Lord."

You are loved by Jesus Christ. And as a demonstration to the liars of His love for you, they will be brought before you, and be made to bow at your feet because of your faithfulness...as they remember how they tried to belittle you with their scholarly demonic human wisdom, and no doubt laughed at you when they had you cornered. But, even though you didn't always have an answer for their foolishness, you remained faithful to the Lord...by faith.

These liars tried to persuade you it wouldn't be so, but it will be. Because you have persevered, I will keep you from the "hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth." They have persecuted you. Now it's their turn. "It is their just due."(Rev16:6)

Hang on to what you have. Don't let them take your crown. Overcomers, "because you have been faithful in little things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord."(Mt25:21) You will be part of God's dwelling, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will

dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God." (~Rev 21:3)

Behold, I am coming quickly! "..I am at the doors!"(Mt24:33) Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (Rev22:20)

See Also Addendum: Q/A -False "Jews" or "Christians"?

Laodicea:

Sensuous Filthy Vomit (Revelation 3:14-22)

"God wants you to be rich!" are words spewed forth from the pulpits into the TV cameras. "It's not God's will for you to be poor." They misapply God's word in Malachi 3:10, saying, "Send us your 'seed money' and just watch God overflow you with riches and wealth." Of course, the only ones getting rich are the TV stars!

Laodicea has grand buildings in which to meet. And strangely enough, they send out many from Philadelphia to their faithful work. But Laodicea parades their generosity for all to see, assuming they are partakers in Philadelphia's work. They even try to immitate Philadelphia's work by engaging in the same [physical] activities. They somehow think they are a notch above Smyrna because they are "so blessed" and they "pray for" Smyrna, hoping that Smyrna could get out of their predicament in persecution and be like Laodicea. They shudder to think that they might ever be in such a predicament, themselves.

But what is the Faithful and True Witness about Laodicea? NO ACCOLADES! Where Smyrna appears to be poor and are rich, Laodicea appears to all the world to be rich, but in God's eyes are poor. They have an appearance they promote of being Christians, but their hearts are not right before God. But neither are they like Satan's throne; easily discernable as being corrupt. They ride the fence pretending to be Christians, using the world's allurements to increase their numbers, and also join in with Satan's throne for world religious unity. Truth cannot be found amongst them because they are so perverted, and about to be spewed out of God's mouth like luke-warm chocolate, in total disgust and revulsion! Yeee-uch!!!

Due to their wealth, they trust in their own abilities and works, as they sit like kings and rule with apparent authority. Many people flock to their fancy buildings. They have programs which impress even the world. And they frolic merrily along!

But the verdict: wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked.

They use the world's sensuality to entice people in...their music, their sensual stage antics, the sensual cooing of words, likening a relationship with their "christ" to that with a lover in the bedroom. This they parade about with latest fashionable sensual attire.

If anyone should point out that they are not right before God, they display their righteous indignation and spout off, "Don't judge, lest you be judged." Don't you know just how important we are before God? We are MOST

VALUABLE to God! God's graeeesss accepts us "just as we are." How DARE you criticize us?!

Christ counsels: buy the gold refined in the fires of testing, built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, along with silver, and precious stones. Things which endure (1Cor3:12-13) and be Truly rich. Put on a white garment, washed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ (Rev7:14), and cover up your nakedness with His righteousness.

If you don't accept rebuke, you are not Mine. What legitimate father is there who does not chasten his son? (Heb12:5-13) Those I love, I rebuke and discipline. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Furthermore, it is now time for me to take possession of what is Mine, which I escrowed with the Holy Spirit (Eph1:13-14). I would really like to have fellowship and share in sumptuous feast...if only you would be willing. But only My own know My voice, and they hear and follow Me. (Jn10:27)

However, for the overcomer: he will participate in REAL power and authority, as he sits with Me on My throne.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Epilogue: Overcomers

In each of the Seven Churches a phrase is repeated, "He who overcomes shall ..???" And under Laodicea He adds, "as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

What does "overcome" mean?

To conquer. To be victorious. To come out the "winner."

Paul writes, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil3:14) And he further explains how he does this, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1Cor9:24-27)

What was the victory that Jesus won?

When He cried, "It is finished" (Jn19:30) He had just completed the sacrifice for sin. (Heb9:28) And fulfilled God's prophecy in Gen3:15 that Satan would be crushed. Conquering death (1Cor15:26,55-57) and sin, and "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."(Heb1:3)

What is the victory for Believers?

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."(1Cor15:57) As Christ was victorious, He grants that we, Believers in Christ, will sit with Him on His throne next to the Majesty on high.(Rev3:21) Our victory is IN CHRIST. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."(2Cor5:17)

What do we overcome?

The World

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1Jn4:4)
"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

The Wicked One:

I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. (1 John 2:13)

How do we overcome?

Faith:

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith. (1John5:4) "For by grace you have been saved through faith,, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." (Eph2:8)

Faith in What/Whom?

Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1John5:5)

What Works do we do?

This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (John 6:29) ...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, (Phil 3:10)

What is the Reward for overcoming?

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (Rev 21:7)

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." (Acts16:31)

He who has an ear...

...Let him hear

What the Spirit says to the Churches

See Also Addendum: Q/A -Where do YOU Stand?

Rapture of the Church - (Revelation 4:1)

"After these things I looked, and behold, a door having been opened in Heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after these things." (4:1)

When a person sees a phrase saying "after these things", one is immediately made to think of passage of 'time'. Some sort of time stamp. Some moment or place in time where something was the case -before-that moment, and then there is something which follows -after- it. If we remind ourselves that the Scriptures did not originally come with chapter numbers, we understand that a person would have been reading along and 3:22 would have led, directly, into 4:1. Thus, the -context- of our reading strongly suggests "after" -what-? What were we just reading about? The Seven Churches.

Also notice the "door having been opened in Heaven". Notice the perfect passive participle; which we will look at in a moment

Notice also that thus far, nothing is allegory (figurative). The Seven Churches are not allegory; they existed historically in Asia Minor; and the current-day application is a present reality. Although allegorical imagery is used to describe various qualities of disobedience or faithfulness; it speaks of the -actual- Church of Jesus Christ and its various apostasies and counterfeits. This "door in Heaven" is not said to be "something -like- a door opening". This is not imaginative; it is real. The actual Heaven (God's dwelling 1Ki8:30); and the actual "door" (the place where one would enter and exit). Opened.

And then, an actual invitation: "Come up here" Now in John's vision the invitation is for the purpose of seeing what happens "after these things"; in other words, events -after- the Seven Churches (that is his mission, to write the past, present and future). When something is spoken of in a time-frame such as this, when one thing is, and after that something else is, it often suggests that the first thing has come to a conclusion; just as Jesus proclaimed that the O.T. functioned up through to John the Immerser. (Mt11:13, Lk16:16) Jesus died and rose. And then at Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given and the Church began through the ministry of the apostles; and Paul teaches that Christ was the "end of the Law". (Rom10:4) Now, "after these things" is something else. The invitation: "Come up here". The scene moves from the earthly Church, up to Heaven and God's presence, of the One who sits on the throne.

Even if this verse did not exist, there is plenty of other Scripture that boldly proclaims that which people have come to call the "pre-trib" Rapture; thus, this verse is merely 'frosting' on the cake of that doctrine, and also provides beautiful imagery.

The invitation is given by a "voice..like a trumpet". Why a "trumpet"? Again: sorry scoffers, it is not what you like to taunt... a "secret" rapture. Trumpets, by design, are -loud-. When the "dead in Christ" are raised, and those alive at that time are called up to be "with the Lord in the air", that call is given with the aid of the "trumpet of God". (1Th4:16-17) As Paul says elsewhere, "For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1Co15:52) And remember how Jesus spoke to John with a "loud voice, as of a trumpet"? (1:10) When Jesus called Lazarus from the dead, it says He "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus! Out here! Now!" (Jn11:43)

Is this (4:1) actually Jesus Christ calling? Jesus did say: "I will come again and receive you to Myself" (Jn14:3) When a person 'receives' another, do they not typically 'call' to that person? Above we noticed the perfect passive participle. Jesus had promised to go and "prepare a place" for us. That 'place' is now prepared, the doors HAVE BEEN OPENED to receive those for whom it was prepared, and the invitation is proclaimed. The butler comes around ringing the bell, announcing: "Dinner is served!" The porter asks: "May I take your coat?" and motions with the white gloves towards the 'open' door, directing the person in through the open doors. The ones for whom the mansion has been prepared does not need to come knocking: the doors are open, so they can walk right-on-in. Jesus said, "I am the door". (Jn10:7,9) Entrance is gained only through Jesus Christ.

And then, as Paul also writes regarding the resurrection: "But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power." (1Co15:23-24) Notice that word "then".

Thus, in order: 1) the Seven Churches, 2) Invitation/Rapture to "come up here" to enter the open door, and -THEN- 3) The things which take place - after- these things (after the Church age, and its rapture).

So then, once the Church gets to Heaven, what awaits?

(That's the next lesson)

See Also Addendum: Q/A -Rev4:1 NOT the Rapture?

One Sitting on the Throne:

Creator - (Revelation 4:2-11)

"..a throne was set in Heaven, and One sat on the throne" (4:2)

Now, the things we know for sure is that there is a Heaven, a throne, and One who sits on the throne. But then, notice all the descriptive expressions: 'like' jasper, the -appearance- 'like' an emerald, a glassy sea 'like' crystal. Please read this passage for yourselves. But it is quite the sight.

Uhhh...Where's Peter? the pearly gates? Oh, that's right. Those are expressions of that earthly satanic cult, and various churchling jokes! What we see is: The doors open and -Jesus- invites... and then:

BEHOLD THE SPLENDOR OF THE ALMIGHTY!

There are also the four creatures that appeared in past O.T. visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel (Is6:2, Ezk1:10, 10:14, etc) when they saw similar visions of "the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up" (Is6:1) with all these same colors and the "rainbow". (Ezk1:26-28) Everyone who is given a glimpse of God's presence seems to see the same thing. It must be real, eh!

In God's presence are the "twenty-four elders" wearing crowns on their heads. (4:4) Who are these 24 elders? There has been much speculation by many, but this study is not going to presume to affirm something that we must ultimately conclude: I don't know (for sure). But we can make some observations.

Remember that the O.T. temple matters were to be made according to the "pattern" (Ex25:40), serving a "shadow of the Heavenly things". (Heb8:5) Some have speculated that these 24 elders correspond to the 24 priestly divisions that David and Solomon established for the temple rituals and worship. (1Ch23:6,etc) The priests being man's representatives before God.

Here's another observation: Throughout the Bible an "elder" is a leader. In the O.T. in Israel it was typically "heads of fathers". (1Ch8:28) For the Church, the elders are the congregational leaders and pastors. (Ja5:14, 1Ti5:17, etc) In Israel, when the nation was summoned and gathered to Moses or a king, it was typically the representative elders who would appear first, just like elected officials 'represent' the people of their constituency. Consider how Israel had 12 tribes, and at any given time there was -a- chief father/elder over each tribe. The Church was initiated through 12 apostles (the 11 plus Paul). Now, consider how Paul explains how Jesus' blood brings both Jew and Gentile, alike, to God: He has

"made both one". (Eph2:14) Could it be that these elders are like "representatives" of both Israel and the Church, together; the 'saints' before God's throne? (12 plus 12 equals 24)?

And then, we see the "seven lamps of fire" (4:5) burning before the throne. What are they? The "seven Spirits of God". Remember at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given to the Church, he appeared as "tongues of fire". (Ac2:3) God appeared to Moses as a flame of fire in the bush (Ex3:2-3); as God also is called a "consuming fire" (Ex24:17, De4:24) But as I've mentioned in the past, even though Jesus spoke of "-the- Spirit of Truth" (Jn15:26); that the "birth from above" is a birth of "-the- Spirit" (Jn3:3,8); here we see the Spirit represented as "Seven". While I'm sure some would wax eloquent about the number "seven" being the number of "perfection" or "completion", and wax symbolic over this; in frank terms, I don't know of a specific Scripture that actually explains this. Thus, let us leave this particular matter as an 'observation'; something to wait for further enlightenment when we actually pass through those doors into God's presence, and have it revealed to us; if it is God's will at that time to do so.

We may not understand everything; but perhaps it is merely enough that we know it is so? Accepting it "by faith, not by sight"? (2Co5:7)

And just like in Isaiah, here we see the four living creatures saying continually: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come! (4:8) HOLY: meaning to cut away and be separate from the filth of sin, being continually proclaimed day and night.

And the elders bow down, prostrating themselves, proclaiming God's worthiness to receive all glory and honor, acknowledging Him as "Creator". "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen1:1) And repeatedly, if one does a simple search, one sees how often God is proclaimed in prayers and to the heathen that God is "He who created..." all things. (Is42:5, 45:18, Rev10:6, Ac17:24, etc)

God created all things, and by His "will" they exist. He is the Potter, and we are the clay. (Jer18:6, Rom9:21) Thus, for those who would swell themselves up with pride the question is issued: "O man, who are you to reply against God?" (Rom9:20) "Know that Jehovah, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture." (Ps100:3)

When the Church is raptured, we go into God's presence. This that is written in this chapter, of which we have scarcely even scratched the surface, is the scene into which we will find ourselves. And, if you will, is the 'command-and-control' center for everything else in the book that follows.

Scroll and the Lamb - (Revelation 5)

"And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, having been sealed with seven seals." (5:1)

In ancient times before the advent of printing presses and computerized databases with security encryptions, official documents were kept in scrolls. If it was an important document such as a will, something designated for a special person, it might be sealed, so that its contents might not be known by anybody other than its author and recipient. The only two people who could break those seals was either the originator of the document, or its intended recipient. Depending on the nature of the document, and the authorizing power/government behind the seals, if anybody else were to break those seals, they did so at the peril of their own lives.

Now, is this an -actual- 'scroll' made of parchment? Let us observe that 4:1 shows us an actual door in Heaven. There is an actual invitation up to Heaven. But then, after that invitation: "Immediately I came to be in the Spirit" (4:2) Thus, everything from 4:2, through to where we are now, is new 'vision' John is being given. As we have observed at other times, visions typically are full of 'symbolisms'. Pharaoh had dreamed about cows and corn, but the dream was about a coming famine. I believe this vision of a "scroll" is symbolism for the time in which it was written, but the imagery is quite definite. The One, God, on the throne, produces this official document with seals. God has authority over the seals, because He is producing it. But then, the call goes out: "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loosen its seals?" (5:2)

This is a special assembly. Could we suggest that God is 'challenging' the universe? Remember that satan had challenged God, presuming to "be like the Most High". (Is14:14) So God produces this symbol of authority and power. Mormonism would suggest that Jesus and satan were "brothers"; as such, being of 'equal' footing, power and authority.

So, here are the Seals of Authority... WHO IS QUALIFIED to take them, and open them, and in doing so, not be guilty and deserving of death? Any takers? Any challengers? All of you who were making boasts, now is the time. Here's your chance. Either put up or shut up!

Notice that "NO ONE" in all of creation was able. (5:3) And notice also, "or to -LOOK- upon it".

Imagine a scenario with a mob of rabble-rousers who have been struggling and fighting, and along comes the -real- 'tough-guy', the 'hero' of the show, who has come jumping in and beat up the chief rebels, and all these injured are stumbling around nursing their wounds; so he then starts challenging everybody, cowering around him in a circle, giving them a

verbal whip-lashing; goes up to one "so you think you're a big shot??" and the fellow barely dares to speak but tentatively shakes his head indicating "No"; and everybody standing around has their heads lowered, with stares fixed to the ground, daring not to look at the strong one for fear of being singled out as an 'example' to the rest (What'choo lookin' at?? You lookin' at me?!? You wanna piece of me??) Everybody has been humbled and are standing around, heads lowered; looking down at the ground. Nobody is challenging for leadership or power.

Now, in such an earthly scenario, if somebody were to come along to challenge the 'tough-guy', about the only way Hollywood would depict such a thing would be with that big super-robot with its hi-tech weapons, to take out the tough-guy.

But in this Heavenly scene, what do we see? Here is the great throne in Heaven, and the One sitting on it, with ultimate authority, offering these seals of power. Who can take on such a challenge?

"..a Lamb as having been slain.." (5:6)

"For He grows up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of the dry ground. He has no form nor splendor that we should regard Him, nor anything spectacular that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men; a Man of pain, and knowing infirmity; a hiding of faces; being despised, we have esteemed Him not. Truly He has borne our sicknesses, and carried our pain; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.... He has been oppressed, and He was afflicted; yet He opens not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is mute, so He opens not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken." (Is53:2-8)

But notice His title: the "Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" (5:5) This expression of the 'lion' began with Jacob's blessing of his sons: "Judah is a lion's whelp...he crouches like a lion; and as a lioness, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the cleansing of the peoples. Binding His donkey to the vine, and His donkey's colt to the choice vine, He has washed His garments in wine, and His clothes in the blood of grapes..." (Gen49:9-11) In a few short sentences, the symbolism of everything dealing with Jesus: His "Palm Sunday" triumphal entry, crucifixion, His vengeance and wrath, and His rule.

Thus, notice his symbols of authority (remember, this is a vision): the "seven horns and seven eyes". (5:6) Horns being a symbol of power, and the passage explains the seven eyes: we see again the expression, the "Seven Spirits of God".

So... this 'Lamb', compared to all those standing around wishing to be grandiose, appears to be seemingly helpless. But He is His Father's Son.

Like in the aforementioned 'tough-guy' scenario; his little boy comes running out to meet him, in the midst of the aftermath of the big fight, "Papa, papa!" and Mr. Tough-guy scoops him up, hoists him up to his shoulders and proudly displays, My son! My son! The "Lamb" has humbled Himself to the point of "death on the cross"; so now God "has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in Heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Php2:8-11)

As we observed one of the introductory 'rules' for this book, this scene is not something to happen sometime in the future. Remember, John is writing about Past, Present and Future. Paul writes in the past tense, "God -HAS- highly EXALTED Him". This -Lamb- "slain from the foundation of the world" (13:8) Just as we already had the Heavenly creatures proclaiming "Holy, holy, holy" in the O.T., we know its mention in 4:8 is not some 'new' event for the future; this that we see of the Lamb being given these seals of authority is not some 'new' event for some future time. He rose from the dead, and has already gone to Heaven with the Father; He -now- presently has this authority. Again, we are being given a glimpse at the 'command-and-control' center for the events portrayed in this book. Chapter 4 is the Heavenly scene. And now in chapter 5 we are given to understand just 'who' is in charge; who has the power and authority. Some of these things have already taken place. Acknowledging God's 'holiness' and praise is continually ongoing. And as we enter Heaven, either through death and resurrection, or at the Rapture, we join in that praise and homage that is already in progress by those who have preceded us into God's presence. Past-Present-Future.

What is the basis for the Lamb's authority? The elders (representatives of the saints of both Israel and the Church?) proclaim: "...for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." (5:9)

The seven seals represent an outpouring of the "wrath" of the One sitting on the throne, and of the Lamb (6:16-17) upon unholiness and ungodliness. (Rom1:18) In recent years there's been an awful lot of "rebuking" satan going on, by those claiming to be little 'gods', but who themselves are bound up in sin in their unholy fleshly lusts. But even Michael the archangel, possessed of more power than men, did not have such authority, but said, "The Lord rebuke you" (Ju1:9) because only the Lord has such authority. Michael did not die for the sin of the world. Today's mini-gods of charismania were not crucified for us! Only the Lord Jesus Christ paid that price; and can open those seals! Amen!

And so, all of creation erupts into praise. Many people think the "Hallelujah Chorus" is the greatest part of Handel's "Messiah", but I must say my personal favorite is at the end of the oratorio, this that we see right here:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (5:12)

Seven Seals - (6:1-17, 8:1)

"Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals..." (vs1)

Is this yet future? Is it past tense? If the Lamb has 'already' been exalted and is sitting at the Father's right hand, perhaps some has already taken place, but others are yet future? If things are as I speculated to the subscribers not long ago (not posted at the website), that Heaven surrounds the earth even 'now', perhaps we are already in the middle of this 'process' of the Lamb opening the seals? Let's look at the first six seals and see a progression, and then make some observations.

Also, as we start into this next section of the book; these are the things that most people look at. What we come to now, is what most people think the book is 'about'. The sevens. Seals, Trumpets and Bowls. Doom and catastrophe. As we delve further, we will see how the Trumpets and Bowls are duplication of each other, of the same things. Remember how God duplicated the dreams about cows and grain to Pharaoh for -emphasis-. "...the dream was repeated unto Pharaoh twice because the thing is determined by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." (Gen41:32) Just as Jesus says, "Behold, I am coming quickly..." (Rev3:11, 11:14, 22:12,20) with rewards and consequences. And furthermore, we will see how the seventh seal seems to be the 'setup' for the sets of seven Trumpets and Bowls.

And along these lines, as we see things duplicated, you will see us jumping around between the various chapters. It will quickly become obvious, something we have said from time-to-time in the past, that Revelation is not a "time-line" that one can begin with chapter 1, and progress chronologically to chapter 22, and map everything out that way, and proclaim that the events in the chapters progress in-order one after the other, according to the chapter numbers. As we jump back and forth, I think it will become obvious what we are doing, and why; and why the chapters do not all appear in-order in the "topic" list at the top of this series.

So, let us continue...

SEAL #1 (6:1)

One on the white horse with a bow and crown, conquering.

Like we've said already, we are not going to conclude to proclaim any sort of 'totality' of understanding; but will make 'observations'.

What is the significance of a horse? Many different things. The one riding a horse was one of elevated status, power and authority. In Zechariah ch6 the horses and chariots represented the "four spirits of Heaven" (vs5) that

go throughout the earth, and stand before God. Messengers that take God's Word and implement it wherever God sends them. So you see, what happens on earth is at God's will. "...the authorities that exist are ordained by God" (Rom13:1) Thus, what we read is all part of God's will and design. After all, it is in the official document, the scroll; sealed with official seals. And as we are seeing -who- Jesus is, as He is "revealed" to us, He is the one opening the seals and fulfilling the contents of the scroll; 'executing' the document. It is by God's design and will, and -implemented- by Jesus Christ. After all, Jesus said, "I always do those things that please Him (the Father)" (Jn8:29)

Notice the rider has a bow, but no arrows; and yet is conquering. Of what good is a bow, if no arrows are shot? Does this suggest domination by peaceful political means? Whilst having a military, not necessarily always using it. Perhaps, domination by intrigue? Something resembling something from Daniel: "And also through his cunning he will cause deceit to prosper in his hand. And he will magnify himself in his heart, and through prosperity shall destroy many. He shall also stand up against the Ruler of rulers, but he shall be broken in pieces without hands." (Dan8:25)

During the "cold war" there was nuclear proliferation, but no nuclear war. Even to this day, US armed forces are stationed in many places all over the world. For the most part, those troops have not engaged in combat. And America's economic superiority has been something which, combine the various elements, and today there are those speaking of American "imperialism". It has been strong militarily (bow), but been for the most part peaceful. (no arrows) Just observing.

Not being an archer, but knowing just a tad about it: Is the bow a status of strength? As I understand it there are different bows of different tensions. e.g. 30lb bow, 40lb bow, etc. David psalmed, "...so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze." (2Sa22:35) Preparation for battle is mentioned as "handle (tread) and bend the bow" (Jer46:9, 50:14, 51:3) In today's world the "bow" would be the accumulation of aircraft carriers, tanks, airplanes, missiles, and technology.

A bit later we will observe one of the "beasts", in which, among other things, we will observe world empires, and the world will "marvel" and say, "Who is able to make war with him?" (13:4b) Again: just observing.

SEAL #2 (6:3)

Peace taken from the world, and people killing one another.

Is that not a precise picture of today? They keep talking "peace, peace", but so-called palestinians kill Israelis; the African continent has been plagued by years of politically-motivated starvation of the masses along with and various insurgencies of so-called 'ethnic cleansings'; the Balkans has been a zone of turmoil; for years there was violence in N.Ireland; plus

all the continual murders and violence done in all localized areas. Spokane (where I live) is not all that large a place, and yet there are times where it seems like the evening news, each evening, reports some new incident of a stabbing, shooting or other murder. Some days, there might be 2 or 3. We already see this today. Is the time yet ahead to be worse?

SEAL #3 (6:5)

Scales.

Economy. The denarius, a day's wage, all going just for food. How does oil and wine fit in? While the price of oil keeps going up, there seems to be a never-ending supply of it. What is it that the entire world is being forced to support financially through oil's inflated prices? Why not hurt the wine? One thing I've noticed...no matter how poor a person is, or down-n-out, if they are a smoker, they 'always' seem to have access to tobacco. And if they are a drinker, they 'always' seem to be able to get their hands on liquor. How many on pensions often make choices between enough food to eat, or medications? How many poor barely have enough to eat, but cannot pay any of the rest of their bills? The economy is a factor of - today's- world. There, too, will that be getting even worse in the times ahead? Will the beast's "mark" be part of the global financial bail-out program, after the bottom falls out?

SEAL #4 (6:7)

Death and Hades

Authority to kill a fourth of the earth's population. Well, this hasn't happened yet, so this would seem to obviously be for the future. But notice the means of this global death: sword, hunger, beasts of the earth. Sword is people killing one another; but more specifically, a sword would suggest warfare. I've read some things that suggest that the so-called "Gulf War Syndrome" is the US' use of depleted uranium in much of its weaponry (speaking of WMD!!). What returning combat soldiers suffer, has become a permanent fixture of the Iraqi landscape, such that, with time, people and plant life will suffer the effects. Do we see such a thing in prophecy? "Because of the wrath of Jehovah it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly a waste. Everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified and hiss at all her plagues." (Jer50:13)

We already see famine and starvation in many parts of the world. India used to have a terrible problem with this. N.Korea is afflicted. Much of the African continent. Some is due to drought. But much is also due to regional politics, of repressive regimes. While the earth has seen this throughout history, would it be safe to understand that the future will see it even worse?

Beasts of the earth... we tend to typically think of a "beast" as something - large-, like lions, tigers... predatory animals that 'eat' people. But beasts can also be virus-carrying birds or mosquitos, or the other things that afflict people who don't cook their meat, but like to eat "with the blood" (rare/raw). (Gen9:4) We already see these things. But for a "fourth" of the population to be killed, what we see now is obviously only pre-cursory.

SEAL #5 (6:9)

Avenging the Souls of the martyrs

Jesus promised that in the world the Church would have "affliction" (Jn16:33) and also promised that many would be martyred (Jn16:2) That has been an intrinsic characteristic of the Church age. [Remember: the Rapture has happened (4:1), but the book, throughout, is about past-present-future (1:19)] Jesus said about the Church that the "gates of Hades" would "not prevail" against it. (Mt16:18) Something that is said about the beast in the context of the "42 months" (last half of the 70th week) is that he makes war with the saints to "overcome them" (13:7) because anybody through the 70th week who makes it to 20:4 to reign with Christ, will have been martyred (13:15)

Just as there is a certain "number" of Gentiles to come into the Kingdom (Rom11:25), so there also appears to be for martyrs. (vs11) But those martyred each receive a white robe of Christ's righteousness. But then, the context also suggests that their query ("how long" until our deaths are avenged?) -will- be answered; as we know that "it is righteous judgment with God to repay with affliction those" who have been the cause of persecution. (2Th1:6)

SEAL #6 (6:12)

Earthquake, sun, moon, stars, heavens separated as a scroll: the world understands the "wrath of the Lamb"

[Hopefully you are reading the passage from your Bibles..? These studies become lengthy enough (for mailing), without also having to quote entire passages.]

This is the stuff we read about in Joel ch2 which Peter quoted in Acts ch2, and the stuff from Zech ch14, and Is ch13, etc. Asteroids, comet fragments, meteorites, earthquakes, tectonic upheavals, leveling of mountains, islands disappearing into the oceans. These are the calamities, the (sole) reason for which many people read this book. And many others get to this point, and see how it is approaching approximately the mid-point in the book, pronouncing it as being "mid-way through the tribulation" and proclaim their doctrine called "pre-wrath". That, somehow, this is the 'point' at which God's wrath begins. However, please read the passage; we'll move along, and then come back to it in an over-all observation.

SEAL #7 (8:1)

"And when He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in Heaven for about half an hour"

And if you read along, you will see the preparation of the "seven trumpets" which we will come back and address in following lessons. When we get to the trumpets and bowls, we might keep in mind at that time that they are really the fullness of the seventh seal. The seventh seal consists of those seven; those two sevens are enclosed in this seventh seal.

Jesus, in explaining the "end of the age" (Mt24:3) lists many different things: antichrists (vs5), wars and rumors of wars (vs6), famines, pestilences and earthquakes (vs7), persecution and martyrdom. (vs9) But He also says: "but the end is not yet" (vs6) and "these are the -beginning-of travail" (vs8), etc.

As we remember that this book is about past-present-future, and we look at these seals -OVERALL-, do we not see a kind of 'progression'? While we might see the first few seals fitting the 70th week, do we not see them as being 'characteristic' of the times we presently live in, and the recent past centuries? But is not the 6th seal very specifically like the other passages which speak of the very end of Wrath. While we see earthquakes and other such things, there has not been the sort of thing that levels mountains and makes islands disappear into the oceans. But their frequency has been dramatically increasing in recent years.

Jesus said that these things are the "beginning of travail". (Mt24:8) Paul speaks of the world proclaiming "peace and safety" and then "destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman" (1Th5:3) I've never been intimately near a human birth, but understand that the labor pains begin with certain time intervals, and progressively those intervals become closer and closer together, until finally, there is the final last "push" of labor and pain, to give birth. Is that not what we see, progressing through the seven seals? There is trouble of various kinds, and as each seal is opened, each gets progressively worse and worse, until the seventh seal erupts into the final seven outpourings of wrath and judgment, until the seventh of those culminates in the "finish" (16:17) of God's plan, and Christ takes over to rule. (ch19)

The Seven Seals embody the totality of Christ's authority and judgment upon satan, sin and sinful mankind. Those who only view "God is love" (1Jn4:8) have quite a surprise to find out God's justice. When Jesus came to "seek and save" the lost (Lk19:10) He manifested His love. But for those who reject His love and salvation, He will also 'reveal' His wrath.

"For the great day of His wrath has come, AND WHO IS ABLE TO STAND?" (6:17)

"Who shall go up into the hill of Jehovah? Or who shall stand in His holy place? HE WHO HAS CLEAN HANDS AND A PURE HEART..." (Ps24:3-4)

Israel Sealed - (7:1-8)

"After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." (vs1)

Notice the grammatical division: "After these things". In 4:1 we concluded it was a delineation of 'time', because the -actual- Seven Churches had been under discussion. But in this case, where the Seven Seals may likely speak of an entire time frame of history, this could merely be like a paragraph marker, or a heading for a new topic. i.e. We've been talking about the "seals" of the scroll, now let's talk about something else. In John's dream he has been given view of one scene; now his view has been changed. Anybody who has dreamed knows how the scenes and events in a dream often switch from one thing to another, with not necessarily always a direct connection. Since this comes between the 6th and 7th seals, perhaps it is intended to be 'parenthetical'? Something not directly related to the current topical 'flow', but is explanatory of certain pertinent information. Perhaps, as the 7th seal leads to the final closing judgments, where by the time all is said and done, over half the earth's population will have been killed, and prophecy speaks in terms of those "who is left from all the nations" (Zec14:16), those who are Believers in Christ might be left to wonder: What happens to God's people throughout all this? If God is judging the sinners, what happens to the saints? As a person understands that Israel goes through this time also known as "Jacob's Trouble" (Jer30:7), how is Israel preserved through this time? We will see more specifically in ch12; but right here we understand God's heart and purpose.

So now... the winds are withheld from blowing. (vs1) This could represent several different things. There are likely both literal and figurative components. If all the winds of the earth were caused to stop, what would happen? I was reading another person's speculation of this from a scientific perspective not long ago. When the winds blow, it moderates the temperatures more evenly across the earth...cool winds from the oceans moderate the heat build-up on the land. The oceans are a great temperature stabilizer. If the winds don't do their function, when the sun rises for the day over land, the land bakes. Perhaps this is part of the explanation of men being "scorched with great heat" (16:9) at the 4th bowl?

The world is about to suffer such cataclysms as it has never before known. When storms come along, often there is the "calm before the storm", before the storm's ferocity hits. While this is not always the case, the few times I've seen tornadoes off at a safe distance, I've also noticed that where I was the air was eerily still, although the tornado was churning things up. The racers nervously jump around, flexing their limbs to be limbered up, for the race which is just about to begin, at which time all

competitors are giving 120% of what they have. But just before the race starts, they get their feet in the starting blocks, hands down at the starting line...and for that brief moment, there is calm and silence, waiting for the starting gun. Is that what this is?

In terms of Israel, wind was a symbol of their judgment and dispersion into exile for their idolatry. When they were exiled, they were scattered "as the stubble that passes away by the wind" (Jer13:24) When Jesus speaks of collecting Israel back from exile He says He will "gather together His elect from the four winds" (Mt24:31) And so here, those four winds of judgment are 'calm' for a period of time. For what purpose?

Before the final judgment begins....

"Do not harm [anything] till we seal the servants of our God on their foreheads" (vs3) And notice that this is specifically "Israel". How do we know? Twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes is specified. Just like somebody might go to a store and pick out (choose/select) 'so-many' of this, and 'so-many' of that; God's "election" (Rom9:11, 11:5,26-28) says, "Of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand..." (vs5), etc, etc, and twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of the "children of Israel" are sealed. This is not the Church. The Church is never counted, tribe-by-tribe, and called "children of Israel".

What is the purpose of the sealing? Protection against God's judgment. In Ezk9:4 we see a marking of the foreheads of selected ones in Israel, to be spared judgment by the angel. (vs6)

What is their characteristic? It is not said of them like in Ezekiel that they "sighed and cried" over the "abominations" that were done. It does not describe them as they are later, as being "ones who were not defiled with women" who "follow the Lamb wherever He leads" and being "without deceit" (14:4-5)

Remember, the time is called "Jacob's Trouble" (Jer30:7) and Paul says "And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." (Rom11:26-27) As we see even today, Israel does not acknowledge Messiah. They yet need to be "purified" (Mal3:3) and given new hearts. (Ezk36:26)

But here, at this point, in that 'lull' between seals 6 & 7, God specifically selects 144,000 of Israel for preservation for salvation; whom He preserves through the coming time of judgment. Just like antichrist has his "mark" on the hand or forehead of his followers, here we see God's mark on Israel for preservation.

White Robed - (7:9-17)

Two lessons ago the question is asked... "For the great day of His wrath has come, AND WHO IS ABLE TO STAND?" (6:17) And we observed the answer: "Who shall go up into the hill of Jehovah? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart..." (Ps24:3-4)

Vs9 has the words again, "And after these things I looked, and..." At this point Israel is still in unbelief, but sealed for preservation. (vs1-8) Here we have a glimpse at another group. (Please read the passage)

This group, "which no one was able to number" (vs9), is praising "God who sits on the throne" and "the Lamb". What are they doing? Worshiping with eyes dreamily fluttering upwards, arms and hands held limply upwards...'worshiping', going into meditative trance-like states, emptying their minds into numbed nothingness?

They are standing with palm branches and shouting out about "Salvation". In the O.T. the primary worship theme was, "Oh, give thanks unto Jehovah, for He is good; for His mercy is eternal." (1Ch16:34)

Worship of God has really nothing to do with "how I feel". It is not about sitting piously while mood music is playing in the background. It is praise and thanksgiving for His salvation. And the white robes they are wearing? "I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garment of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness like a bridegroom adorns himself with ornaments, and like a bride adorns herself with her jewels." (Is61:10)

Who is this group? And where do they come from? The elder answers: "These are the ones coming out of great affliction, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (vs14) The cleansing God promises, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Is1:18b)

But what period of time do they come from? They come out of great "affliction". Well, the Church is promised "affliction". (Jn16:33) And is not the Church's salvation based on being washed in Jesus' blood (1:5) in the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Tit3:5)? Is this the Church? As we know that the book is about past-present-future, where the first part of the chapter speaks of Israel, is this last section the Church?

Because of the understanding of past-present-future, could it be the saints throughout history? The O.T. saints were resurrected when Jesus was (Mt27:52-53); the Church is resurrected/raptured (1Th4:16-17, 1Co15); and the believers from the 70th week are resurrected just prior to the Millennium to reign with Christ 1000 years. (20:4-5) According to Hebrews

ch11 we know the O.T. saints received persecution; the Church does; and those from the 70th week are beheaded for not bowing to the image of the beast. (13:15) Believers of all ages, beginning with Abel, have come through affliction. And even though there were 4000 years before Jesus actually died on the cross, the O.T. animal sacrifice was prophetic, in faith of God's promise of salvation through the woman's "Seed". (Gen3:15) It could be.

However, also notice the little special emphasis: "They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not fall on them, nor any burning heat" (vs16)

What happens when those who had not known Christ prior to the Rapture, who were not of the pretenders to whom God gives "strong delusion that they should believe the lie" (2th2:11); when they hear the "eternal gospel" (14:6-7), and refuse antichrist's mark (14:9), such that they are no longer able to "buy or sell" (13:17); what will they eat? Until they are found and beheaded, are they not going to get mighty hungry! Those who survive awhile during the time that men are being "scorched with great heat" (16:9), will they not experience the "burning heat" of the sun!

Since the context of Israel's 144,000 being sealed is the upcoming time of wrath, it seems fair to assume this group is, also.

Thus, the question that some people ask... this passage answers. The question is asked: if the Church is raptured 'prior' to this time, and the Holy Spirit has come "out of the midst" (2th2:7b), "how are people saved" during this time? They look at the O.T. with its animal sacrifices. Then they look at the Church with "grace through faith". (Eph2:8) And so they query... if the O.T. was "works", and N.T. is "grace", "how" are they saved during the 70th week?

The SAME WAY they were in the O.T.; the SAME WAY we are in the Church. It is God's salvation, through the "blood of the Lamb", Jesus Christ. Hebrews ch11 explains how "faith" is timeless to salvation. We already looked (above) at how Jesus' crucifixion is also timeless.

During the 70th week, it could well-be that any copies of Scripture that are found will be destroyed by the antichrist, thus, people will not be able to read to learn complex theology. There likely won't be Believers openly available from whom to be taught, as Jesus said, "...the night is coming when no one is able to work" (Jn9:4) However, the "angel" proclaims the "eternal gospel" to the whole world (14:6), and Joel proclaims how simple it will be during this time, which Paul quotes...

"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich toward all who call upon Him. For everyone, whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Joel2:32, Rom10:12-13) It appears there's going to be a lot of "eleventh hour" conversions!

7 Trumpets-Bowls: wrath of God explained - (8:1-6, ch15)

"And when He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in Heaven for about half an hour" (vs1)

After the 6th seal, in ch7 we noticed the winds being withheld from blowing. Here now, the 7th seal is opened, and there is silence. For what reason? At the 6th seal mankind is acknowledging that it is God's "wrath" that is upon them. (6:17) Now, with the 7th seal, God is about to "finish" His wrath. (15:1) Again, is this like the setting of the feet on the starting blocks just prior to the starting gun? Since we speak 'athletically', this applies to athletics; also to things like music concert performances, serious participants typically spend some quiet time to collect their thoughts and 'focus' themselves in terms of what they are about to do. Or, if we think of some sort of judgment like an execution, the criminal is strapped to the table or chair, etc. If it is by electrocution, the person at the switch stands poised, the one officiating is there, it is a serious moment as each churns around whatever thoughts are going through their minds; the 'moment' comes, the official gives the nod, the technician throws the switch, and the deed is done. Even with something like an animal that needs to be put down, I never found it something I could simply waltz up to the animal, stick the gun to its head, and pull the trigger. That little calf, deformed at birth, that couldn't suck properly; having become somewhat tame from bottle-feeding, it is all friendly, sniffing at the gun barrel; so you "get set". It is a somber moment, knowing the calf (that has become like a 'pet') is going to be dead in just a second. Is that what's going on in Heaven? Everybody taking their places, waiting for the 'nod' to begin the final events? I don't know. The passage doesn't say. But this is a speculation.

We then see the angel with "much incense" (please read the passage for all the details), offered with the prayers of the saints. The prayers ascend before God, and then what happens? The angel throws some of that incense fire from the altar "to the earth" with resulting thunders, earthquake, etc. This is pre-cursor to the final seven judgments. Thus, can we receive understanding as to the 'purpose' of the final judgments?

What were the prayers of the saints? "How long...until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (6:10) In terms of the Church we understand part of God's judgment is against those who persecuted the Church: it is "righteous judgment with God to repay with affliction those who trouble you" (2Th1:6)

Thus, in a very real sense, the final judgments of wrath are also co-shared as coming from Believers. Satan and his followers wreaked havoc upon God's children, so now, as God's children have been hurt and have cried out to God ("abba Father" - 'Daddy, they're hurting me!' Rom8:15, Ga4:6),

God is now (to use a human expression) "hopping mad" that anybody should have been hurting His precious ones; 'how -dare- they!!' "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of His saints." (Ps116:15)

As we continue in ch15, notice those who have "victory" over the beast, his image, and the mark. Also notice in vs3 the "song of Moses" and the "song of the Lamb". What we might observe from this looks an awful lot like the O.T. with Israel and the 'Law', and the N.T. with the Church. Israel always spoke of observing the "Law of Moses" and believers were called "Jews" (Rom2:28-29) or "Israel" (Rom9:6); and the Church is called "CHRIST-ian" (Ac11:26) But this talk of the "beast" and the "mark"...is this a proof-text that the Church "goes-through" the 70th week? Well, a whole host of other Scripture says it does NOT. So, is there something else we need to see here?

Remember, John is writing about past-present-future. (1:19)

This "mark" of the beast... 'where' is it worn? We haven't come to that yet, but notice that it is received "on their right hand or on their foreheads" (13:16)

Do we have anything in the world today where people worship images, and receive marks on their foreheads? One of the most notable organizations, which we will observe in more detail later in this series, the Roman catholic church. What is one of its primary icons? Mary. Well...their "Mary" is not really a person who exists, but comes from millenia of pagan mythology from Egypt's Isis and Babylon's Ishtar. These goddesses never actually existed, either, but they were dreamed up and worshiped, and images erected in their honor, to be bowed to and kissed. A true catholic, when walking by an image of (what they falsely call) "mary", I've noticed that they never fail to at least genuflect. There are many forms of bowing and kissing. And the Wednesday which precedes 40 days prior to their worship of Ishtar (they call it "easter"), they receive a "mark" on their foreheads. Yes? Remember: past-present-future

The church of Laodicea's charismania is also not Christian, but is pagan. Their mantras and meditations by which they become "spirit-filled" actually come from the religions of the east (Is2:6), from Yoga and TM, things from Hindu origins. 'Anybody ever stopped to take note what the Hindus do in worship? They also receive a mark on their foreheads. And in charismania the leader often 'pushes' the person on their forehead, as they are 'imparting' the spirit to them. Again: past-present-future

There is -a- "mark" that is -going- to be instituted by the antichrist for engaging in commerce. (13:17) But just as we will see in upcoming studies how much Babylon has both 'religious' and 'government/commerce' components; as we understand that 'the' antichrist is coming, but now there are already many antichrists (1Jn2:18); as we understand that there

will be much catastrophe, but now we see little bits of it (Mt24:6,8); so, too, there is 'the' mark that is to come, but there are also these other marks.

This matter of the beast's "mark" is not -only- for the coming 7-year period of the 70th week. People are often in a panic and paranoid about technology that is being developed and experimented for implantable chips, but are completely blind to the aspect of the 'mark' that already exists, and has existed for centuries! How many people calling themselves "Christian" also fellowship with the catholic church, calling them "brothers"? How many people calling themselves "Christian" even engage the catholic church even 'indirectly'? And I ask this last question, knowing my own shame in the matter from my past, in my ignorance at the time. I taught music in a catholic school, played organ and sang for catholic masses, and performed professional concerts in catholic cathedrals...the temples of Babylon. In a letter-of-recommendation, the nun (school principal) even specifically noted that during my tenure, teaching, I "evinced respect" for them.

I am SO THANKFUL for how Paul says it: "I received mercy because I did it ignorantly..." (1Ti1:13) "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.." (Ac17:30)

If you are a True Christian, but have associations with catholicism or charismania...GET OUT NOW! BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!! (18:4) You may have been in ignorance before; but now you are not. Do not receive their "mark" on your forehead! Be holy unto God. Many people who claim to be Christians don't think it's that important to be separated from others like catholics or charismatics, but notice how the angel proclaims, "If anyone does homage to the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God..." (14:9-10)

Notice the scene in Heaven as the final plagues are about to be poured out. Notice from 'where' the angels carrying the last plagues come. The "temple of the tabernacle of the testimony..." (15:5-6)

What?? Are they not inviting 'everybody' to "come in" and fellowship? (That's what Laodicea does!) !!! NO !!! They are coming out of the temple, from God's presence, to pour out God's wrath. And notice that while the last plagues are being completed, the temple is filled with the "glory of God" such that "no one was able to enter the temple". (vs8)

Wrath comes from God. Among other things, it is retribution on behalf of God's children (past-present-future) who have been holy, and not partaken in the mark.

There is 'the' antichrist, but now there are many antichrists. In similar fashion there is 'the' mark, but now there are also antichrist's marks. If the "torment" for -the- mark is "forever and ever" (14:11), what is the judgment

to those who partake of -these- marks? Israel got dispersed to the nations in exile for refusing to stop worshiping the Queen of Heaven, as "with most of them God was not well pleased" (1co10:5) Laodicea is being "vomited out" because it is not 'repenting'. (Rev3:16,19)

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Mt11:15, Rev3:22)

For those who have been holy, not having partaken of the 'mark', what is their heart regarding God's impending outpouring of wrath?

"Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints." (15:3b)

Four Trumpets-Bowls: wrath of God - (8:7-12 16:1-9)

Trumpet/Bowl #1 (8:7,16:2)

Hail and fire mingled with blood, burning up a -third- of the trees and grass. Exactly 'what' is this? We are not told. There are many forms of events that could be worded this way, including asteroid/meteorite bombardments, lighting, volcanic activity, nuclear exchanges, etc. The possibilities are endless. Whatever the case, a 'third' of plant life is destroyed.

And whatever causes plant life to die also brings sores upon mankind.

However, remember how the 144,000 of Israel were sealed for protection? (ch7) They are not hurt. Nor are any others who don't take the mark or bow to the image. (16:2) This is just like when God was bringing Israel out of Egypt. Through the first half of the 10 plagues Israel also experienced the plagues. But when they got to the flies (Ex8:22) God made a distinction between Goshen and the rest of Egypt. In a similar way, we observed how the Seals might be a historic progression. We wondered, but what some of the first seals may have already been opened, since we see many of those things even today. But we came to the 6th seal, and then there was a break in the narrative, to let us know God's sealing protection for Israel, again. Now we are in the "finishing" stages of God's wrath, and just as Egypt's plagues got worse and worse and God made a distinction for Israel; so, too, will it be in the coming Day. Those who don't bow to the image will be martyred by antichrist; but they do -not- suffer - God's- wrath.

Trumpet/Bowl #2 (8:8-9, 16:3)

"Something like a great mountain" thrown into the sea. A -third- of the ships and life in the seas dies. 16:3 says that "everything" in the sea dies.

This is not -a- mountain. But something "like" a mountain. Remember, this is imagery of a dream. From our recently past series on study methods we observed that Scripture pretty much usually tells us when something, for sure, is allegory. As we look at the makeup of the earth, when I read this passage, my mind's eye sees a big bull's eye on the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific makes up a 'third' of the earth's water mass. Something "like" a mountain...sure would seem to suggest an asteroid or comet, or something like that. Something the size of a mountain would certainly wipe out all ships in the Pacific region. And since it speaks of "blood", perhaps this object is also of a toxic nature, that poisons all life in the waters?

Trumpet/Bowl #3 (8:10-11, 16:4-7)

A great star falls on a -third- of the rivers and springs. The water is made bitter, like blood. And "many men died from the water..." (8:11)

Is this an actual celestial 'star' that falls? If so, how does it affect spring[s] and river[s] (plural)? Or is "star" figurative for "angel"? In 12:4 we see the "dragon" casting a "third" of the stars to earth. God speaks to Job about the angels as "morning stars" (Job38:7) When a "third" of the rivers and springs are polluted, is this figurative of those third of the angels who rebelled along with satan, and were cast out of Heaven? Thus, is it these fallen angels who are sent by God to pollute the waters? Remember: this series does not claim to have all the answers, but we make a lot of 'observations'. And some of these observations are put to the reader in the form of questions. Things we may not have the answers to, but about which we can think and muse; waiting till the day of its fulfillment to have full understanding.

Another question I have always had is: Is it -real- "blood"? Or is the term "blood" figurative for something else? Whatever the pollution, we might assume it to appear "red"..? And whatever it is, it is toxic to drink; and people and water life die.

Now, the angel who pours out this bowl... what does he say? "Take -that-, you sinners!?" As though he, the angel, is pouring out judgment? Even Michael did not do such, but said to satan, "the Lord rebuke you" (Ju1:9)

What does he say? "You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things, for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink, for they are deserving." And another says, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments" (16:6-7)

For you followers of mother-earth ("gaia") and you tree huggers, and you other militants of ecology... notice what God is doing to your precious little earth. Many eco-nuts are of a mentality that thinks man is sooo great, that he can totally change earth's ecology; almost with an attitude like, if enough activists should gather together in one spot and take a deep breath and -BLOOOOOW- real hard, they might be able to blow a clear spot in the atmosphere. Well, in these final judgments, God is taking earth and scrambling it, like eggs in a frying pan. Do you think you can gather together enough of your ilk and stop God? He created it in the first place, and if He is of a mind to mess it up while He judges you along with the rest of the world, who is going to stop Him?! (Is43:13, Mal3:2) He's messing it up; but then He'll fix it again. (Is66:22, 65:17)

Trumpet/Bowl #4 (8:12, 16:8-9)

A -third- of the sun, moon and stars struck. A third of the day disappears, and also a third of the night. Along with this a great scorching of men with heat and fire.

Details are not provided here. But in these days science and astronomy has given us a wide range of understanding of the dynamics of the universe. We know from Is13:13 (for the superstitious, talk about a -double- 'unlucky' number!) that the earth is going to "move out of its place, in the wrath of Jehovah of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger." (That's this period of time we are studying in Revelation) Job speaks of how God "shakes the earth out of its place" (Job9:6) Zec14:4-7 speaks of a huge earthquake, the lights "shrinking" and the matter of day and night 'time' becoming disoriented.

What sorts of things would cause a great rise in heat, and the discombobulation of time? The sun, and the relationship of the earth to it. Astronomy tells us that suns/stars go through cycles, where they suddenly greatly expand and/or shrink in size. What would happen if the sun suddenly got bigger, thus putting its surface closer to earth? Would that not cause a sudden dramatic increase in temperature? Would it not also cause "sores"? (16:2)(Although, for that verse, nuclear fallout could also cause sores) What sorts of things would cause daylight and night 'time' to change? The rotation of the earth. If the earth were induced to change its rotational speed for some reason, what else would happen? Humongous earthquakes, the kinds spoken of in this book. What other sorts of things might cause the lights to appear to "shrink"? If, as Isaiah says, the earth is moved out of its place...where is earth's "place"? It's present orbit around the sun at aprox 93 million miles. If we've had "something like a mountain" hitting earth, what else is also going on? What other major celestial bodies have also come around, tugging on earth gravitationally? Get the right combination of things going on, and earth could easily be flung into a different orbital trajectory around the sun. MOST ANYTHING is possible.

This is the stuff of Hollywood's blockbuster movies like Armageddon and Deep Impact. Only, those movies don't even suggest the half of what is really going to be happening. In those movies estranged children and parents reconcile at the last minute and die together, and all sorts of other touching emotional 'family' love is depicted, and man boasts of man's "goodness".

But the truth of the matter is: When these things come along for real (not just the theater), it says that mankind will "blasheme" God, and will -NOT- repent, nor will they acknowledge and glorify Him. It will be exactly like America has been since 9/11. A measure of judgment came, but man was exhorted by its (allegedly) "christian" president to -continue- living life, "just as you have been doing". Specifically, "Don't change a thing!" During a time when God's Ten Commandments were carted away from public view

to a closet, and so-called "gay rights" is endorsed and praised and promoted, America ~~-REFUSES-~~ to repent!

But then, why should they? The (alleged) 'church' proclaims that repentance is "not necessary", that God accepts us "just as we are". So, if those calling themselves by God's name don't even repent, why should the world!

Thus, yes: True and righteous are Your judgments. (16:7)

Woe, Woe, Woe - (8:13-9:11, 16:10-11)

Woe, Woe, Woe! (8:13) A "third" of things have been struck... now there are three judgments remaining. And if what has already happened weren't enough, the final three will dwarf them, by comparison. I mean...at this point, at least 'half' the world's population has been killed: a 4th at the 4th seal (6:8), and more recently over a third (8:7-11). If a 4th was killed, and then a 3rd of what remains...that's 'half'.

Trumpet/Bowl #5 (9:1-11, 16:10-11)

"Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star falling from heaven towards the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit" (9:1)
"And the fifth angel poured out his bowl onto the throne of the beast..." (16:10)

Up until now the judgements have been (if we may say so) "generic". They have been generally aimed and focused on the earth, the world, and mankind. Now, we get to the root core.

What is the "bottomless pit"? It is the place where the dragon will be bound with a chain, and thrown into for a thousand years. (20:1-2) It is the place where, apparently, those who have the gift/authority from God are often said to send demons whom they cast out of demon-possessed people. Remember that when the demon-possessed recognized Jesus, they implored Him not to torment them "before the time". (Mt8:29) From a source I trusted years ago, a person who had been a Christian college roommate, came back to visit me one time after he had been lured away for a time into the 70s commune/Jesus movement, but had returned to the Lord, and in connection with explaining his own path returning to the Lord, told about a casting out of a demon he had been informed of by a pastor who was instrumental in his return to the Lord from the commune theology; the demon was told to exit the person and "go into the pit". The demon was recorded (this person heard it) saying, "No! Not the pit! Not the pit!" As though the "pit" is a -real- place the demons know about...and don't want to go there.

So... whatever the nature of this "pit", the angel is "falling". Satan? a demon? Anyway, the pit is unlocked, and out of it come smoke and locusts. In other words, God is loosing the powers of darkness upon mankind. As you read all the descriptive words, I think it is obvious that these locusts are allegorical. Not your standard run-of-the-mill 'locusts' like earth knows now.

The angel of this bottomless pit has a couple names. (9:11) (If you are using a KJV you won't find this name "Abaddon" in the O.T. where it rightfully appears in Job26:6, 28:22, Ps88:11, Pr15:11, etc) Abaddon: the

place of destruction and ruin; is paired with "Sheol": the place of the dead, grave, etc (which KJV renders as "hell") Apollyon (Grk) is essentially the same: "Destroyer"

This destroyer (from the place of the dead) is sent out, but is not allowed to kill...but to torture. Strikes, bites, stings. Whatever the nature of it, it will be sooo horrific, that people will wish to die because of the nature of it. This summer (as this is being written) these little tiny bees (I think they are) were making a 'home' out of my garden corn. If I went out early in the morning, they were all congregated around the tassles, hovering...buzzing. In the still of the morning, what an ominous sound as one could hear this buzzing throughout the entire corn patch. Today as I was in the back yard, painting wheel rims in preparation for a new set of tires for the truck, this one blackish colored bee (or wasp, hornet ? It was darting around so erratically, I couldn't get a decent look at it) came buzzing around me, meandering around incessantly, almost as though 'possessed'. On a couple occasions I had to completely remove myself from the area until he got a whiff of somewhere else to be. (It was from that distance that I could see him darting around widely, wildly, erratically, viciously; as I say, as though 'possessed') A neighbor got stung the other day, and his entire hand was swollen up; and it was not a very pleasant experience for him. Just one sting. I've been bit by a wasp before. VERY painful. 'Even been stung on the tongue by a bee many years ago (where the bee had gone inside my soda can, outside where I had set it down, and I picked it up for a drink, and the bee ended up in my mouth, and managed to sting my tongue before I could get him spat out)...even much -MORE- painful, let-me-tell-you!!! I'm sure many of you have either experienced similar things, or been around others who did. You 'understand' the misery.

Now, try to imagine 5 months of this! They're always after you, and you cannot get away, they are stinging, and you are going into shock, bloating up from the infection, and they are stinging on top of the stings. There is no sleep, due to the misery of the infections. There is no sleep due to 'hearing' them buzzing, as you dread the next attack, which you come to know will be inevitable.

There are some people who speculate from the figurative descriptions in vs7-9 that this is actually variations of warfare, and certain kinds of weapons systems. But vs5 seems pretty clear that it is a 'sting' of some sort of 'bug' or 'creature'. Perhaps vs7-9 are indicative of the powers involved? Whatever the case, it is allegory. Perhaps some specially-created creature -just- for the occasion? Hollywood likes to make these horror flicks with demonic-like creatures that torment people. Perhaps this will be the real thing?

Notice that 16:10 speaks of the 5th bowl being poured on the "throne of the beast". The powers of darkness are unleashed upon the world powers. This judgment is aimed, specifically, not only at mankind, but at the rulers and authorities. (Eph6:12) Satan, his demons, and the human rulers who

have sold their souls to satan. And thus, in keeping with the nature of their rule of "darkness of this age", they are given darkness.

What is the source of the "pain" about which they are 'gnawing' their tongues? (16:10) Is it the 'darkness'? Depending on what translation you are reading, if you notice the punctuation, you will typically see that the first two phrases are linked together, and the last is more separated from the first two. (Comparing the use of commas, semicolons, and periods) The 'darkness' is one statement, and the 'pain' is another statement. If they're being stung (9:5), would you not expect that to be a source of 'pain' over which to grit the teeth and "gnaw the tongue".

And for all the pain of the torment, their hearts are soooo hardened, it says: "And they blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains and their sores, and DID NOT REPENT of their deeds." (16:11)

The church of Laodicea taunts regarding the rapture: they claim it to be "pre-trib" (they think), but "JUST IN CASE IT ISN'T", they make preparations (they presume) to go through their alleged "tribulation", with the thought that, if they were wrong, and had got it wrong on this side; they can "always believe" (properly) later. But remember how Paul warned that those who "didn't" believe -now-, -then- they will be given delusion to believe the lie. (2th2:10-12) And they who claimed they would 'then' believe...? Well, this passage tells us they WONT! Even though they see God's judgment, just as they do now, they will do then: They will REFUSE to REPENT.

Armageddon - (9:13-21, 16:12-16)

"And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon" (16:16)

Trumpet/Bowl #6 (9:13-21, 16:12-16)

"Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates" (9:14) And notice that their commission is to "kill a third of mankind" (vs15) And notice that their commission is for the specific "hour and day and month and year". This that comes next is a very specific moment in history, that has been on the drawing board for a long time, and 'now' it is time.

The "army of the horsemen was two hundred million" (vs16) While it appears to be the case that the "army" is a real army, the description is allegorical. However, are not the descriptions of "fire and the smoke and the brimstone" (vs18) very much like what a person 2000 years ago might have viewed the devastative power of today's weaponry? Viewing rapid-fire machine guns, flame throwing technology, massive bunker-buster bombs, and such-like?

The Euphrates river is "dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared" (16:12) And the "number" which John heard was "two hundred million". What entity from the east has the ability to muster a military that large? For some years, now, China has boasted having a military -just- 'exactly' that size. And in recent years China has been flexing its regional muscles regarding situations like Taiwan, expansionism against the US...a former administration even treasonously gave them much of our military technology secrets. Yes, Iran and N.Korea may be flexing their nuclear muscles and have been called an "axis" of evil, but China is more directly, specifically, in this prophecy. And in recent years they have been expanding their economic base at a level that would certainly support such a move westward into the middle east. And their loathing of US involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the situation with Israel, is no global secret.

Notice also that "a third of mankind was killed" (9:18) by their march. Eastern and southern Asia, of course, contains the highest concentration of the world's population; an 'easy' area to kill lots of people with comparatively less effort! With a 'half' killed up to this point, this now leaves the earth's over-all population count about a third what it started out. In other words, by now two-thirds of mankind have been killed. If you're not quite following the simple math as we progress, notice about Israel it is even said, "And it shall come to pass in all the land, says Jehovah, that two parts in it shall be cut off and perish, but the third shall be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine

them as silver is refined. And I will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, It is My people, and they shall say, Jehovah is my God." (Zec13:8)

But this will not be 'just' China. Satan, antichrist and the false prophet will be mobilizing the -entire- world to gather them to battle. (16:13-14) There will be a massive political/spiritual movement to collect -all- the world in battle before God. And this will happen against Israel, God's elect.

"For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem. And the city shall be captured, and the houses plundered, and the women ravished. And half the city shall go into captivity and the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And Jehovah shall go forth and fight against those nations, like the day He fought in the day of battle." (Zec14:2-3)

What? Even Israel's (alleged) "friend", the US? It says "-ALL- the nations". Why do you suppose, even today, that the US sells such highly sophisticated weaponry to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and others of Israel's sworn enemies?

Folks, "Armageddon" is not an asteroid on collision-course with earth (although, God may also have some of those up-His-sleeve for that final battle) as Hollywood has depicted; but it is all of the world's nations gathered together against Israel. Megiddo is a specific location in Israel, which many of the world's past military leaders have viewed as an 'ideal' battlefield. This is Gog-Magog (Ezk38-39) This is the "Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel ch3) the "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of decision." (Joel3:14)(Please go and read those entire passages for the complete picture) This is the battle for which the world is even now gearing up, as they are beating their "plowshares into swords, and pruning hooks into spears" as they are thumping their chests "Let the weak say, I am strong" (Joel3:10) This is that "great winepress of the wrath of God" where the "blood came forth out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, by a distance of 1600 furlongs" (14:19-20) (That's a radius of about 180 miles...an area completely encompassing Israel, Jordan, most of the Sinai, Lebanon and much of Syria.)

This is the "harvest" of the earth (14:15) This is the great invitation "to all the birds that fly in the midst of the heavens, Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings...the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great" (19:17-18)

And notice whom the world is fighting. We'll look at it again when we get there, but it fits -here- where we are. "...the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army" (19:19)

They are coming against Israel and Jerusalem, at Megiddo. But their gathering is -really- against God Almighty.

How does this battle turn out? That's Trumpet/Bowl #7

But notice the exhortation. Even up-to-the-end God is exhorting. Up until this point there is yet "time" to repent. In the next lesson we will see that that option is imminently to be extinguished. But this is the occasion about which Paul says, "For when they say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall by no means escape" (1Th5:2-3) where Christ comes "as a thief in the night". They will come gathered against Israel, and their judgment will come in a moment; in an instant.

But until that moment, God exhorts, "Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, that he not walk naked and they see his shame" (16:15)

But again, and this it not 'negativity', but this is how Scripture repeats it after each of these judgments. While they still have 'time' yet to repent, and even though instant annihilation is imminent, as there has been this massive military build-up, and the third of the world that is left knows what is about to happen, it says: "But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not do homage to demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which are not able to see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders nor their sorceries nor their sexual perversions nor their thefts. (9:20-21)

They are still doing their spirit-filling, yoga, TM, occult, satan-worship. They are still murdering and being sexually perverse. Hmmm...has George Bush remained as president, telling the world to "continue doing as you are doing...don't change a thing...keep living your lives as you have been doing" because we are all the greatest people on earth! ??? If not Bush, it will be somebody like him. Because that's how the world will be at that moment in time. All these tragedies will have decimated the world's population down to a mere fraction of what it is today....but for all that, they will -still- NOT REPENT.

No More Time - (10:1-10)

Here we have a little parenthetical passage. There are many self-proclaimed experts who will scholarly pontificate as to what (they think) this passage is about, and what it means. I am not such an one. I readily admit that I do not possess such wisdom. So, rather than try to pontificate something I don't know, let us merely make passing observation. After all, even Daniel was told to "shut up the words and seal the book, to the time of the end." and also, that what he was hearing, he "did not understand". (Dan12:4,8) If Daniel could say, "I don't know" ...who is PB to claim greater wisdom than Daniel.

What is the significance of the "little book"? John is told to eat it. Initially it tasted sweet in his mouth; but once digested, it was bitter. And then he is told to prophesy some more. (vs11) Whether this is the significance or not, I do know this: That, to the child of God, God's Word is sweet to the taste. "Your Words were found, and I ate them; and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O Jehovah the God of Hosts." (Jer15:16) But when God's Word is proclaimed, and rejected by the hearers, there can become a bitterness, as Jeremiah also tried to hold it in, "Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak in His name any more. But His Word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with holding it in, and I could not." (Jer20:9)

Seven thunders "uttered their voices" (vs4) and John is told to not write down what they said. Why? The passage doesn't say. Again, some will wax eloquent, explaining how "thunder" is the voice of dissent, that these would have been the utterings of demons complaining against God. But then, what do they do with the other various passages that speak of God's voice as being like thunder? (2Sa22:14, Job37:5, Ps29:3, etc) These are obviously some 'mysteries' that we are not yet to know, otherwise they would have been written down for our benefit.

But then we get to the part we -can- understand. There are two things: the matter of "no more time", and the matter of the "mystery of God" being "finished".

What does this mean: no more time? (vs6) Is this part of the workings of the antichrist, whom Daniel says will "intend to change times and law" (Dan7:25)?

Let us keep in mind that Trumpet/Bowl #6 has begun Armageddon, and #7 is imminently upon the world. #7 "finishes" it. (16:17) We have come to what I often call the "line". "...the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. Behold, I am coming quickly..." (22:10-12) The progression of human history marches

on, with sinners being born, making their choices whether to follow God or satan, dying, being resurrected to praise or wrath. Eventually that 'moment' comes where that process is at an end. History has run its course, it has come to its conclusion. It's like that huge overhead door has been rolling down to shut the entry. Until it reaches the floor, people can come and go to either side of the door. As the door nears the floor, some may even be able to scurry and 'slide' under it. But ultimately the door reaches the floor, and it is "shut". Whoever is on the inside stays there, and whoever is on the outside stays there. That is the kind of scenario where some will find themselves on the outside knocking, "Lord, Lord, open to us.." (Lk13:25)

There is "no more time". The door has been shut, and is not opening again. (3:7) That's it. Period. Now, those final events that conclude history are in motion...no holding back. Those who slid under at the last moment can mop their brows with a sighed "Phew!" as they just barely 'made it' ("yet so as through fire" 1co3:15) For the rest, this is it: Judgment!

What is this "mystery of God"? (vs7) Again, some scholars will pontificate. Thing is, in Scripture there are quite a few mysteries. Which 'one' might it be referring to? Or could it be speaking of several inter-related mysteries? Rather than try to pick one or two, and say "this is -it-" and wax eloquent where this passage does not specify, let me suggest to the reader to go read the "Seven Mysteries" series in the Library.

I suspect this statement includes a bit of 'all' of them.

Prophets - (10:11-11:13)

"Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets." (Am3:7)

Here we have another parenthetical section. As we traverse through the seven Trumpets and Bowls, we might be tempted to only look at the catastrophes and judgments as most of earth's humanity is being killed. Right 'now' at this point at the end of #6, at the most, only a third of earth's population is left alive. Depending on how the calculations are meant to be understood, if it is the case that those prior fractions were not compounded upon prior remnants, but are each fractions of earth's original population, there are even less people remaining...just a 'sliver' (less than 10%) of today's makeup of humanity.

As the judgments are taking place, is that -all- that's happening? Are the various things merely happening, with humanity having no clue as to 'why' they are happening? As a child, with the kind of father I had, it was often that I wasn't sure 'why' I was being punished; I was just supposed to "know". But that is not how God works.

Before the flood there was Enoch, preaching that God was coming to judge unrighteousness, and was then raptured 700 years prior to the flood. (Ju1:14-15) Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" against the pre-diluvian race. (2Pt2:5) Before Israel was taken captive to Assyria there were both Elijah and Elisha prophesying and doing signs and wonders. Before Jesus was introduced on the scene, there was John, preaching in the "spirit of Elijah". (Lk1:17) And most notably, a period of time not at all unlike what we are studying, only scaled down to the local region of Egypt with the ten plagues, it was Moses and Aaron; proclaiming to Pharaoh: God says, "Let My people go"; and pharaoh hardened his heart, just as the world will do in the coming 70th week that we are studying. In the O.T. it says that God continually pled with His people Israel to repent, by the hand of His prophets... it says, "rising early and sending" them (2Ch36:15, Jer11:7, 25:3, etc); but they refused to heed.

Well, during the Day of the Lord, God will also have His prophets...the "two witnesses". "And I will give to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth" (11:3) Anybody care to guess what their message will be? R----!!!

First of all notice that John is told to "measure" the temple, altar and those worshipping God. But also notice that no dimensions are given, like are given for the wilderness tabernacle, Solomon's temple, and the millennial temple. (Ezk40-44) Is that because there won't actually be a completed temple, but merely a 'spot' allocated for the morning and evening sacrifices? (Dan9:27) Details we don't know yet.

But notice that the "court" outside the temple (the temple mount as is the case right now?) is overrun by the Gentiles for 42 months. Notice that the two witnesses prophesy for 1260 days. According to the Jewish 30-day calendar, 42 months and 1260 days are the same... 3 1/2 years. Keeping in mind that the 70th week is a 7-year period of time, at the 'middle' of which the antichrist desecrates the holy place and proclaims himself to be deity. (Dan9:27, 2Th2:4) Daniel speaks of "time and times and one half time" (Dan7:25, 12:7,14); that's 3 1/2 years. If the antichrist confirms the covenant for seven years, it seems reasonable that the first 3 1/2 years are relatively calm and peaceful, as they are proclaiming "peace and safety" (1Th5:3) (and perhaps Israel has sole access to the temple mount the first half?), and that these 3 1/2 years where all the trouble happens is the -last- half, leading up to those final 2 1/2 months; figured by Daniel's mentions of 1290 and 1335 days. (Dan12:11-12) Are those months the outpouring of Trumpet/Bowl #7, as God "finishes" wrath, and then Jesus comes, and by the conclusion of the 2 1/2 months, He has set up His kingdom? It is not spelled out as to exactly 'what' those months are, but he speaks of "blessing" to those who survive to that point.

So... notice that these prophets preach. And as humanity seeks to kill them, they protect themselves by calling fire upon their enemies to destroy them. Sounds about like Elijah, doesn't it: "if I am a prophet of God, then let fire come down from the heavens and consume you..." (2Ki1:10,12) They have authority to call for drought; again, sounds like Elijah. To turn water into blood; sounds like Moses in Egypt.

Many speculate as to "who" these witnesses are. Prophecy says, "Behold, I am sending you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Jehovah." (Mal4:5) At the mount of transfiguration, it was Moses and Elijah who appeared with Jesus. (Mt17:3) Consider that Elijah did not die, but was carried up to Heaven in a whirlwind. (2Ki2:1) and when Moses died, nobody knew where God buried him. (De34:6) Seeing the kind of plagues they bring, remembering their original ministries, and the fact that their first departures from this earth were unusual...it makes one speculate and go, "hmmmm"

When their ministry is finished, just as John was beheaded...these two are killed. They are not buried, but there will be (likely?) a live-eye cam focused on them. Perhaps the major TV networks will be stationed with 24-hour coverage? Just as the networks were continually re-playing the images of the WTC towers coming down, with 24-hour/day coverage, for an entire week...it would not be at all unlikely they would do something similar with these two.

There are some who speculate that this will be around the time of the annual x-mass celebrations, since it says that people will "make merry, and send gifts to one another" (11:10) It may be...it may not be. The passage doesn't say; although, for those here at the time, they will be able

to count 7 years from the covenant (Dan9:27), or 42 months from the desecration of the sacrifices, etc.

But then, they are resurrected. There is a "loud voice from Heaven saying to them, Come up here" (vs12) And it says the people -see- them rise and ascend.

Where else did we have the -loud- voice "like a trumpet" saying, "Come up here"? The rapture of the Church in 4:1 Considering where we are in the sequence, where the angel proclaims that there is "no more time" (10:6), history has come to that "line", and everything is about to be "finished", I am climbing out on a limb to suggest that this is also the event where those beheaded for not bowing to the beast's image during the 70th week, are resurrected. (20:4-6) Because, what is immediately next is Christ's vanquishing of Israel's enemies at Armageddon, and coming "with" the saints. (Zec14:5) If those beheaded during the 70th week reign a thousand years with Christ, they have to be resurrected prior to that. This spot, with the two witnesses, is really the only place for that to logically occur. And it is worded, and the event appears to happen very similarly to the way the Church is resurrected and raptured. As well, the O.T. saints were resurrected along with Jesus. (Mt27:52-53) Thus, this is the 3rd phase of the "first resurrection". (20:5) For more on this, at the website please check out "Resurrection and Christ's Elect"

Considering how the disciples saw and watched as Jesus ascended into Heaven (acts ch1), and how the unsaved will watch these witnesses ascend to Heaven after they are resurrected: perhaps you will understand my past comments, speculating that when the Church is resurrected and raptured, that the world will see and watch that event, too. Another testimony to the scoffers, that it is -NOT- a "secret" rapture, where Believers are "slinking" away unnoticed. The world will see it!

And notice, too...just like there was a big earthquake when Jesus rose from the dead (Mt28:2), so will it be when these are resurrected. (vs13) Notice the physical damage, and 7000 people killed.

And -FINALLY-, at-long-last... the people "were terrified and gave glory to the God of Heaven" (vs13) They've been hardening their hearts up till now. Time has run out. Now, finally, they are acknowledging the Most High.

"The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly." (vs14)

So, as we are about to enter the 7th Trumpet/Bowl (the third "woe"), here is where things stand:

All the nations of the world are gathered around Israel/Jerusalem, all poised for Armageddon. (16:16)

The "line" has been drawn. There is "no more time" (10:6) Those who are saved are saved, and those who are not...it's too late.

The beheading of 70th-week Believers, those who did not take the mark nor bow down to the image, is over. Those who had been martyred are now resurrected and in Heaven. Other than the sealed from the 12 tribes of Israel (7:1-8), there are no Gentile 'believers' left on earth; they are now all in Heaven.

So now, "the third woe is coming quickly" (11:14)

7th Trumpet-Bowl: wrath finished - (11:15-19, 16:17-21)

"Then the seventh angel sounded: and there were loud voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world have been made those of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (11:15)

Here, now, we reach the conclusion of the events leading up to Christ's millennial kingdom. Until we reach the end of the thousand years, the Great White Throne, and the new heavens and earth, the next chapters, for a bit until ch20, will be individual units of topics, explaining individual elements of this time, expanding on some things that, up till now have only been mentioned in passing as a sort of passage of time has been presented. Right now we have come to the end of history, the end where there is "no more time". We now have the overall outline of what I sometimes call the prophetic jig-saw puzzle. Enough of the pieces have been put together, we are seeing the general scope of the 'whole'. Now, what is left is to plug the pieces in to the various spots to complete the details of those various elements of the picture.

This is now the point where it is proclaimed, "It is finished!" (16:17) There was another time when such a proclamation was shouted... when Jesus was on the cross: "It has been finished! And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." (Jn19:30)

You see, the "Day of the Lord" began when Jesus was born as a baby in Bethlehem. On the cross He "finished" redemption. And 'now' He is finishing judgment of satan, and taking rulership over that which He redeemed. (5:9)

Notice one thing that is -NOT- happening. Jesus is not returning to an earth that man has prepared -for- Him, and 'giving' -to- Him! There are those who teach such false doctrines today. It says "...You have TAKEN YOUR GREAT POWER AND REIGNED." (11:17) When we get to those chapters we will observe in greater detail the nature of His "great power" as He harvests the clusters of the grapes of wrath for trampling (14:18-20), as He comes on the "white horse" judging and making war (19:11) and of His "striking the nations" (19:15) When we get to those chapters, please remember that, chronologically, even though they are several chapters away (and it will be a few weeks before we get to them in the series), they actually fit right 'here' at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

Notice the nutshell summation of it all:

Nations were angry
Jesus' wrath has come
Judging of the dead
Rewarding of the righteous
Destroying the wicked

And where the glory of God had filled the temple such that nobody was able to enter "till the seven plagues of the seven angels would be completed" (15:8), now the temple is open. (11:19) Judgment is finished. The temple is open, and the ark of His covenant is seen. And the very final outpouring of judgment: lightning, voices, thunderings, earthquake, hail. These things prophesied in Joel ch2 & 3, and in Ezk38-39 are at the very end. It is not seven-years-of earthquakes, hail, etc. The major big events of those things, and I suspect the moving of the earth out of its place (Is13:13), is at the very end. Perhaps, even, part of that extended 'month' we observed earlier in Daniel's listing of 1290 & 1335 days? (Dan12:11-12)

This final earthquake is the event where Jesus sets foot on the Mt of Olives (Zec14:4), where it is split, creating a huge valley. It is the event where the islands sink into the oceans, and mountains are leveled (16:20) to fulfill "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low..." (Is40:4) And if you read in Ezk38-39 how God disrupts the armies that have come against Israel in the "last final years" (Ezk38:8) and invites the birds to feast (39:17-20), we see that this is "That Day" found throughout the O.T. prophets, beginning with Isaiah.

This, also, is where Babylon falls, which we will observe in greater detail in ch18. (16:19)

This is "That Day", the "Day of the Lord"

This, up to this point in the series, has been a general outline of the history of God's judgment of sin. The next handful of lessons, now, will look in more detail at the background for it all. It will describe the nature of satan's rebellion against God, how this struggle has been carried out through Israel, the essential underpinnings of the world's government and religion, of God's salvation to Israel, and finally of God's reclaiming and assumption of ultimate power over all of creation, and establishment of the new sin-free creation.

Israel vs Satan - (ch12)

"Now a great sign appeared in the heavens: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars" (12:1) "And she bore a male child..." (12:5)

First of all let's clear away some aberrant thoughts that have made the rounds over the years. If we remember back to Sunday school and Joseph's dreams, do we not know who this woman is? Jacob certainly did. When Joseph dreamed about the sun, moon and eleven stars, he knew Joseph had dreamed about their family. (Gen37:9-10) And as we progress through this chapter, for anybody whose head is not in the lofty realms of academia and as a result can't see the forest for the trees, it is obvious this is talking about Israel. If there is a 'simple' explanation, vs a complicated, convoluted one, typically the simple one is the 'right' one.

Now, a couple years ago there was a gospel-according-to-the-stars observation of the movement of the constellations. This apparently happened one autumn/winter (?) a couple (few?) years ago, where the moon and stars lined up, for those who know the names of the constellations, to give the appearance of the things said in this chapter. Not being an expert in those things (The only thing that makes any 'sense' to me in all this is the "big dipper". I don't 'see' all those things they claim to see.), I have no way of verifying it one way or another; but read those things with curiosity; an astronomical alignment that was said to have 'never' ever appeared previously in human history, and never would again. It was a 'one-time' event. And that would certainly seem to agree with the concept of, as this passage says it, the "sign...in the heavens"; and also how God created the universe as "signs and seasons, and for days and years" (Gen1:14) In other words, if those astronomical observations a few years ago were correct and observed as intended, that is just another sign that we are presently at the threshold of history and prophecy. As Jesus said, we don't know the "day nor the hour" (Mt25:13); but we know we are in the 'season', where the fig tree is budding its leaves. (Mt24:32-33) The end is upon us, "at the doors", and has been a few years...thus: Most any day, now!

Also, there has been some sort of convoluted false teaching that people were sending me a few years ago in reaction to something-or-other we were studying at the time, about the "man-child". Since some minds are sooo stuck on the concept of Revelation being a 'time-line', and totally 'prophetic' (for the future); they've apparently missed that original 'key' that the book is about past-present-future (1:19); they have these strange, off-the-wall notions of this "man-child" figure of prophecy, speculating all sorts of bizarre things. It was seeming like there were these occult-like -cults- based on the "man-child" doctrines they had concocted; and man-child was elevated in their minds to some sort of mythological position nowhere even hinted in Scripture. Some very strange mutations of the (gaia)

Isis/Horus-Madonna/child concepts of ancient paganism. But again, when a person does not "twist" the Scriptures "to their own destruction" (2Pt3:16), the passage itself, when understood alongside the rest of Scripture, clearly explains it. The male child is Jesus Christ. These other doctrines that, thus, deny that Jesus Christ has "come in the flesh", are doctrines of antichrist. (1Jn4:1-3)

But, please read the chapter; and let us wipe the slate and address this chapter from the top....

In this one chapter is essentially the world's entire history, in nutshell form. It gives us the very root core to the 'why?' of everything. While the enemy would seek to divert our attentions to other causes, this chapter lays out and outlines the key players of world history, from the Garden of Eden, clear through to the end of the 70th week. There are certainly many multitude of details, which is what the rest of Scripture is about; but any studies of covenants or dispensations need to understand and agree with this chapter. This, right here, is 'key'.

This woman and the dragon. We know the dragon is satan, "that serpent of old". (20:2) The woman (perhaps initially) symbolic of Eve? (considering how the "Seed" of the 'woman' is mentioned in the context of Eve's fall Gen3:15) After God had created them "male and female" He pronounced the creation "extremely good" (Gen1:31) It was a glorious, perfect, creation. But as soon as the woman had been created, Eve the "mother of all living" (Gen3:20), the serpent comes around and lures her to sin. Remember, the matter of Christ's work was established in God's design even "before the foundation of the world". (Jn17:24, Eph1:4, 1Pt1:20) Perhaps satan already knew of the woman's "seed" clear back at that point? (Gen3:15) For sure, God knew what the serpent would do...!

Of course, the garland of twelve stars, Israel; further promise of the "Seed" through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel). (Gen12:3, 22:18)

Let's look at the red dragon a moment. (As a side-note: have you ever noticed how the eastern nations, especially China, are sooo into the red dragon, and is a symbol of their worship?) Seven heads, ten horns, and seven diadems. We'll look at those details in chs 13 & 17, but this represents world governments, kingdoms, empires. The "third of the stars" being thrown out of heaven to the earth (vs4), the angels that were cast out of Heaven with him (vs9); satan's demons. As we know from Ezk28:14, satan was God's chief honcho in Heaven, the "anointed cherub that covers", who then, being chief, would have been leader of the other angels; thus the symbolism of his "tail" drawing the third with him. As leader, he 'led' the other angels in rebellion, to be cast to earth. They did not "keep their proper domain, but left their own abode" (Ju1:6) Daniel also speaks of this, "And it caused some of the host and of the stars to fall to the ground, and trampled them." (Dan8:10)

Thus, we understand satan's claim to Jesus that the world's authority had been given to him. (Lk4:6) He's been given authority over governments, religions, the demons.

Thus, as the woman (The "seed" of the woman began in the context of Eve Gen3:15, but more generically Jesus was born a -Jew- "under the law" Ga4:4-5, thus, of Israel) gives birth to the "male child", who is this child? The one "who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron" (vs5) Who is that? The one to whom God said, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You....Ask of Me, and I will give the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps2:7-9) The one of whom it was prophesied: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Strong and Mighty God, The Eternal Father, The Prince of Peace." (Is9:6)

But what did the dragon do? Remember, his heads and horns. He had Herod attempt to kill Jesus before He could grow up to manhood (Mt ch2); "in order to devour her Child as soon as it was born" (vs4)

"And her child was caught away to God and His throne" (vs5) "..He was taken up into Heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God." (Mk16:19) "It is Christ who died, but rather is also raised, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Rom8:34)

Notice, there is nothing directly about the Church here. Once Christ has ascended to Heaven, then immediately we are in the 1260 days; the same way Dan9 goes right from 69 weeks into the 70th (although Daniel does speak of "desolations" 9:26, where Israel has been dispersed to the winds); the time of Jacob's Trouble, where Israel will have a wilderness hiding place for 3 1/2 years. (vs6) Some speculate this might be the rock formation stronghold of Petra. And it says "they" will feed her. Who is they? The nations praised in Mt25 as those who "gave Me something to eat" having done so to the "least of these My brethren"...?? Or does God have some "ravens" (in training) for that day? (1ki17:4,6)

Notice, then, that "war broke out in Heaven". (12:7) The result of this war is that satan and his demons are cast out of Heaven to the earth. Exactly at what point in time does this happen? It would seem to be near the end, as "he knows he has a short time left" (vs12) Right now, while satan may have dominion over the earth (Lk4:6), he still has access to God's presence (Job1:6, 2Ch18:18-22), where he has also been the "accuser of our brethren" (vs10) But it seems that his access to God comes to an end.

And then it is proclaimed, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time left" (vs12) Now, if we understand that the Church (Holy Spirit, the one who restrains) has been taken "from out of the

midst" (2th2:6-7), such that there is only evil, and no good, can you imagine the nature of the violence that will erupt on earth! This would lend weight to the 2nd seal, which we speculated as possibly being 'partly' for today, as being more specifically for the 70th week; because with satan given free rein, there certainly will not be any peace, and people will certainly be killing one another at an accelerated rate compared to today. This was the characteristic prior to the flood when God's Spirit stopped striving with man, it says, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." (Gen6:11)

Heaven rejoices at the ousting of satan! (vs12)

What is the victory of the saints?

They "OVERCAME HIM THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB" (vs11)
"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1co15:57)

"...and THROUGH THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY.." ".always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1Pt3:15) "But when they deliver you up, do not be anxious about how or what you should speak, for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." (Mt10:19-20)

and "...DID NOT LOVE THEIR LIVES UNTO DEATH." "And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." (Heb11:35) "And you will be hated by everyone on account of My name. But he who endures to the end will be kept safe....And do not fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who has power to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Mt10:22,28)
"..that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom10:9-10)

"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have affliction ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Rev2:10)

Now, for some pertinent explanations:

Satan, the dragon, is the cause for all the world's problems. Notice it says that he "...leads the whole world astray" (vs9) It is not God's fault. It was introduced to mankind through the serpent-of-old. Man, of course, followed satan; thus he answers to God for his own sin. But it came from satan.

Israel's persecution over the millenia has been from satan. (vs13) While it has appeared that it was variously different national governments and the various arms of the catholic and protestant churches, the one calling the shots behind those powers has always been satan.

Now, during the last half of the 70th week, as the world is collecting its armies (led by the dragon) against Israel, Israel is "given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness..." (vs14) where they are nourished for 3 1/2 years. What sort of entity could be used for such a massive evacuation to be air-lifted to safety? Even though the US is part of "all" the nations gathering against Israel (Zec14:2), there is, nevertheless, an aspect of this nation that is Israel's 'friend'. Is not the national symbol of this nation the bald eagle? Even the US postal service, a symbol of US sovereignty when mail goes to other countries, right now has a logo they slangingly call, according to one of my USPS customers, the "beak-in-a-box"...the head of an eagle. The US is one of the few entities that has the air power to pull off such a feat; and is politically/morally the most likely to be inclined to do so. Again... just observing the possibilities as they appear, as of this writing.

Notice the imagery of the serpent "spewing water" after the woman. Often the term "sea" and "water" (like this) refers to the hordes and masses of humanity. Even today, is not anti-semitism again on the rise. Most of the world's people, if asked, will blame Israel for all the problems in the middle-east. Everything bad in the world, if they skew their thoughts around a few moments, they will declare to be "Israel's FAULT"

'You see the 'battle' that rages? The struggle is really between satan and God. But satan, while on this earth, battles God's elect, Israel. He cannot win against the Most High, so he vents his wrath against the "pupil of [God's] eye" (Zec2:8)

Now, as satan spews out the "water" of humanity against Israel, what sorts of things would put a damper on their efforts? Well, around these times, what sorts of things are happening, as we observed through the seals, trumpets and bowls? Droughts, famines, epidemics, earthquakes, economic chaos, etc. All the things we've already observed in prior studies in this series. What happens when thousands are killed and rendered homeless because of a hurricane or earthquake...are those people thinking about going after Israel? ...or about their own skins and survival? 'See how that works? The passage says, "But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth" (vs16)

'Understand the concept of God's vengeance upon those who hurt His own? "...it is righteous judgment with God to repay with affliction those who trouble you.." (2th1:6)

So... since Israel is protected (remember the 144,000 were sealed 7:1-8) the dragon goes after "the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (vs17) Who's that? Those who don't take the beast's mark, and don't bow to the image. During the 70th week, those are the ones "to be killed" (13:15), the "saints" from "every tribe, tongue and nation" (13:7)

How are other Believers to be considered the woman's "seed"? Because they are of the "faith of Abraham" (Rom4:16, Ga3:7,9, etc) And what was Abraham's faith? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Ga3:6) God spoke of Jesus also as Abraham's "Seed", through whom all the world would be "blessed" (Gen22:18)

Again, with a lack of complex sophisticated doctrine (remember: the "simplicity that is in Christ" 2co11:3), since the antichrist will likely try to destroy all copies of the Scriptures, it is the simple Gospel of the 70th week:

"For everyone, whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."
(Joel2:32, Rom10:13)

Beast & Persecution - (13:1-10)

"Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his head names of blasphemy." (vs1)

As we get into these next several studies, let me make it clear that I am not a student of history. I wish I had been, but during college I figured, "I'm a -musician-...why do I need to know world history?" So I only studied enough of the requirements to "get by", whilst immersing myself in music. I did VERY WELL in music! But do not know history like I now wish I did.

However, if you hadn't already figured it out by now, this Revelation series is not like other ones you will read here or there. If you want your intellect titillated with all the theories as to which nation or empire fulfills which head, horn or crown, there's plenty of self-proclaimed experts out there peddling their books. Go buy one of them. But if you've read this series from the top, you will have noticed the numerous sectional closes reiterating the Scriptural exhortation to Repent, be Separate from the world, and to Call upon the name of the Lord for salvation. This series will have been a complete waste if the reader does not come to understand the invitation by which the book closes: "Come...take of the Water of Life freely" (22:17)

If it was necessary for us to know every little last detail about -which- nation/empire was what, or -which- specific human leader was who, they would have been named. But for the most part, they were not. But we are given to understand, whatever empire is under discussion, -who- is 'behind' those empires. That's what the next few lessons will be about.

This beast rises up out of the sea. The next lesson (for which we will skip ahead to ch17) will explain who/what all these players are. But for right now let's summarize them as world empires and catholicism/babylon. Together they are called the "beast", because as we see in the next lesson, the political and religious have been inexorably linked down throughout history.

Notice that this beast (remembering the definition we have just put forth) has "names of blasphemy". In other words, it is at odds with the Most High, and by its very presence it is the embodiment of rebellion against God. You will find the depictions mentioned here, also in Daniel's visions in Daniel ch7 & 8. If someone of Daniel's stature was "terrified" (Dan7:28) and he "did not understand it" (8:27); neither are we going to try to nit-pick out every little detail, and claim full understanding.

But the important thing to understand here is that "the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority" (vs2) This understanding expands upon the previous lesson where we learned that sin and antisemitism

originated from satan. Here we understand more clearly, that the world empires and religions originated from satan. Above we said "catholicism"...that which calls itself "christian"...according to this passage right here...IT IS OF SATAN. Please remember this, as we progress.

Vs3-4 is a passage that pretty much all the 'experts' wrangle over.

[VW: By the way, you'all know what an "expert" is, don't you? In mathematics "X" the unknown quantity. i.e. $X = ?x(?-?+?)$ etc. And "spurt" == a 'drip' under great pressure! You know... X-spurt :VW]

This "head" that is "mortally wounded" but then healed. What is that? Back when Pope John Paul was shot a couple decades ago, some speculated that it was him. If we look at world empires, the Roman empire 'died', and then there was a period where there were many nations all over, but nothing global. And then, as the US came to be a nation, founded on many of the principles of Rome, and after WW2 as US military might has been projected globally, some have suggested that the US is a kind of "revived" Roman empire, based on politics, human rights and ideologies. Others see the EU as being a revival of Rome. With the question, "Who is able to make war with him?" right now the US is considered to be #1 in that arena.

But America is a "christian" nation...not backed by satan, surely?? (you might suggest?) Not going to go into all the details here, but there is so much about Washington, D.C. that is of occult design and layout, based on Free-mason architecture; various buildings and streets are laid out according to occult/astrological latitude degrees and so-forth. Our money says, "In God we trust", and yet also includes the occult all-seeing-eye in the Egyptian pyramid. And this list goes on-and-on.

Now, as history progresses, the part of the beast that will rise in prominence will include the "ten crowns" (13:1 Dan7:24-25) and -one- with "words against the Most High"..."blasphemies" (vs5) This one is a ruler for 42 months.

Do not mistake the matter. Most prophecy studies think only about the world rulers during the 70th week, and when considering the last 3 1/2 years, the ruler (person) of that period, almost as though it was its own entity. But that final ruler of blasphemy did not just suddenly appear (Pop!) on the scene. No. The entire world history of global government and religion leads up to that time. That one with the words of blaphemy is empowered by satan...but so, also, are all the empires leading up to his time. Keep in mind that while it speaks of the 42 months, the passage began describing the leopard, bear and lion, symbols of world empires three millenia ago. Nimrod, after the Flood, began to be one standing in the way of God, and part of his empire was Babel (or Babylon). (Gen10:8-10) The Babylonian and Greek empires were every bit a part of the 42 months, as the US and EU are today. And they all, being part of -the-

beast, have their power from the dragon, satan. (Remember: past-present-future 1:19)

Persecution is specified for the 42 months. But remember back in your history books to past persecutions: Nazi holocaust, Spanish inquisitions, Protestant persecutions of Christians, Nero's burning of Christians, etc.etc. Those were all... courtesy of the dragon.

Throughout history, and in the coming 42-month period, if people paid homage to the beast (whatever the nature of that homage), they were spared. But notice it says of them, "whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (vs8)

Notice the entire historical scope of this. The beast is referred to in terms of all its empires: past, present and future. As is the "Lamb". Most people think of the Lamb as being 2000 years ago; but in God's scheme of things, in His foreknowledge, the Lamb was slain even before man was created. That "sign" in the heavens about the woman, dragon and male child (ch12)...that was clear back at the beginning with Eve.

For Believers, history has seen both Smyrna (2:8) and Philadelphia (3:7); both persecution, as well as open doors. But during those final 42 months, it will be like Smyrna; where the beast has authority "to overcome them" (vs7) And unlike previous persecutions that were localized at different times in Rome, Germany, Spain, England, etc., this will be global...world-wide.

And this comes from the dragon; satan.

Take heed to whom you pay homage! And when the beast is defeated (17:14), the "form of this world is passing away" (1co7:31) If you were relying on the world's (government's) support, where will that leave you?

"If anyone has an ear, let him hear" (vs9) But notice the "endurance and faith of the saints" (vs10) Captivity and Sword. Martyrdom.

Woman on the Beast - (ch17)

"Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth prostituted themselves, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her sexual perversities. So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns....and when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement" (17:1-3,6b)

The "beast" can be easily explained, as deciphered: The seven heads (vs9) provides the mix of government and religion we mentioned last lesson. The "seven mountains on which the woman sits" has pretty much been documented by most scholars as the hills in Rome. The "seven kings" (vs10) are pretty much accepted as world empires, beginning with Babylon, Medo-persia, Greece, Rome, etc. Where they go in the immediate future seems up-for-grabs... The US, British Empire, EU, UN. We're not going to worry about that at this point.

The "ten horns" (vs12) are 10 future kings/kingdoms. Until the EU became as massive as it is, prophecy scholars were proclaiming that the Roman Empire would be re-constituted in Europe with 10 nations. But at last count, as the various Baltic countries are joining, that number is now at least double that, if I am not mistaken. Thus, it seems highly unlikely.

There are the 10 regions of the "Club of Rome" 1) N.America, 2) Europe, 3) Japan, 4) Australia/S.Africa, 5) Russia/greater Asia, 6) S.America, 7) N.Africa/middle east, 8) Central Africa, 9) India/Asian islands, 10) SE Asia. These have not yet been declared in a public way, but those who wield power behind closed doors have divided up the world into these regions for global rulership considerations. This passage speaks of ten "horns". In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as the world kingdoms traversed down his huge statue, at the very bottom, at the 'end' of history, were the 10 toes. (Dan ch2)

Next lesson we'll see how the beast and antichrist also have a joint power relationship. But this chapter (17) is primarily about the woman on the beast. The global government is included, because of how the two are related to each other. But our primary observation is about the woman "sitting on a scarlet beast" (17:3)

Again, let's not forget that, although the passage speaks of kings and kingdoms, the real player is the "dragon" (12:3) There it spoke of "red" dragon. In our present passage it is a "scarlet" beast. As we spoke of China's love for their red dragons, quite often that 'red' color is also called "scarlet". Same thing. While the kings/kingdoms are given their "power" by the dragon (13:2), here we see the woman "sitting" on the beast. Typically, when a person is sitting on a beast (i.e. horse, mule, camel, etc) the

person sitting astride is the one controlling the reins. Let's keep that in mind when we get to the end of the chapter, which will confirm this statement.

For a detailed well-documented study of this subject, although the author has come to be understood to be a false prophet due to his stance on the doctrines of Repentance and Hell, and his comfortable fellowship with apostate denominations and promotion over the years of CCM 'worship' music; nevertheless, in similar fashion as one might do research in encyclopedias or other such works written by the unsaved, this work is 'most' useful. "A Woman Rides the Beast" by Dave Hunt. This particular book is highly recommended on this subject.

We are not going to go into the same depth in a relatively shorter lesson like this as the book, but I'd like us to concentrate on vs4-5.

But let us understand that this "woman" is what is known today as the Roman Catholic Church. But it didn't always have that title.

Notice the regal wealth of her attire. (Please read the passage) Notice the "golden cup". The RCC is known, probably more than any other entity, for its 'chalices'. The two items of the mass, the host and the chalice. The term "Holy Grail", referring to the alleged cup used by Jesus at the Last Supper, is of strictly catholic origins. Notice the proclamation: Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the earth.

This is an entity which, more than any other, has been responsible for the martyrdom of True Christians. Other than the Jews who rejected Jesus and persecuted the early Church, until Rome got into the act, the early Church was pretty much left alone by the world-at-large. Nero burned Christians, and over the years since then there were many 'inquisition' style campaigns by the RCC to annihilate Christians. When the Reformation split away, many of the Protestants carried on what the RCC had started, persecuting Christians and Jews. Many today speak of the brutality of Islam in torturing people; but from what I've read, and seen in pictures, Islam is like a walk-in-the-park compared to the systematic, efficient, creative torture tactics, and devised all sorts of devices, tools and implements to make their 'mission' of torturing Christians more gruesome. Thus, this passage says she was "drunk with the blood of the saints" (vs6)

Now notice how John says, "And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement" (vs6b) Why would this be? What would it be that would cause John to be so amazed?

The RCC claims to be "Christian". It names the name of "Jesus Christ". It speaks of Christ's crucifixion, something which Paul said, "But may it never be that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"

(Ga6:14) Like apostate Israel (Rom3:2), the RCC has been a repository of some of the Scripture manuscripts.

We've already looked at RCC's martyrdom of Christians. What else is her claim-to-fame? Babylon the great, Mother of harlots (being full of sexual perversities), Mother of abominations of the earth. Until I sat down to work on this just 'now', there is something I had never before thought of, but was suddenly putting two-and-two together. Let's look at these in order:

BABYLON THE GREAT:

It is most appropriate that she is depicted as a "woman", after all, who is RCC's 'god'? Ishtar. The Babylonian "Queen of Heaven". Yes, catholics and the pope pray to her, addressing her as "Queen of Heaven" The deception, which most uninformed True Christians don't realize, and when they find out it amazes them (just as John was amazed), is that RCC does not actually worship "Mary" Jesus' mother. That is the label given to Ishtar to deceive the world into thinking RCC is "Christian". But the woman sitting on the beast is -not- "Mary", but Ishtar. Ishtar (Queen of Heaven) is of Babylonish origins. And remember from ch12 how the dragon was seeking to devour the male child of the (other) woman, and we observed how that figurative woman began with Eve... When/where did the Queen of Heaven get her start? Where did Babylon begin? With Nimrod and Babel. (Gen10:8-10) Babel was where post-diluvian mankind decided to start rebelling against God en-mass, and began building the ziggurat to worship the host of the heavens. The dragon was fighting against God by persecuting Israel. Israel sprang from Abraham, who came from roughly the same region as Babel. God was calling out Abraham to form the nation Israel. And concurrently the dragon was forming Babylon at the hand of Nimrod. Nimrod then, as he migrated, ended up in the regions around Egypt, where Ishtar's alter-ego Isis was conceptualized. But until Constantine supposedly "became christian", the non-christian Roman empire was worshiping Libertas, descended from the Greek Aphrodite, descended ultimately from the Babylonish Ishtar. When he "became christian" in order to bolster his political empire, they applied "christian" labels to everything pagan they already were worshiping, and suddenly, Voila!, Rome was "christian", but still worshiping the sun and Ishtar. Same concept as when Chevrolet had their "Luv" pickup years ago. It had the -label- "Chevrolet", but in reality it was "Isuzu". It was made in Japan by Isuzu, and its essence was 'Isuzu', but by label was called "Chevrolet". In the same way, the religious descendants of Nimrod, Babel, Babylon got a new label and started being recognized by the label "christian", even though in essence, it is still 'Babylon'.

MOTHER OF HARLOTS:

Now this is what suddenly jolted me as I was preparing to begin this study, as I was taking note of the all-caps in vs5. This phrase has typically been viewed by prim-n-proper conservative KJV-toting Christians in 'spiritual'

terms. But let us look at the words at face-value, and compare them with reality.

What is a harlot? A promiscuous woman. (If your children are reading this along with you adults, you may wish to have them turn away momentarily and read it yourself, to see if it is suitable for them at this point. We are going to be rather blunt here.) A woman who uncovers herself to the male, inviting sexual attention. This woman is called the "mother" of harlots. What is a mother? One who gives birth to, and originates...

The ancient mother-earth religions also worshiped the sun. Part of Ishtar's worship involved a virgin, at sunrise, going out to greet the rising sun, naked. Much ancient pagan worship included temple prostitution, in fertility rites. In some societies a chosen couple were stripped naked, anointed with oils, and whilst everybody else was worshipping, the couple would engage in sex, and then they would both be killed -while- in the sex act, and their bodies offered in sacrifice, to assure the pleasure of the gods for human, animal and crop fertility for their society. In some other cultures, it was a variation of the same theme...the couple while engaged in sex, the temporary building/shelter in which they were thus occupied, would have its supports suddenly knocked out from under the roof, the structure collapsing over their bodies, and then set ablaze...again, as sacrifice. When a couple was being married, they would walk up the steps to the altar, pray their prayers to the gods, and be blessed by the priest for fertility.

During the winter solstice fertility season, one of the traditions is that if a couple happen to find themselves together under a mistletoe, they are to kiss...whether they are married to each other or not. The RCC throughout its history has been known for its priestly sexual abuses. God commanded mankind to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen1:28) Just as the dragon was contesting God at every turn; God blessed the sexual union of a husband and wife, satan offered his own perversion. How much of society's sexual perversity does so in the name of women being "goddesses"? How much of the world's sexuality is based on Babylon's perversities of Ishtar?

Based on the wording of this passage, I'm going to step out onto another limb here, and suggest that human sexual perversity had its beginnings in pagan worship. How many married people will be pure regarding other people, except when there is a mistletoe, or at a wedding reception line where all the men follow each other, kissing-the-bride? (another man's wife) The mistletoe is of pagan origins. The wedding (ritual/ceremony) is of pagan origins. Thus, the mentality...we need to be pure to our spouses...except when it involves worship of our gods. Our gods tell us to be promiscuous as a part of worship... and eventually, if it's OK to be promiscuous in worship, what's wrong with it any other time? See the progression?

I am suggesting that sexual promiscuity did not originate from married people doing so, their religion telling them to be pure, thus adultery was a 'sin' to their religion. But rather, I'm suggesting that their religion - encouraged- and promoted promiscuity, by its very design, being 'fertility-based' worship.

There is certainly much ancient art and statuary to support this notion. Some have even suggested that it originated between the serpent and Eve. Somehow I doubt that...and yet, after they had eaten the fruit, their enlightenment was the knowledge that they were naked (a lot of details that are not given to us). However, we are not informed of sexual deviance until the fallen angels (the dragon's fallen 'stars') are recorded as having relations with the "daughters of men". (Gen6:1-2)

So often Scripture speaks of "sexual perversities". Well, this 'woman' is the "mother" of it. She rides the beast, the dragon. It originates from satan. And this 'woman' is the one RCC falsely calls, "Mary", but who is in reality "Ishtar" the Queen of Heaven.

Now here's another "amazement" to "marvel" about in all this: How many people think of the wedding as "legitimizing" a relationship. They want a "church wedding" in order to have a 'proper' marriage that is "blessed-by-God". They think that to not have it 'blessed' by the pastor/priest is to be "living-in-sin". But when one considers the pagan origins of everything, I would suggest to you that a "church wedding", something you won't find anywhere in Scripture, rather than making it 'right', actually "perverts" it; and makes it unholy, because it copies from paganism. (Did I mention: marvel/amazement?) What the RCC calls "Holy Matrimony" originates from the scarlet beast, the dragon....satan. And the woman sitting on the beast, Ishtar (Queen of Heaven), is the goddess-mother of it.

MOTHER OF ABOMINATIONS:

the occult, satan worship, all sorts of things. We won't spend time with this. But if you wonder about this, please keep in mind that some of the staunchest satan-worshippers in the world are priests in the catholic church; especially in the Vatican. And we have addressed on other occasions, particularly in connection with Gibson's "Passion of the Christ" the matter of the occult/satanic powers of the so-called "Latin Mass".

Now, a few observations and explanations: In a few lessons (ch18) we will observe the fall of Babylon, and of Christ's take-over of world dominion (ch19), so we won't spend time on vs14 at this time.

Also, remember how we spoke of the "sea" (13:1) and "water" (12:15) as being the masses of humanity. 17:15 here is the key where the text confirms it in so-many-words. All these things we talk about involve all of humanity of all nations. The beast and woman, while being empowered by the dragon/satan, are the peoples of the world. The RCC is made up of 'people', the pope is a 'person' -elected- from amongst fellow-cardinals...

and these people are controlled by satan. World governments and kingdoms are 'people'...controlled by satan. If you are not a Christian, and give allegiance to the beast and follow in the woman's ways, -you- are being controlled by satan.

Now, here's the kicker; and we see this already beginning...

"And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and consume her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled." (vs16-17)

The civic governments will destroy the catholic church. How can this be, if "the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth"? (vs18)

How does the RCC rule over kings? In most ancient eastern empires the king was revered essentially as deity. (This was the thing with Japan in WW2, their emperor was their 'god') When Rabshakeh was taunting Jerusalem and Hezekiah, he shouted out, "Have any of the gods of the nations..." delivered their peoples? (2Ki18:28-35) A nation's god was related to them nationally, at the edict of the king. When a king gave a command, it was as if 'god' had given the command. In many nations the kings looked to the priests, because the priests would wield demonic magick and strike awe and fear into the kings; thus, while the king might have been supreme over the land, the kings typically feared the magicians and fortunetellers. Note how Pharaoh (Gen41:8) and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan2:2) called the magicians and astrologers when they needed answers. In Europe over the centuries, it was the pope who would crown kings. The pope was considered in-the-place-of-God (vicar), so his edicts were considered just as if God had spoken it. Thus, a king being crowned by a pope...his kingdom was blessed by God. The pope would tell kings who they could marry, and who they couldn't. That's why England separated and instituted the "church of england"...even though it is, still, of the same 'dragon'...carrying on essentially the same traditions. What was in eastern religions, the RCC has continued for the past two millennia. Nothing has changed, except that the RCC is falsely called "Christian".

"The beast that was, and is not, and yet is." (vs8b) Have you ever wondered what that is about? The Roman empire, the global political empire, died, and came to nothingness. And yet, through the catholic church it really still exists, and in some ways is even more powerful, because it is 'religious'. It has the specter of the gods. In keeping with the ancient eastern nations, the Roman emperor was considered deity. When the empire vanished, the popes actually became more powerful because of their imagined link to the "immortal, invisible, omnipotent" gods. The physical emperor could die, but a pope connected to the immortal gods has more power...and thus can reign "over the kings of the earth" (vs18)

Well, even though Babylon/RCC has been over civic rulers, we are informed here that the rulers will destroy the 'church'. I don't get too excited these days when I hear that the government is after some church for tax fraud, or some other thing, because I see that that church is not the Church of Jesus Christ; it is part of the dragon's 'harlot'.

In the last days, when those 10 kingdoms (global regions?) are in power, it says they will destroy the RCC. Now, considering how powerful the catholic church is, how could such a thing be possible? Of all the religions, the RCC is the only religious entity that has a seat in the UN. The RCC is the only religious entity that has embassies in many countries, behaving as a nation-state, rather than a religious entity. The RCC is wealthy beyond imagination, having its fingers in commerce all over the world. (Hunt's book documents all this at great length)

Well...in this country for the past couple years there has been a thing called, "Priest sex abuse scandal" Many people coming forward, exposing various priests who sexually abused them when they were younger and vulnerable due to their youth, and their awe of the 'powerful' priesthood. There are some parishes that are filing bankruptcy due to the court settlement awards given to the victims. Is not the church supposed to be "pure"? Well, not the RCC! I grew up during high school in a community with high percentage of catholics, and still remember some of the priest-sex jokes my (catholic) peers would laugh to each other about. There is one of those America's Funniest Video clips I've now seen a couple times. The second time I saw it coming, I watched to verify. For you that have seen it, the one where the couple are being given the mass wafer at their wedding, and the priest "accidentally" drops the wafer down inside the front of the bride's dress; and then goes personally fishing to retrieve it. Second time I saw it, I realized it was -NO- 'accident' that the priest dropped it...he did so 'deliberately', so that he could 'cop-a-fee!'. The 'pure' priest, the representative of the Holy God??? Not hardly!! And done unabashedly in front of the entire congregation! This is just one possibility of how the secular governments might be coaxed into destroying the catholic church. What else is yet to come? The world waits to see. But it will happen.

World governments may be run by the dragon, but Babylon is the world's religion, by which humanity worships something other than the Most High. It began at Babel...became Babylon...and after Christ, became the Roman Catholic church. The catholic church today -is- ancient Babylon. And God is going to destroy it, using the dragon's world government. As Jesus said about a kingdom fighting against itself: "And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end." (Mk3:26)

"Put yourselves in array against Babylon all around; all you who bend the bow, shoot at her, and spare no arrows; for she has sinned against Jehovah. Shout against her all around. She has given her hand; her

foundations have fallen, her walls have been thrown down; for it is the vengeance of Jehovah. Take vengeance on her. As she has done, do unto her." (Jer50:14-15) See also: Isa 47:7-15

Antichrist & the Mark - (13:11-18)

"Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon" (13:11)

We've seen the beast "rising out of the sea". (13:1) Coming out of the sea-of-humanity, the beast is global empire. We've seen the woman (harlot) sitting on the beast, Babylonian catholicism; sitting on the beast 'steering' the beast in its direction/s. Now this next beast, rather than coming out of the sea, comes up out of the 'earth'. God formed man of the dust of the ground. The end of this chapter informs us that this is a specific -person-. The number of the beast is the "number of a man", and by calculations his number is "666".

Caution is in order regarding this number. Calculations have been done on many various people, by all sorts of manipulations and formulae, calculating dates, ages, numerical values to the spellings of names, and all sorts of things. By these means various world figures have been proclaimed by those doing the calculations, including: Hitler, the pope, FDR, Prince Charles of England, Bill Clinton...to name just a few. Some have suggested that 666 stands for the computer in Brussels? Amsterdam? (I forget now) that was nick-named by its operators the "beast", and its model was claimed to include the number "666". Some claim it to be code in merchandise bar codes. A few years ago a fleet of buses in Israel had license plates with a common numerator designation of "666-xxx", and some were getting all excited. I am going to proclaim right at the top, here, that I don't know what the 666 is. Obviously, all these things just mentioned are/were -not- it. (Well... unless perhaps Charles or Clinton are yet to come forth globally. Clinton certainly seems to never disappear from public view!)

As we look at this person, we see personification of one mentioned in other prophecies: "man of sin...son of perdition" (2th2:3), "antichrist" (1Jn2:18), "he" (Dan8:11,9:27)

If the beast is global empires, and the harlot is the RCC; is this one the pope? There have been many treatises and books written, proclaiming it is so. After all, if the RCC is the harlot, who is head of the RCC? Well...Ishtar is. But who is Ishtar's prophet, who prays to her? The pope. This one is also called the "false prophet". (20:10)

Let's go to vs11 and make some observations:

"..two horns.." (vs11) Horns, the symbol of authority. Why two? Well, just observing here... the RCC is not the world's sole entity, is it. Remember that which split away from Rome? Protestantism. Remember a few years ago there were a couple of documents drawn up, and signatories. ECT...Evangelicals and Catholics Together. Protestants reconciling back

to Rome. And yet, they are retaining their "protestant" label. Perhaps it is something related to eastern orthodox, where there was the split at the Great Schism? No answers or proclamations... just observations and musings. Until this one is specifically "unveiled" (2th2:8) any of these kinds of comments are mere speculation. It could just as easily be totally somebody else. Recently the name Benny Hinn as come to my attention along the lines of Israel/Palestinian relations. According to Dan9:27 we know it is somebody who will be involved in the middle-east "peace" process, and will have the lineage credentials to fool Israel into thinking he is Messiah (Christ)...thus: "anti-christ".

"..like a lamb.." If we go back to the ECT concept, and the pope; what are the primary unifying slogans? The pope in 1995 promulgated his encyclical "That They May be One". And everything is couched in terms of "love".

"..spoke like a dragon.." Never-to-be-forgotten is the true source of it all. The dragon...satan.

"..exercises authority over the first beast.." Remember the woman "reigns over the kings of the earth" (17:18), and the pope being 'head', has the authority.

"..give spirit to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should...speak" Anybody who is even the least bit aware, knows of all the "marion apparitions" ... Dreams, visions, appearances in windows, on the sides of buildings where people rush to set up little shrines with candles, and keep vigil, tears are seen coming from the eyes of her statues. And the pope venerates her as ultimate supreme.

"..causes the earth...to do homage to the beast...to the image" (13:12,15) One of RCC's prime methods of "christianizing" the world has been at the tip of the bayonet. When the "new world" was being 'conquered' on behalf of the various European nations, the RCC was right there, too..."christianizing" (as I remember the term from my grade school history books). What if people refused to bow to the priest and Ishtar? They were killed. (13:15b) Remember: past-present-future

Now, most of this all seems to point to the RCC. But when we get to vs13: "And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven onto the earth in the sight of men", this sounds more like the realm of people like the aforementioned Benny Hinn.

However... something most people don't realize is that the RCC/Babylon is also "mother" to the charismatic manifestations. In an earlier lesson we repeated what we have in the past, that some of the most earnest satan worship and ritual goes on right in the vatican. We mentioned the "Latin Mass"...the basis for catholic priests performing 'miracles'. We think of miracles being the realm of charisma... but I expect most of you haven't seen that room in that particular cathedral in Montreal, Canada, where

somebody was taking me on a tour (back around 1980), the room covered, wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling, and many hanging from the ceiling with string/rope, with -CRUTCHES- allegedly abandoned by cripples who had been healed by some catholic priest-or-other (I don't now remember his name). I've never seen (or heard of) such a 'room' (of authenticating "proof") related to charismania.

As we already noted the RCC's wealth, this person also sticks his fingers in global economy. The "mark" -required- for buying and selling. (vs16-17)

We already know that -the- antichrist is a very specific person to be "unveiled" after the Church is raptured. (2th2:7-8) But as we understand that this book includes past-present-future, see how much of this has -already- been going on for centuries? Do you see it?

In a prior lesson we discussed the 'mark' that exists today. We spoke of RCC's "ash-wednesday" forehead smudge; Hinduism's 'dot' on the forehead. Symbols on the forehead are not limited to just these two, but are so-universally understood from paganism, that even a TV science fiction show like Star Gate SG1, which bases much of it's story line on Egyptian mythology, has one of its key players with an embedded 'seal' in his forehead, from a prior allegiance to god-like figures.

I repeat this matter, because of the eye-opening nature of this understanding. Whether or not the anti-christ is from the RCC, everything we see here in this passage, we -already- see in some form or other...from the Babylon/Roman religion. History has shown all the people -already- killed, who did not pay allegiance to the image and mark. And how many, calling themselves "Christians" (children of God through repentance and faith in Christ), have gotten themselves tied up in Babylon?! And remember God's warning about a Believer's ties to this Babylon system. A person who unites themself with the beast, harlot and her false prophet...ushers themselves right out of God's Kingdom, and into God's judgment.

This is not a matter of being "judgmental" or "tending-to-lean" a little too "strictly" to the "letter of the law"; or of not loving our "brothers of the RCC". **THEY ARE -NOT- BROTHERS!!!** Please understand this clearly! Any allegiance with them is allegiance with the red dragon, satan. **DO NOT BE FOOLED** by them calling themselves "THE CHURCH" and being "CHRISTIAN". **THEY ARE NOT!** Remember, John was amazed at what he saw...because it was hard to believe. But did you notice that the angel chided John, "Why did you marvel?" (17:7)

Yes, -the- anti-christ is yet to be unveiled at the beginning of the 70th week, but "even now many antichrists have risen up" (1Jn2:18) Everybody (whoever 'everybody' may be!) is all paranoid and worried about the 'mark' of -commerce- that is yet future, for the 70th week, that they do not see the mark that already exists, of which many have already partaken.

DO NOT BE DECEIVED or LED ASTRAY by them! DO NOT PARTAKE!

He who has an ear, let him hear!

Israel Saved & Final Warning - (ch14)

"Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads." (vs1)

As this book progresses, we've seen the unleashing of God's wrath through the sets of 'sevens'. We've seen how satan has been continually against Israel. We've seen the nature of the beast, the woman, the false prophet. We've seen the beast's "mark" of allegiance on the forehead, and now notice again God's mark on Israel.

Ch14 sits here, in-between some things we've already covered. Earlier were the seals, then the trumpets. After this chapter is the bowls. Most of those chapters covered a lot of specific details about a relatively short period of time of judgment, most specifically the last 3 1/2 years. But here with chs 12-14 we have more the "overview" look at several different things. The way the book separates the trumpets and bowls with these intervening chapters of explanations, perhaps ch14 is sort of a 'review' before it reiterates what the trumpets had been, with the bowls? You know... the same sort of way we've been 'remembering' periodically the "past-present-future". When there are so many pieces to the puzzle; if we've had our noses buried into one spot, sorting out the details of that place, sometimes we need to raise up from it, get a breath of air, rub our eyes, stretch a little, and look at the 'whole', to see how the 'detail' we were just working on is now looking like, with relationship to the whole. Like a painter, trimming the windows, frames or trim; climbs down off the ladder and steps back a few steps to look at the 'whole' house, to see the progress.

Notice where Israel is now. Back in ch7 they were, simply, sealed. In the sequence of the layout of the book, the major judgments hadn't started yet. But now we've seen Israel's persecution from the dragon; we've seen God's judgments, which we know from other passages is also called "Jacob's Trouble". (Jer30:7) We know that, although Israel has been in unbelief, that God's purpose is to refine them (Mal3:3-4) and give them a new heart. (Jer31:31-34, Ezk36:26)

So, now, notice the description...

They have their own song. They now have the label as "redeemed". (vs3) They are "not defiled". They are not characterized by the sins handed down from the mother of harlots, of sexual perversity. (vs4) Where Israel had yelled out to Pilate, "Crucify Him", now they have "mourned for Him". (Zec12:10) It says they "follow the Lamb wherever He leads". They have now accepted Him as their Shepherd (Jer23:3-8) as He has gathered them from the "four winds". (Mt24:31) Scripture will have been fulfilled, that "..Israel shall be saved.." (Is45:17, Rom11:26)

So now, it's time for final judgment. But before that happens, there's one final call. Remember in Jesus' parable, the "certain man" gives a feast, and invites various ones. Many who are invited give excuses for why they will not be showing up; so the invitation is given to the poor, indigent and handicapped; but "still there is room". So the man commands the servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled." (Lk14:16-23)

God does not "delight in the death of the wicked" but that they should "turn" (repent) and live. (Ezk18:23, 33:11) As long as there were unmartyred believers on earth God sent His prophets "rising early and sending" (Jer25:4) But 'now' the Church has been raptured, Israel is in her place of protection, and anybody not bowing to the image is being killed. There certainly are the "two witnesses" (ch11), but are they able to preach to the entire world? I don't know. What method does this angel use to preach the "eternal gospel" to the -whole- world? (vs6) Whatever the case, God is not limited in His abilities....

What is the message? Remember, we've already speculated that the antichrist will likely have destroyed all copies of Scripture that he can find; as the RCC has done at other times in history. Without Believers and preachers to teach, it is not too likely that unbelievers will be learning about Predestination, Dispensations, the finer points of Justification and how it was viewed by Abel, Abraham, Moses, David and Paul. When everything else is stripped away, what is the root core of faith?

"Abraham believed God" (Gen15:6, Rom4:3) And what is the initial fundamental core of faith? THAT GOD EXISTS. "...that He is..." (Heb11:6)

Who is God? The creator. This is how Paul introduced Him to the pagans on Areopagus, "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of Heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands...." (Ac17:24)

What is man's primary rebellion? God does not exist. We are all here "by chance"...from an (alleged) "big bang". That over billions of years, by scientifically/mathematically impossible odds, things just "happened" to form together, creating "life". Sh'zzamm! The primary #1 reason man looks to the stars, and sends probes into outer space, is in the quest for the "origins of life". They do this because they -refuse- to acknowledge God. (Romans ch1) Many prayers of people recorded in Scripture record their acknowledgment of God who "created" all things. (Jer32:17) As God is reasoning with man about His own existence, He speaks of Himself as the creator. (Is ch40)

Like the "certain man" who gave that feast had several steps and levels of the kind of person being invited: God asks of mankind to exhibit faith through animal sacrifices; man rejects. So then He sends His Son; they

reject. (Mt21:37) So, as He is inviting from the byways and hedges, scrounging every last bit of humanity that will be persuaded, He pleads: 'will you just only acknowledge/honor your Creator' Those are the words of the preacher, "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, so that the evil days do not come, nor the years draw near, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them." (Ec12:1)

Just... ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CREATOR! ...before it's too late! Judgment is coming!

The second angel says as much: "Babylon is fallen" and notice the #1 sin that is proclaimed. "...her sexual perversion.." If you haven't yet taken note from earlier lessons, do so now! What characterizes the essence of the world today...at-every-turn? perverse -SEX- !

The third angel reminds everyone of the 'rules' and consequences for disobedience: DO NOT do homage to the beast. DO NOT partake in the MARK

Or else... RECEIVE WRATH. The consequences are "forever and ever" and there is "no rest day or night" (vs11)

To those who are obedient: Jesus said, "And do not fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who has power to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Mt10:28)

"Here is the perseverance of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." (vs12) Those who disobey receive judgment, but those who are obedient, even though they are killed, receive "rest from their labors, and their works follow with them" (vs13)

The final warning has been given: Now it is time.

"One like the Son of Man" given the instruction "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." (vs14-15)

This is where the expression "grapes of wrath" comes from. Harvesting the grapes, throwing them into the large vat, and getting in there trudging around with the feet, squishing it all in preparation for the making of wine. Like we illustrated earlier that God is taking His creation and scrambling it like "eggs in a frying pan"; here we have the imagery of the sloshing around in grapes, making a real mess, staining everything in sight, as all the nations have gathered their militaries around Israel/Jerusalem for their desired "final solution". Only, God is turning the tables on them and having His 'final' -say- with them. This is just an overview of this. We shall look at this in more detail when we get to ch19.

The primary observations from this chapter are two-fold: 1) Israel is saved, 2) Rest of the world: take warning.

Israel, due to disobedience to God, became a "byword among all the nations" (De28:37) But due to God's mercy (Neh9:27, Ps51:1, Is54:7) He is saving them and giving them a new heart.

Nations: have you seen that? Have you seen God's "everlasting love" for Israel, by which He has "drawn" her? (Jer31:3) The same is available to you, if only you will do the simplest thing... ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CREATOR. Israel had the choice, the blessing for obedience, and the curse for disobedience. (De30:19) Life or death. The same is offered to you, even at this late hour. The "landowner" is willing to give you the same wages at the 11th hour, as what He paid those who worked all day (Mt20:6-14) ETERNAL LIFE! If you obey, you certainly will be killed by the beast, but you will have "rest". (vs13) But if you refuse, but instead partake of the beast's mark, you've just been given a glimpse at the harvest of God's winepress of His wrath; that's where you'll be.

The choice is yours.

Babylon Destroyed - (ch18)

"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every unclean spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her sexual perversities, the kings of the earth have prostituted themselves with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the power of her luxury." (vs2-3)

"And I heard another voice from Heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, so that you not share in her sins, and so that you not receive of her plagues." (vs4)

Over the years I've heard people suggest, and I have also followed and furthered those suggestions, that Babylon has two aspects, the political/economic, and the religious. That there are -two- Babylons. And as we might look at the world, we might view the religious as being Rome and/or the one-world-religion; and the commercial as New York, or wherever a person wants to place the world's commercial hub; and the political/governmental as the UN, EU, etc. what-have-you. But as we progress through this book, I am seeing Scriptural/prophetic Babylon more-and-more as being -one- entity in this book... religious/spiritual.

However, then, that makes this ch18 a little more confusing. (Please read the chapter) Most of the chapter lists all the aspects of commerce and the arts that "weep and mourn" (vs11) over Babylon's demise.

However, I cannot get out of my head the clear delineations of ch17 and prior passages. The dragon is satan. The beast is one of the global empires. It is the heads, crowns and horns that represent global empires and governments. And it is pretty specifically stated that the 'woman' astride the beast is what is called Babylon. (Depending on what one is reading, and where, the dragon and beast sometimes become inter-related with each other)

In vs7 we see a repeat from Isaiah, "I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow". In Isaiah she says, further, "I am, and there is no one else besides me." (Is47:8) This pretty much 'has' to be Ishtar, the Queen of Heaven, that is worshiped by today's RCC, and was 'queen' down through the millennia since Nimrod. This is the 'religious' aspect of the dragon's domain. Thus, what then is all the talk of commerce and the arts?

This gets us into areas I'm not qualified in. Hunt's book speaks of this at great length. The RCC is likely one of the wealthiest entities in the world. And apparently it has its fingers in commerce globally. I don't know that much about commerce and the stock market. But if one considers its cathedrals, often containing much gold, one realizes the wealth necessary for their construction.

But the parts related to the arts I can relate to, from my music background, especially having been in choral music, and done so professionally. The staple of choral music is the mass, and other related 'catholic' music. And what better concert venue (for acoustics) than a cathedral! Also having minored in organ...are not the catholic cathedrals the locations where the world's greatest pipe organs reside, and where they are recorded. When one considers art and statuary, are not most of the great and famous works related to catholicism, having been painted or fresco'ed inside catholic cathedrals and chapels. Is not architecture of the various historical periods based on the manner in which cathedrals were built. When I sometimes watch the travel shows on Public TV, it is interesting how the TV 'guide' can't wait to find the cathedral of the place being visited, to see the architecture and interior art.

If the "woman...reigns over the kings of the earth" (17:18), and catholicism/babylonianism is a way-of-life to those societies, will it not make sense, then, that catholicism will have its fingers into every aspect of those societies, thus being supported and supplied by every form of manufacture, commerce and trade. Thus, if the woman/babylon is destroyed, every person who relies upon her for whatever it is they do, will lose business, music, arts, commerce. When those cathedrals come crumbling down, that architecture destroyed, those paintings, frescos, statues, stained glass....all in piles of rubble, will there not be a great outcry. Those cathedrals are the heart-and-soul of those communities. Often I find myself, when watching those shows where the guide is drooling over the 'beauty' of those things, I find myself muttering..."bring it down, bring it down!" When the day comes, I will not find it at all hard to "rejoice over her" (18:20)

In ch17 we observed the aspect of "sexual perversity". But notice also in this chapter the special mention of "dwelling place of demons, a prison for every unclean spirit". (vs2) We also mentioned that some of the staunchest satan-worship goes on right in the vatican. Those signs and lying wonders of the Latin Mass. And of course, you've all noticed the satanic "black" robes the priests wear. That hideous demonic-looking crucifix at the top of the pope's walking stick. Their mass wafers with 'flames' around the rim in honor of the sun. In many of their cathedrals symbols and images of the sun....since Ishtar is also related to sun-worship. In words they claim to be re-crucifying Christ in their mass, but when one considers that the wafer is actually an image of the sun, one realizes that mass isn't really about Jesus at all (even truly nominally), but about sun-worship. Those who know more about this than I do, inform us that the hand gestures the priests do for their various rituals come from satanic rituals of magick. As this passage says, "...for by your sorcery all the nations were led astray" (18:23b)

And in "one hour" she will be thrown down. (vs10) How is it all going to come about? We are not given the details. But the "ten horns" will be

having a go at her. And whatever the means is, it will be catastrophic, much like a huge millstone being thrown into the sea. (vs21) It will be "with violence"! If it is true, the suggestion that the RCC was responsible for starting up Islam [see: "How the Vatican Created Islam"], has not that 'violence' already begun in the form of the "war-on-terror", and seeing how this is a global struggle, have not the "ten" already begun the process of her destruction.

Those who know the Lord say: Bring it on! Whatever she was dishing out, return it to her double. (vs6) Because "in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth" (vs24)

We've singled out the RCC here. Indeed, today, it represents the largest percentage of what is Babylon. But it should be understood that this includes anybody who joins with her in the one-world-religion. It is just that the 'hub' of this today is in Rome. But, as was the case throughout history, this includes any of the religions that came from Babel: Hindu, Buddhist, TM, Yoga, charismania, voodoo, etc. Just yesterday (at the time of this writing), while I was shopping for some groceries, the in-house sound system was playing the music of one of today's pop groups; and as the introduction began, it was using the sounds and chord progressions of eastern societies and religions, and I looked up at the ceiling-speakers in anger, thinking: Cannot a person get away from that...even while doing something 'neutral' like shopping for groceries???

The "voice" from Heaven proclaims to Christians: "Come out of her, my people, so that you not share in her sins, and so that you not receive of her plagues" (18:4)

This verse, right here, says Babylon is 'spiritual' in nature, because if it were political/societal...well, Paul says we'd have to leave the world. (1Co5:10)

But, like we keep repeating, every-which-way that is possible: If you're still in it... GET OUT -- NOW! ...while you still have the chance. Whether it be the RCC, charismania, or your dabbling in other eastern spiritual things like meditation, spiritually-based exercise routines, or the wearing of occult jewelry like crystals, fish, cross, crescents, etc.

Be HOLY unto God (1Pt1:16); holy and without blemish (Eph5:27), separated from Babylon and its sorcery and sexual perversities. Be "pure" before the Lord. (1Jn3:3)

"Declare among the nations, proclaim, and lift up a banner. Proclaim and do not hide it; say, Babylon is captured, Bel is ashamed, Merodach is broken in pieces; her images are withered up, her idols are broken in pieces." (Jer50:2) See also: Jeremiah chs 50-52 (all three chapters)

See Also Addendum: " *Downfall of the Queen of Heaven*" (Is47)

Rejoicing over Babylon's Fall - (19:1-4)

"Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her sexual perversities; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her. And again they said, Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" (vs1-3)

B'but...hold on there just a minute! Did not Jesus teach, "You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you, Do not resist evil. But whoever hits you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." (Mt5:38-39) Wasn't Jesus teaching pacifism? He also taught: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you," (Lk6:27) Didn't Jesus teach that we should "forgive" those who do us wrong, even "until seventy times seven" (Mt18:22)? Aren't we supposed to "luuuv them into the kingdom"? Aren't we supposed to "forgive and forget"? Aren't we supposed to not be "judgmental" poking at the twig in their eye, when we have a log in our own? (Mt7:3) Aren't we supposed to live and let live, accepting our 'differences'; after all, they just have a different "lifestyle". What's that saying? Unity in diversity!!! That: Unless you're wearing a robe & pounding a gavel, you shouldn't be judging.

WHO is the one doing the avenging? Us? Believers who have been wronged and persecuted? No. The "Lord our God" -HE- is the one avenging.

Whether today's relativistic thinkers, the generation of the 60s & 70s pot-smoking hippies of "free love" realize this or not, there -IS- such a thing as RIGHT and WRONG. There -IS- such a thing as RIGHTEOUSNESS and SIN. There -IS- such a thing as PURITY and IMMORALITY. And situational ethics does not change these God-ordained standards. Just because humanity has closed its eyes, turned its back and rejected them, doesn't mean they ceased to exist. When they got high on LSD, and 'imagined' themselves flying-like-a-bird, having jumped out of a window or bridge, the LAW-of-GRAVITY still existed, and brought them crashing down to their deaths. Well, those people of that generation are today's world leaders and/or are running for office.

This book is the Revelation -of- Jesus Christ. One thing about Christ that people refuse to understand is that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb13:8) Jesus does not go swinging and swaying with the whims of humanity. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were kicked out of the garden. When humanity became corrupt, God destroyed them with the flood. When Israel disobeyed God and bowed down to idols, He dispersed them throughout the world. When various entities rebelled against God's authority, He sent judgment in various forms. And God has not changed today.

If a scumbag mistreats his wife, or refuses to send child-support, and is caught and punished, society says, He deserves it. If a mother suffocates her babies in plastic bags and dumps them in a dumpster, and she is caught and punished, society says, Justice is served. If somebody takes prostitutes and mutilates their bodies in horrendous ways, and the person is finally caught and locked away, society says, Good riddance!

But when mankind worships various evil idols, and that worship leads them to also persecute Christians; God "is not fair" to judge, after all, there is "no proof" that God exists. When mankind engages in perverse sex, and as a result reaps the rewards of that behavior with all sorts of STDs, AIDs and death; Why do such "wonderful people" have to suffer so? It isn't fair...we should have the right to live any way we want to. When satan's followers devised cruel means of torturing Christians, even worse than the aforementioned prostitutes are mutilated by serial killers, and the world says the Christians 'deserve' it; BY THE WORLD'S OWN STANDARDS, the way they view their own sense of justice, should not God avenge the persecution of His children? They are deserving. They've got it coming. And as they are sent to Hell..."Good riddance!"

And as they are gotten rid of..."Yea! Hip, hip, hooray! For He's a jolly good fellow..." When a neighborhood child-molestor is put away, does not the neighborhood 'rejoice', that, Now...at long last...their children are "safe".

Well, God is punishing the "molester" of His children. The harlot, by her descriptive title, has been driving up next to God's children, opening the door, enticing with candy, "Don't you want to go for a ride with me?" ...or, can you help me find my puppy? (i.e. I'm staying in these apostate groups to be a witness, so I can find the lost and help save them...instead of heeding the warning to "come out of her, my people" 18:4) Once snagged, God's children have been abused, tortured, mutilated and killed. But now, since God has taken vengeance, His children are "safe".

As Paul was being carried to the Roman barracks for safety against the mob that was trying to kill him, the Jewish mob was yelling, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!" (Ac22:22) This has been the collective attitude of satan's world against God's children.

Thus, now, those in Heaven also rejoice...

Away with the harlot. She is not fit to live, but to be rejoiced over as her "smoke rises up forever and ever!" (vs3)

Amen! Alleluia!

King of kings: takes rulership - (19:5-6,11-21)

"And I heard, as it were, the sound of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!" (vs6)

This title, "omnipotent", means "all-powerful". Up until this point God has restrained Himself, as-it-were, against sin. But now it's like the organist pulls out "all the stops" to make the organ play at its maximum. Now the time has come. Remember: this is the occasion of the 7th trumpet, and it is declared, "You have taken Your great power and reigned." (11:17)

This is the final judgment of the angry nations. (11:18) This is the judgment of Babylon. (16:19) This is the judgment of the beast and false prophet. (19:20) The judgment of the "cities of the nations" (16:19)

We see the white horse. (vs11) The Heavenly armies follow on white horses (vs14) White, the symbol of faithfulness, purity, truth and righteousness; everything the dragon, beast, babylon, and world are not.

But notice, also, that His robe is dipped in blood. (vs13) Why? Because He is about to go and shed much blood. He is about to go out and execute God's wrath upon the nations. Perhaps somewhat like a boxer coming out of his corner, shadow-boxing as he comes to meet the opponent? Perhaps as one who is angry, on his way to avenge a wrong done to a loved one, having picked up a weapon-object, and is hitting things along his way to meet the one upon whom he expects to mete out justice?

His eyes are a flame of fire. (vs12) With His eyes He can see down to the "soul and spirit" of each enemy (Heb4:12-13), to execute the justice due each individual. And the flame is also viewed as "burning" anger. (Please read all the other descriptive details)

He is going out to "strike the nations" to "rule them with a rod of iron" (vs15) Remember, this is the woman's "male child". (12:5)

The invitation is given to all the carrion birds, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God" (vs17) In other words: Squawk, squawk! 'Dinner is served!'

Remember where we left things at the 7th trumpet/bowl: all the nations are gathered for Armageddon. (16:16) The 200 million from the east have traversed across the Euphrates (9:14,16) This is the day of "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of decision." (Joe3:14) This is the Gog/Magog invitation to the birds: "gather together from all sides to My sacrifice which I am sacrificing for you, a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood." (Ezk39:17)

How will God accomplish this defeat of Gog/Magog? With "flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." (Ezk38:22) and by disrupting technology and weapons systems: "And I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand." (Ezk39:3) For all the sophistication of today's weaponry and technology, one thing they still have no control over, that interferes with their abilities, is the 'weather'. And if you add to that God's projectiles from outer space, and some earthquakes (Joe3:16)...well, there you have it. And what is the "sword which proceeds out of [His] mouth"? (vs21) Well, when God sent His angel to strike the enemy, they found themselves waking up in the morning to a lot of "dead corpses" (2Ki19:35, Is37:36)

This battle is so severe that the blood is said to flow as high as the horses' bridles. (14:20) Is that literal "blood", or is it figurative of how severe that last battle is? We all have heard the term "blood bath". Well, this is God's blood bath upon the world.

Satan and his followers, the beast, 10s, harlot, horns, crowns have shed the blood of the saints. Thus, God is avenging, and taking rulership.

In that day Christ comes and sets foot on the Mount of Olives, and at the great earthquake of that event, the mount splits in two, creating a huge valley. (Zec14)

This scene is recorded in many passages, which we won't review them all here. And I suspect the words we've read, and the words we might try to use to describe it would be woefully inadequate to the reality of that event. I suspected the most seasoned and war-hardened soldier today could not imagine what this day will be like.

But let's close by saying that this is not the "inevitable" day that mankind has brought himself to. But it is the Dragon bringing the world in one final battle against the Most high. The Dragon and the world will not simply lose by a "fluke-of-nature", and so then Christ sorta 'slips' in and assumes control. No! This is the occasion where God -deliberately- "gives" the nations to Christ as His "inheritance" (Ps2:7-9)

"Ask of Me, and I will give the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps2:8-9)

Therefore... "I charge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without spot, blameless until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will reveal in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light,

whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and eternal power.
Amen." (1Ti6:13-16)

Marriage of the Lamb - (19:7-10)

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." (19:7)

Let us notice, first, one thing this passage does NOT say. Notice one thing that is NOT "prepared". One thing the wife is NOT doing. The wife is NOT "preparing the world" for Christ's return. The Church is not preparing the world as a present for Christ, for Him to come and rule. Aspects of today's apostasy, that also doesn't believe in the Rapture of the Church, teaches this. But they have it all backward.

Jesus promised, "I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn14:2) Now, does not simple logic dictate that, if the Church is -on- this earth when He made that promise, and Christ is "going" to preparing a place, that 'where' He is going is not the same place where the Church is right now?

Regarding the world, remember that Christ is -TAKING- His "great power" and reigning. (11:17) And in the process of Him doing that, He is (to quote a prior expression) "stirring things up like eggs in a frying pan" Not a very pretty place for a wedding!

What is Christ preparing for His bride? That is yet a secret. He created this universe in six days, and look at it. He's had close to 2000 years preparing a place. One can only 'dream' of what it will be like! "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it dawned upon the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1co2:9)

But the Bride is to be preparing herself. You see, the Church's wedding to Christ is a bit backward from the way the world does things. In our western cultures the man comes groveling to the woman, hoping he is acceptable to her, that she will accept him. And the bride, on the pedestal, is the one everybody looks at. The bride is the one with beauty. And the wedding is considered to be -her- "day". Pretty much everything about the wedding centers around the bride, and the groom's opinions of things don't much count for anything; especially to the bride's family. He pretty much has to "show up" and "behave" himself, and go along with everything the bride has prepared. Is all that, because of the traditional (church) wedding's roots in the pagan Ishtar goddess worship of fertility?

The Lamb and the Church is reversed the other way around. The Lamb's "wife" has been preparing herself. How? Notice it says, "and to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen" (vs8) What is the sense of that word "granted"? It is not the bride's -intrinsic- 'right' to wear white, as being 'superior'. Things are 'granted', typically, by the greater on behalf of the lesser.

Why is the bride the lesser? For two reasons: 1) she was created -by- the Lamb, and 2) she was in the despicableness of sin, and then redeemed. The image God uses with Israel, I think applies here. God came around and saw the infant squirming in its blood and pronounced, "Live!" And later saw her still in blood, naked, and cleaned her and clothed her, dolled her up with jewels, and took her to Himself. (Ezk16:6-13) (Please read that passage)

The Lamb redeemed the Church to Himself with His own blood (1:5), and as Hosea redeemed Gomer to himself, the Lamb says, "You shall stay with me many days. You shall not be a harlot, nor be with another man, and I also will be for you." (Hos3:3)

The Lamb does not require much from the bride, except for her to be a "glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish." (Eph5:27) The exhortation is given, in anticipation of this day, the marriage of the Lamb, to "purify himself, just as He is pure" (1Jn3:3)

The Bride is not to be bar-hopping, giving lap-dances, flirting with the world, receiving the world's advances for one-night-stands; having fellowship with Babylon, negotiating with Babylon, dialoguing with Babylon. The warning was clearly given: "come out of her, my people, so that you not share in her sins" (18:4)

The Bride, thus, by definition, is being "holy in all conduct" (1Pt1:15) You might not see the Bride getting into her car on Sunday mornings, with Bible under-arm, because all there may be in her area is Babylon. And so, rather than compromising her holiness, she keeps separate from the harlot.

However, what she does then receive is: the "rewards" due the Lamb's servants, prophets and saints. (11:18)

Beyond that...it is not 'proper' to disclose to the rest, just as it is not proper for a husband and bride to announce to everybody else the nature of their wedding night. Certainly, there are those of loose morals and loose lips, who blab everything. But like the saying, "A gentleman does not kiss and tell", so too, the details of the marriage of the Lamb and bride are not disclosed to the world.

Millennium - (20:1-10)

"And I saw an angel coming down from Heaven...and he laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should not lead astray the nations any more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while." (vs1-3)

First of all, let's address this "thousand years". There are those, particularly of the post-trib, post-mill, a-mill positions who attempt to challenge Christians to prove that there is such a thing, Scripturally, as a "millennium". In fact, on this very day as this is being written, earlier, there was an e-mail from a former subscriber challenging where 'else' in Scripture, besides Revelation ch20, that such a thing as a "millennium" is taught. While this passage right here is the only one that specifies a "thousand" years, as we shall see, there are plenty of other Scriptures that tell us the characteristics of this period.

But, to suggest that Scripture doesn't teach a doctrine about a "thousand" years, is to reject the book of Revelation as being part of Scripture. This passage, right here, spells it out in so many words. Amazingly, there are those who proclaim that "millennium" (forgetting any other doctrines like Rapture, resurrection, etc) does not exist.

At the beginning of this Millennium satan is locked away in the bottomless pit. What is the significance of that? Remember how, in our overview of world history, we learned that it has been the dragon (serpent/devil/satan) that has led the whole world astray. (12:9) We learned that, while mankind followed satan, that sin originated with satan. Thus, with satan locked away, there is no satanic temptation for 1000 years. More on the results/effects of this in a moment.

Those beheaded during the 70th week are resurrected. (vs4) We have already speculated that this may occur when the two witnesses are raised. (11:11-12) The beheaded resurrected saints "reign with Christ" for the 1000 years. (vs4) We also know that the Church will "reign with Him". (2Ti2:12) In fact, -all- saints, those who partake in the first resurrection, "reign with Him a thousand years" (vs6)

Here, the saints of the 70th week are raised. We know the Church is raised before the 70th week. (1Co15, 1Th4:16) We also know the O.T. saints were raised when Christ was (Mt27:52-53); as Daniel also prophesied. (Dan12:2-3) Thus, it proclaims here: "This is the first resurrection" (20:5) This completes the resurrection of all Believers throughout earth's history up to this point. For explanation of the three 'phases' of the "first resurrection", please see a past writing: "Resurrection

and Christ's Elect"

The "rest of the dead", the unbelievers, remain in their graves until the end of the 1000 years, to stand before the Great White Throne (vs11)

What are the characteristics of the Millennium?

First of all, one thing it is not, is a repeat of the 70th week, and of Armageddon. Just as Hollywood gets everything else wrong when it comes to matters of God, it gets this wrong, too. A few years ago there was a TV series called "Millennium". I didn't watch the series, but saw previews and promos for it; and what they depicted was an earth in anarchy, plagues, global catastrophes, along with dark demonic spiritism. That is the total opposite of what it really is.

With satan bound, there is no demon-possession. There is no demonic temptation upon mankind to sin. In fact, all the devastation that happened at the end, will be fixed. Ezekiel ch40 begins a description of the millennial temple complex. ch47 describes a river that springs from underneath that temple, and the trees growing alongside. Wherever the waters go, the waters that had been polluted will be "healed" (47:8,11) And the trees will be for food, and the leaves for "healing" (47:12)

Remember how when God first created Eden, the food for all living animals was "green plants". (Gen1:30) In other words, the T-rex, lions, tigers, wolves, etc ate plant life. They were not carnivorous. It was after the judgment of the flood that God made things where some living creatures ate other living creatures, as He also gave to man: "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have designated all things for you, even as the green plants." (Gen9:3) at which time God also instilled "fear" into animals. (Gen9:2) As Paul says, "For we know that the whole creation groans and travails together until now." (Rom8:22)

But God says, "for behold, I create new heavens and a new earth". (Is65:17)(Please read that entire chapter) Now, the fact that it does speak of death (vs20) indicates that this is not yet the new Heavens and earth that Peter speaks of where there is "righteousness" (2Pet3:13), with the new Jerusalem where there is "no more death" (Re21:4) But it is the new 'remodeled' earth which follows the devastations of the 70th week. People will be productive, and live extended lives again, like before the flood. And animals that are today predatory, will again live in peace and harmony, again eating plant life.

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, says Jehovah." (Is65:25) See also: Isaiah 11:6-9

There is so much in the O.T. about this period, even though it doesn't designate it as a "thousand" years. But this is the period where Christ rules, sitting on David's throne.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Strong and Mighty God, The Eternal Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace upon the throne of David there will be no end; and upon His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from now on, even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts will accomplish this." (Is9:6-7)

This is the period where the nations will grab the sleeve of a Jew and say, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." (Zec8:23) Further it is said: "And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For the Law shall go forth out of Zion, and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." (Mic4:2)

This is -that- time about which the Scriptures are replete with prophecies. To say a whole lot more right here would necessitate quoting most of Scripture prophecy to Israel regarding God's future blessing to them.

But who are Christ's deputies during this time? "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them..." (20:4) The ones "reigning" with Christ. The O.T. saints, the Church, and the martyrs of the 70th week. Who will be governing the 12 tribes of Israel? The 12 apostles. (Mt19:28)

Now, when the thousand years are completed, satan is let loose from the pit; goes and deceives the nations again (please read the passage); and again they gather the "four corners of the earth" (in other words 'all' the world) and surround the "camp of the saints" (vs9) and Jerusalem.

There is a question that some who scoff at the pre-trib rapture doctrine put forth, that I don't know that Scripture answers for us at this time. What constitutes a "saint" during the Millennium? What sorts of laws will be in effect? We do know that if a person dies at the age of 100, they will be considered a "child"; and a sinner living to 100 is "accursed" (Is65:20) In that context, what exactly does "accursed" mean? We do know that the nations will be required to make the annual trek to Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths, and if they don't, they will have drought. (Zec14:16-17) Thus, it seems apparent that, even though satan is bound in prison, there will be obedient people, and disobedient ones.

Also, considering the fact that, in spite of 1000 years of peaceful rule, the world will be able to be deceived into following satan again, informs us that

the 'fault' for sin is not completely satan's, is it. Satan might have introduced lies to Eve, but Eve allowed her own lusts to be enticed.

Many people find fault with God, and suggest that God is not fair. God does not provide a level playing field when it comes to His holy standards. They blame God for (allegedly) 'creating' evil. They blame Him for allowing such a superior being (like satan and his demons) to tempt us. Modern psychology suggests that, if our 'environment' as babies and children was not full of hate, lying, deceit, anger, etc., that babies and children, if left to their own devices without any outside influences and preconceptions of right or wrong, would grow up 'good'. They say that it is the sinful environment and corruption into which young ones grow, that leads them to 'become' sinners. Perhaps some presume that God didn't give Adam and Eve "long enough" in the garden to correct themselves and 'prove' themselves as being righteous after all; let alone the fact that God already did what they suggest, He created the 'environment' -perfect-, and yet Adam and Eve sinned.

Well...for 1000 years Christ is ruling in righteousness. That original state of peace and perfection that was in Eden has been restored. If a person at 100 is considered a "child", then it would seem that mankind is back to living the long lives they did in the beginning, of many hundreds of years. For those who complain about environment, God has restored it to perfection. Those who complain that "the devil made me do it"...well, satan is now in prison; he is not a factor; the blame cannot be cast on him.

And yet, for all that, there are those who disobey; there are those who are sinners and are "accursed"; and for all the complaints about satan... When he is released, what does sinful mankind do? He follows satan, and rebels against Christ's 'perfect' rule.

Thus, while we learned that it was the 'dragon' that led mankind astray, the sin we have is 'resident' within us. "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps51:5) Man, left to his own devices, is a sinner. A person must be found "written in the Book of Life" (next lesson)

But these hordes that encircle the saints... God zaps them with "fire..out of heaven".

And the devil, beast and false prophet are "cast into the Lake of Fire and brimstone" to be "tormented day and night forever and ever" (vs10) This is a place specially prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt25:41)

Great White Throne - (20:11-15)

"And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away. And there was found no place for them." (20:11)

As I've been engaged at working on this area of the Revelation series, there have been some e-mails, taunting at certain things being taught here; and among other things, if a person reduces their comments by logical deduction, one is left to conclude that they don't accept this book (Revelation) as being part of the Scriptures, God's Word. They ask for proof of some things written here also existing in the rest of the Bible, or more specifically, the N.T. (Perhaps they also don't believe the O.T. is part of the Scriptures?)

Well, this scene is recorded in the O.T. "I watched until the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days sat, whose robe was white as snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was like flames of fire, its wheels like burning fire. A stream of fire went out and came out from before Him. A thousand thousands served Him, and a vast innumerable number stood before Him. The judgment was set and the books were opened." (Dan7:9-10)

This one called "Him" is the "Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead." (1Pt4:5)

Who appears before this throne? The "-dead- small and great" (vs12) If they are 'standing', it means they got resurrected. No, the resurrection is not only for Believers, but there is a "resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" (Ac24:15) Again as the O.T. says: "And many of those sleeping in the earth's dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to reproach and everlasting abhorrence." (Dan12:2)

The "just" were all resurrected at the beginning of the 1000 years, concluding the "first resurrection"; to "reign with Christ for a thousand years". (20:4-5)

But the "rest of the dead" (those -not- saved) "did not live again until the thousand years were finished". 'Now' (vs11) the 1000 years is completed, satan has been cast into the Lake of Fire, and there is the great white throne. These dead...who are they? The "rest" mentioned in vs5. The unsaved. If you find yourself at the Great White Throne, it means only one thing. You are receiving judgment. The saved/righteous do not appear here, because they are -not- "dead". They were resurrected before the Millennium. (Sorry! You who don't believe in "pre-mill". By your own words, you have condemned yourselves. If you hold to some notion that your resurrection and/or rapture comes -after- the Millennium, you are among the "dead" who did not "reign with Christ")

What is the basis for judgment? There are two.

First of all, -who- goes into the Lake of Fire? Those not found in the Book of Life. What is this 'book'? It is the book in which God has recorded the names of all the righteous. Now, if for some reason you don't believe Revelation is God's Word, please note elsewhere the existence of this Book:

Moses speaking first, "Yet now, if You will, take away their sin; and if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written." (Ex32:32) "You have kept an account of my wanderings; O put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your Book?" (Ps56:8) "Your eyes saw my embryo, and in Your book I was enrolled, and all my days had been preordained, when as yet there was nothing." (Ps139:16) "...your people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the Book." (Dan12:1) "...fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life." (Php4:3)

This is the most crucial judgment, whether or not one's name is found in this Book. One is either 'in' the book, or he isn't. About this there is no fence-straddling or so-called "gray areas". And furthermore, if a person is -not- found in the Book, they go to the Lake of Fire. No if's, and's or but's.

And be sure that, if you are a sinner, not having been justified by Jesus' shed blood, "your sin will find you out" (Nu32:23) No matter where you were buried, or what happened to your ashes, you -will- be reconstituted to stand before God. Even if you were buried at sea, and a shark came along and ate you, or you were cremated and your ashes sprinkled in the ocean, you -will- stand before the Throne.

The other judgment is based on works. A Believer's works are tested to see of what sort they are. (1Co3:13) Durable works receive a reward. If a True Believer squandered away their life, but truly were saved; God knows that and they will be saved, "yet so as through fire". (1co3:15) But they are in Heaven...not the Lake of Fire.

The unsaved are also judged "...according to their works, out of the things which were written in the books." (vs12)

Although we know that the dragon is the one who deceived the world, humanity had a choice whether to follow him or not. And we all "give account" concerning ourselves to God. (Rom14:12) How are "accounts" kept? In 'books'. Thus, our lives are being kept track of. Just as there are rewards or lack for Believers, there are also "many" or "few" -stripes- of judgment. (Lk12:47-48) How that all works out in a place like the Lake of Fire, I don't know...but this is God's way.

Now, please understand: the Lake of Fire was never originally intended for humanity. It was designed for the "devil and his angels". (Mt25:41) But

when man rebelled against God, and chose to follow satan, what he didn't realize at first, but will come to understand, is that he also chose satan's consequences. God's dwelling is Heaven (1Ki8:30), and so when Jesus fulfills His promise to "receive" the Believer to Himself, that where He is, there will His believers be (Jn14:3); the contrary matter is also true, those who chose instead to believe in satan, go where he goes.

But many object, complaining, "God is not fair to -torture- a person endlessly forever". Well, again: If a person who trusts in God goes to where God is, Heaven (and wouldn't people say -that- is 'fair?'); then is it not equally fair for those who chose to follow satan, to go where he is? Is that not 'fair'? If the one is fair, so is the other. You cannot follow satan, and then in the end complain that you are not getting the benefits of having followed God. It doesn't work that way. You cannot have it both ways. Jesus said, "No one is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other..." (Mt6:24) If you follow God, you receive God's rewards. If you follow satan, you receive satan's rewards.

Yes, there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt8:12) as "all tribes of the earth will wail because of Him." (1:7) Well, so be it!

Even so, Amen! (1:7)

New Heaven and Earth - (21:1)

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea." (vs1)

There is a false doctrine being promoted by Jack Van Impi (I don't usually name names, but in this case it is necessary, because he has such a slithery deceptive persuasive way about him); I haven't yet heard if anybody else also adheres to it; that the Eternal Life that God gives to His believers is a life on -this- (present) earth, as JVI says, "forever and ever and ever and ever". He connects this with a doctrine called "eight day" (which is adhered to by others). We are not going to go into all those details here, we have already done so in a commentary, "Terra Firma? (eighth day)"

But any such a doctrine is a false doctrine. It both adds to and takes away "from the words of the prophecy of this book" (22:19)

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen1:1) And then God sets out and records the "generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God was making the earth and the heavens," (Gen2:4) The word "generations" being a word denoting "records" or "recorded history".

This earth will have gone through several mutations. Noah's flood, as geological evidence shows, changed the earth's topography, creating the tall mountains, and various watersheds. Then, after the flood, the land mass was split up into the continents. (Gen10:25, 1Ch1:19) And then, as we have seen in this series, through those final judgments the earth is undergoing further changes; perhaps bringing it back closer to its original state of environment again?

This earth will have seen 7000 years of history, corresponding to God's covenants and dispensations. Just as "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2Pe3:8) seven "days" (of thousand years) will have been fulfilled. God's plan of demonstrating man's relationship to sin, and His own redemptive grace, will have been illustrated from every conceivable angle, silencing all arguments. And much as an electronics engineer might experiment with many circuit designs on a bread-board, demonstrating the various characteristics of each set of design parameters, finally -the- design is decided upon, so now, instead of functioning with the bread-board, a totally 'new' circuit board is designed and built to conform to that final design. The 'betas' are all finished being troubleshot ("troubleshoot"?), and this, now, is the final 'version' release. Not that God needs it (He is omniscient), but to prove to all the hosts of creation (the "cloud of witnesses" Heb12:1)... all the "bugs" are now worked out. No more prototyping is needed. No more 'what-ifs?' (Job1:9-12,etc) This is the 'final' release. Circuit boards are mass-

produced, software is burned and packaged onto CDs, the manuals go-to-press.

So...once the final edition is produced, and tested for production integrity, the engineer goes through his computer, doing some 'house-cleaning'. All those old trial/test files are no longer needed. Delete them. All those old bread boards are all encrusted with solder, jumpers, lifted traces where things were cut-and-soldered. Throw them out. The files of the rough drafts are now no longer needed. Delete them. Where the workshop shelves were cluttered with zillions of prototypes and parts, they've been cleaned out, and the new shiny shrink-wrapped packages glisten in the light.

Thus...for those who wish to remain on -this- earth "forever and ever and ever"? Well, if that is their wish, they will "pass away" along with it. But God is creating "all things new" (vs5) Can it be any clearer!

How is He getting rid of the old? "...the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with intense burning; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." (2Pt3:10)

Until the advent of man's understanding of nuclear energy, the unbeliever scoffed at this passage. How-in-the-world is the universe going to be "burned" up?! Sand doesn't burn. Steel doesn't burn. Well, God-inspired Peter wrote that the "elements" will be dissolved. That's the basis of nuclear energy release. God is going to dissolve this universe at the 'elemental' level. "...the 'form' of this world is passing away" (1co7:31) What is the nature of the new heavens and earth? Well, the resurrection and rapture changes the mortal body of dust into a "spiritual body". (1co15:44) God does not give us the details; but it would seem apparent that some sort of similar change happens to physical matter? Where, in this creation, does anybody see gold like "transparent glass"? (21:21) It's a new kind (form) of gold!

70% of this earth is covered by oceans. The new earth has no sea. The New Jerusalem is a 'cube' measuring close to 1400 miles each way. We've observed this before: were an attempt made to place such a city on -this- earth, it would be, proportionately, like peeling the shell off an unboiled chicken egg, leaving the 'skin' as a covering over the yolk/white, suspending this in weightlessness, and hoping that a small vehicle wheel lug nut would adhere to the edge of it without obliterating the egg. Thus, if nothing else, the new earth has to be -considerably- BIGGER than this present earth. Also, if the New Jerusalem extends 1400 miles 'up', something would need to be done about the atmosphere, because presently "space" begins at around 60-70 miles up; breathable air is only about 2-3 miles up. (depending on the individual's physiology)

"And all the host of the heavens shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; and all their host shall wither, as a leaf withers off

the vine, and as fruit falling from the fig tree." (Is34:4) That's -this- old earth, filled with sin. We are promised that the "former things have passed away". (vs4) How can we "forget" (Is65:17) this old, if we were still living on it, with all the fossils and relics of its remembrance?

Thus: "...we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." (2Pe3:13)

New Jerusalem - (21:2-27)

"And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (vs2)

As, throughout this series, let's repeat: Please read this entire passage for yourselves. If we were to cover everything, word-by-word, this would be at least a two-year series. But that's not what the Lord has burdened. We talk about the highlights, and assume the Holy Spirit is also teaching you many things, from your reading, that these studies are not necessarily intended to cover. You can easily read about the precious stones and pearls for yourselves.

First, and foremost, it is proclaimed: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" (vs3)

This is really all that God wanted, all-along. Today's unbelieving scoffers rail against God, as being a cruel tyrant, a vengeful one who allegedly 'delights' in torturing people; and on-and-on their taunts go. But when God created -this- creation, it says that when He had finished at the end of the 6th day, He took a step back and had a look at what He had created, and pronounced it "extremely good" (Gen1:31) He had made man "in His own image" (Gen1:27) In other words, somebody with whom to fellowship.

But then, man decided to follow the serpent. Sin became the underlying root to that relationship. So, sin needed to be punished. But to those who receive His salvation through Jesus Christ, He "gave the authority to become children of God, to those believing in His name" (Jn1:12) He who "overcomes shall inherit all things" and becomes God's son. (vs7)

Now, through 7000 years, those seeking after God have been "tested" to see of what sort they are. (1co3:13) Those that are part of the New Jerusalem have been proven to be genuine...the real thing.

Their testing has resulted in tears; God is wiping those away. Those who died, sometimes torturously due to persecution; there is now no more death. No more sorrow, crying, screaming. Many have died in agonizing pain at their martyrdom; there is no more pain. The former things have passed away...they are no more. Everything is "new". (vs4-5)

And notice God's 'seal' upon this promise. "Write" (record it): these are "true and faithful" words. God's promise: This is how it will be; and I'm not lying. This is a promise; not to be broken. And as if to say: This is My signature, the One making this promise... "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending" (vs6) God cannot swear by a greater, because there is no greater, so He swears by Himself. (Heb6:13)

But...

In amongst all these wonderful things, the word "but" is ominous, don't you think! Jesus, in His earthly ministry, spoke of hell, with warnings to avoid it, a -lot- more times than He spoke of Heaven. In similar fashion, this book speaks a -lot- more of God's wrath and judgment, than it does about the pleasant joys of forever for believers. But even here, the relatively shorter final two chapters (out of 22), where we are talking about the 'new' creation and Jerusalem, lest anybody be confused, and think that, even though they have not repented before God and received Jesus' salvation, that they (somehow) are privy to this glory, another warning. There used to be an old Negro spiritual that said, "Everybody talkin' 'bout heaven ain't goin' there". Well, this verse is included, to make sure you understand, "Everybody -reading- about the new Jerusalem ain't goin' there". Just because you are feeling all 'blessed' at reading this, is no guarantee you are invited, if you have refused to repent and believe. Notice who does -not- reside in this new creation:

"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, prostitutes, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death". (vs8)

Does not pretty much every sin a person may commit, fit into one of these categories? A person who -is- one of these....has not been cleansed by Jesus' blood through the "washing of regeneration". (Tit3:5) They go to the Lake of Fire, the second death. But the one who has "overcome" (vs7) through the "blood of the Lamb" (12:11) is part of the New Jerusalem, and partakes in the joys enumerated.

Further, notice that there is no temple. (vs22) What was the function of the temple? of the priests? of the sacrifices? Advocacy between man and God. In the O.T. they slaughtered animals. (book of Hebrews) Once Jesus died, Jesus became our -direct- "advocate". (1Jn2:1, Rom8:34) As long as we are in these bodies of "flesh and blood" that are not able to "inherit the kingdom of God" (1co15:50) our hearts might be cleansed from an evil conscience (Heb10:22), but our feet get dirty while walking in this evil world, and need to be washed. (Jn13:10) But in the New Jerusalem, we have our new changed incorrupted bodies. We have no more trace of sin. Advocacy is no longer needed. A temple and altar are no longer necessary to plead for God's mercy. As the song says, there is "nothing between my soul and the Savior".

No more scorching sun, nor frosty moon. "God [who] is light" (1Jn1:5) illuminates everything.

And this next part, I will confess, is a mystery to me. It speaks of the "nations of those who are saved" coming and going. And if God reigns and has had all authority returned to Him by Christ (1co15:28), who are these "kings" of the earth? (vs24) Are they the ones who were -more- "faithful"

and were given authority over "ten cities", etc? (Lk19:17) And so, the ones they are kings over, the ones who had been less faithful, but were, nevertheless, saved? I don't know. The passage doesn't tell us. Just...that there are nations coming and going to the New Jerusalem; and if it is a new earth, would it not make sense, then, that the majority of its population live throughout this new earth?

This is John's dream; he was carried away "in the Spirit" to a high mountain to see this. (vs10) Dreams, as retold to others, never convey the totality of what the dreamer saw. And the description takes up scarcely a few sentences. Obviously, there is sooo much that is not told.

But...again... If you're not saved, don't be drooling over it. It's not for you. It is a pure, sinless and holy place.

And "..there shall BY NO MEANS enter it anything that defiles, or produces an abomination or a lie, but -ONLY- those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Life - (22:1-5)

"And he showed me a pure river of Water of Life, clear as crystal, going forth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (vs1)

Today there are so many fads, particularly where (bottled) water is concerned. I find it incredible that people -actually- 'pay' the kinds of money they do for...WATER! And as the reports have shown (the ones I've seen), the water in those bottles might be pure, or it might not be. In many (most?) cases, it might not even be all that different from what one would get from the tap. Yes, at home and at work I have bottled water, too. I take a bottle over to the tap, fill it up, and put it in the fridge so it will be cool for drinking. It's water in-a-bottle; that qualifies as "bottled" water...right? It just doesn't say "Dasani" on its label.

But, there is nothing like a drink of cold water on a hot day.

What is even better, is to be some places in the mountains where water is running sparkly clear. I know... in some places water runs through layers of minerals that adds a strange taste. But over on the other side of the state here, in the northern Cascade mountains, I remember years ago when I worked for that logging company that one summer, the water that came running out of those hills was the -BEST- I remember ever having tasted. We would fill our canteens, and leave them under the running water to keep them cool, and when we needed a drink...there was absolutely NOTHING LIKE IT!

Whenever I read this passage, that is the kind of image I get in my mind. And then, reminding myself that this is the Water of Life, coming from God's throne, realize it's gotta be so-much-better than that water from the Cascades!!

Now, from this water grows the Tree of Life. Is this the -same- "Tree of Life" that was in the Garden of Eden? You see...the perfection God had created for Eden, He has restored. And seeing as how there is "no more curse"...what was the curse? When you disobey, you shall "die the death" (Gen2:17)...for those redeemed by the Lamb, there is "no more death" (21:4)...there is now no longer the cherubim with the flaming sword keeping man away from the Tree of Life. (Gen3:24) There is free access to the tree. There is "right" to the Tree of Life. (vs14) It is "OKay" to eat from it.

The tree, of course, has fruit each month.

But then, here's another mystery I haven't quite figured out. And the answer to this may likely be related to that earlier question about the "nations" (21:24) It says: "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the

nations" (vs2) If the new earth and Jerusalem are perfect and without corruption, why should any sort of "healing" even be necessary?

Without anything else in Scripture to provide a suggestion, considering how, also, nothing is said about the nations of the Millennium, of those who did -not- follow satan (Gog/Magog) in that last rebellion, who thus would have been obedient to Christ...nothing is said about death-and-resurrection for them. Nothing is spelled out (to us) about the nature of 'their' rewards. When the old is destroyed, and the new established, do they simply jump from one to the other? And so, if they were originally part of this earth, would this healing be related to whatever was associated with this earth, that they carry-over? We are also not told if there is still disease during the millennium, etc. A -lot- of unanswered mysteries.

In the same way the O.T. saints were given a glimpse of the Church age, but it wasn't explained to them nor to the angels (1Pe1:10-12), would it be safe to understand that, in similar fashion, we are given a glimpse of the Millennium, and beyond, but not the details. 'Seems reasonable to me. If we can't even always get-it-right (with our own lives) in this life, why should we be worrying about that which is to come in the next periods of time? Like Jesus said to Peter, you never mind about John, "You follow Me." (Jn21:22) So... if some famous teacher is presuming to 'know-it-all' and is declaring it, you can be pretty sure he is lying...he doesn't know nearly as much as he thinks he does.

But just like the saints of dispensations-past, the -label- is still the same. "His name shall be on their foreheads" (vs4, 14:1)

Faithful Words - (22:6-20)

"And he said to me, These Words are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servant the things which must quickly come to pass. Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who keeps the Words of the Prophecy of this Book." (vs6-7)

There are several things we might look at in this passage:

Jesus Christ -is- coming. And when we see the 'leaves' shooting forth buds in the manner of the things recorded in this book, it is as Jesus said, "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors." (Mt24:33) Jesus promised to "go and prepare a place" for the Believers, and He also promised to "...come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (Jn14:3) When we see the things recorded, happening, we know His coming is soon.

This book, and the whole of Scriptures, is a record; and it is complete-finished; "the time is at hand"(vs10) Remember: John was told to write about "the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things" (1:19) Scripture starts out "in the beginning" (Gen1:1), and God proclaims, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God was making the earth and the heavens," (Gen2:4) This Book is a record of the events on -this- earth, with its associated heavens. We are given a hint that, 'before' the earth was created, the angels must have existed: for them to 'sing together' and 'shout for joy' when God created it. (Job38:4-7) And in the last few lessons we are given the mere slightest glimpse at what follows: to realize that if we die, that is not -the- end, but there is more to follow; that we don't simply disappear into oblivion; there -is- something that follows, and for those who obey God, it is utterly unspeakably fantastic.

But the recording of this earth's history is now 'complete'. "These words are faithful and true". This is the extent of what God intends to inform us at this point. If a person adds to them, to him are added the curses found in the book. (vs18) As Paul says about those who would bring around a different "gospel", that they are "accursed". (Ga1:8-9) even if brought by an angel. The Gospel has been (fully) given "once for all" (Ju1:3)

It is even accurate in a scientific sense. Early-on the Bible proclaimed, "..the soul of the flesh is in the blood.." (Le17:11) and man scoffed; until perhaps a decade or two ago (I forget exactly), suddenly modern medicine made a 'discovery' and proclaimed that the essence of a person's life is in their blood. Man through the so-called 'dark ages' proclaimed that the "earth is flat", but the Bible already proclaimed the "circle of the earth". (Is40:22) If a scientific thinker were to proclaim that the earth rotates on its axis, and also orbits around the sun, they would have been burned-at-the-stake for heresy; by the RCC/Babylon church which deliberately kept the

Bible out of common hands, and proclaimed the earth was "flat". These are only a couple examples; there are many more related to the flood and evolution, etc.

Do not seal the words of the Prophecy of this book. In other words: proclaim it. It is not to be, as Babylon/RCC did for centuries, hidden away and made "illegal" to read. At various times in history the RCC went about destroying any copies of the Scriptures they might find in 'lay' hands.

There are rewards and judgments, based on how this book is treated. If a person "adds" to the Book, the plagues written are added to him. If a person takes away from the Book, from him is taken away Eternal Life. (vs18-19) There is a cult called KJ-onlyism, which adheres to the KJV of 1611. The 1611 edition "added" books to the Scripture, also known as the Apocrypha. These are the "added" words from RCC/Babylon. To them will be added the plagues recorded. And those who cling to the 1611 are accursed. (Ga1:8-9) In more recent years many translations have come out that have "removed" words and phrases here and there, detracting from God's essence, His provided salvation, debasing Israel, etc. From them is removed Eternal Life.

But... "Blessed is he who keeps the Words of the Prophecy of this Book" (vs7)

But now the "time is at hand" (vs10b)...and that's it. Whatever status things are, that's what they remain. A righteous person remains righteous; a sinner remains a sinner. God's pronouncement of the matter: "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. (vs11)

As Christ comes, His rewards are given according to "what his work shall be" (vs12) Based on what? Keeping the "Words of the prophecy of this Book" (vs7)

So many are not content with God's Word, the Scriptures, the Bible. They are always lusting out after 'famous' speakers and authors. They do not trust God's Word to mean what it says, without the commentary of the (so-called) 'church fathers'. When their lust wants to do something the Scriptures call "sin", they bounce from church-to-church until they find a congregation that agrees with their immorality. But in view of what's just been shown us in this book, those people are "outside", pounding on the door, yelling out "Lord, open to us", but He is replying, "Truly I say to you, I do not know you" (Mt25:11-12)

Today, people don't like what they term 'name-calling'; but notice what God calls them: "...dogs and sorcerers and prostitutes and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and produces a lie" (vs15) 'You callin' me a dog? 'You callin me a liar? ...as though the person is then supposed to shrivel away in embarrassment... Well...-YES!

Notice just 'who' is making these statements: "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify these things to you, to the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." (vs16) Messianists today, typically, claim that the Church is rooted into Israel. But they also have rejected their Messiah. They, Israel, are nothing so special, except that God chose them. (De9:4-6,7:6) Yes, Jesus sprang forth from David, and succeeds to his throne. (Is9:6-7) But notice that He is called the "Root of Jesse" (Is11:10, Rom15:12) Yes, He proclaimed: "before Abraham came to be, I AM" (Jn8:58); and He also "humbled Himself" and came in the form of man, from the lineage of Jesse and David, to save us. (Php2:8)

He is the one of whom it is written, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn1:1) The Word of God recording the Word of God for us to read and obey proclaiming: The time is at hand. The Word has been given. Don't mess with it. Mess with it at the peril of your eternal soul.

But "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (vs14)

Invitation - (22:17)

And so, in-amongst all these warnings and proclamations of the entity of God's Word, the invitation is given:

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him who hears say, Come. And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take of the Water of Life freely." (vs17)

Ever since the beginning, when Adam and Eve sinned, God has been reaching out to man. To Adam He called out, "Where are you?" (Gen3:9) Throughout the O.T. to Israel God was continually sending His prophets "rising early and sending" (Jer25:4) and pleading, "I take no delight in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! For why will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezk33:11) Jesus came as a man and invited, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Mt11:28) "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mt10:14) God, throughout the years, overlooked our ignorance "but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Ac17:30) Paul yearned: "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am (a Christian), except for these bonds." (Ac26:29)

Forget that false doctrine of the reformation called "irresistible grace" that teaches that, when God calls, a person cannot BUT help coming to salvation. There is that other doctrine that states that God set it all up at the beginning, going "eeny meeny mynee moe...I pick you and you and you and you" and the rest of you, I give you no choice, you can never be saved, because I don't want you. The verses just quoted in the above paragraph, do they sound anything like these doctrines?

"The Lord is...longsuffering toward us, not having purposed that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2Pet3:9)

Also, do you find anything in Scripture like the doctrines of RCC/Babylon, where a person must, to atone for their sins, "say 10 hail mary's", or walk with pebbles in your shoes, or kneel up the steps to the statue of Ishtar and kiss her toes, or...??? When Simon tries to pay money for God's gift of the Holy Spirit, what did Peter reply? "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!" (Ac8:20)

And this is how God's Word is proclaimed here: "For we are not, as so many, peddling the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ, in the sight of God." (2co2:17)

Jesus says, "I will give of the fountain of the Water of Life freely to him who thirsts" (21:6) "For by grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the -GIFT- of God; not of works, that no one should boast." (Eph2:8-9)

"Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat. Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Is55:1)

"He who testifies to these things says, Surely I am coming quickly" (vs20)

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Addendum:

False "Jews" or "Christians"?

QUESTION:

I notice in your lesson you referred to those the Bible calls false Jews as false Christians...you reasoning on this?

ANSWER:

First of all, it should be remembered that the early Church -was- "Jewish". Pentecost in Acts ch2 was one of the annual Jewish feasts that they celebrated each year. (Lev23:15-21) And if you notice of all the Jewish feasts, if I recall correctly, this is the only feast where the bread was -with-leaven, (vs17) signifying the 'spreading' of the Holy Spirit into all Believers; and what would also result in the world being "turned upside down" (Acts17:6) with the spread of the Gospel. Acts ch2 was a "Jewish" event, fulfilling "Jewish" law.

But also notice in connection with that feast (culmination of Firstfruits, having begun with waving the sheaf the day after the Sabbath of the Passover (vs11) signifying Jesus' resurrection as the "Firstfruit" - 1Cor15:20,23), that they were to leave "gleanings" (vs22) for the "poor and for the -alien-".

Notice that Paul says of Gentiles, "..at that time you were without Christ, being -aliens- from the commonwealth of Israel." (Eph2:12) When Gentiles were given the Gospel, that was fulfillment of those "gleanings" Israel left in their fields year after year. We have been brought "near by the blood of Christ." (vs13)

Some people say that Romans was written to the -Jews- residing in Rome. However, Paul's yearnings in ch9 sound like Israel is 'third person' in relationship to those to whom he is writing. So, assuming he wrote it to Gentiles, notice his wording about that concept we often label in these writings as "True Believer": "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly..but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart; in spirit and not in letter." (~Rom2:28-29) ..as he again says, "..not all those of Israel are Israel." (Rom9:6) As he ties all Believers together, both Jew and Greek as "Abraham's seed" through "faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal3:26-29)

If Israel had received Jesus, then the terms "Judaism" and "Christianity" would be synonymous today. But when "He came to His own..His own received Him not." (Jn1:11) And so the "salvation of God [was] sent to the Gentiles..." (Acts28:28, Rom11:17) As Paul affirms, God's purpose was that Israel should be a "light to the nations" (Acts13:47, Is49:6) as they were supposed to proclaim Christ. But instead of letting Christ's light shine,

through their "good works" (Mt5:16, Heb10:24), they asked Pilate to have Him crucified. And once the Church began after Pentecost was fulfilled at the coming of the Holy Spirit, they continually persecuted the Church.

All the missionary journeys in Acts were carried out by Jews. Even Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, himself was a Jew. When they spread out going to new places, they always went first to the synagogues to proclaim to Jews. But it was the Jews in these places that stirred up the crowds to persecute their fellow-Jewish missionaries. (Acts13:45,50, 14:2,19, 17:5,13, etc)

When persecution scattered the Church (Acts8:4), they finally got out to where Gentiles were also hearing the Word. But when "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts11:26) the leaders there were still primarily Jewish Believers.

When these letters to the Seven Churches were written, the primary Church leadership is still Jewish. The large Roman "church" structure has not yet come into being. John, the writer, is Jewish. According to the primary Jewish hierarchy of the day, this new entity the "Church" (believing in Jesus Christ) was a rebel faction. You see, just like today, the early Believers tried to work within the organized structure as they went into the synagogues, but were hounded and persecuted.

Today, True Believers who try to work within the organization are hounded and persecuted, just like back then. Back then, the primary structure was "Jewish". After centuries of Jewish dispersion, the primary structure is Gentile, and called, "the church".

If we remember the "Intro" to this series, part of the understanding of these letters was as they were written to -those- seven churches in Asia Minor, at the time John wrote them. Those entities don't exist today. But those seven characteristics do. We are observing the seven as they exist today. Then, the entity that was supposed to be Godly, but was apostate, was "Jew". Today, it is "Christian".

[Note to newer subscribers: ...please understand that God's work with Israel is not finished. He will restore them. (Rom11:26, Jer31:31-34) During the time of Wrath, after the Church has been removed. For more on this at the website please refer to TopicSearch keyword "church & Israel"]

Where do -YOU- stand?

EDITORIAL:

It's one thing to look at "them"... whoever "them" is. But what about "you" and "me"? There is a series in the website's Library on the "Seven Churches" that was mailed originally several years ago, and re-ran at the beginning of this year. Everyone of us who claims to be a "Christian" falls into one of the seven categories. Let's review them briefly.

EPHESUS:

This is the KJV-only, separated, soul-winning, Bible-thumping, land-mark, independent, Bible "baptist"; and any others like them. They engage in "discernment" ministries of ferreting out the false and exposing it. They are "testing those who say they are apostles and are not" (Rev2:2) And this is -good-. But they lack their "first love". They typically hold to "once saved-always saved", but ignore where it says they have "-LEFT- their first love". Notice it doesn't say they "lost" their salvation... they -LEFT-. Many of them also vehemently proclaim that "repentance is a work", thus, repentance is "not part of" salvation... apparently missing the exhortation to REPENT.

THE EXHORTATION:

"Remember from where you have fallen; REPENT... or else..." (2:5)

As a -group- entity, they will NOT be invited, "Come up here!"

SMYRNA:

Martyrs for Jesus Christ. These are not victims of the politics of the catholic-protestant wars of the middle ages. These are not victims of the Lebanese-christian conflicts of the 20th century. These are not victims of the catholic-protestant conflicts of N.Ireland. These are not even necessarily the victims of modern Islamic persecutions. Although, in all of these cases, there are sure to have been -some- "individuals" who also 'happened to be' Believers in Jesus Christ. Even though Israel is God's "chosen/elect" nation, these are not even the victims of the Nazi holocaust. Until Christ returns and their hearts are changed (Jer31:31-34) and purified (Mal3:3), "most" of Israel are not presently righteously "pleasing" to God. (1Cor10:5)

These are those who were in "the church" characterized as the "synagogue of satan". (2:9) A church/synagogue claiming to be of God, but persecuting the True Believers. (Jn16:2-3) These are those who faithfully stood upon God's Word, even though the pastor/s were promoting themselves through their programs. They were ousted from churches

(some of those, even, of Ephesus) for their faithfulness; and depending on the time of history, church and politics, were even killed.

THE EXHORTATION:

Do not be afraid of what will come.
Be faithful unto death (vs10)
--NO CONDEMNATION

As a -group- entity, the 'synagogue of satan' from Smyrna will NOT be invited, "Come up here!"

PERGAMOS:

This is "christendom". In the series we asked if it's possible to be in the Catholic and/or Mormon churches, and also be a Christian. We concluded that it -is- possible, because each of these entities contain 'elements' of Truth. They each have the Bible, and salvation comes through "hearing the Word of God". (Rom10:17) These are all the various denominations that worship at their "altars", whatever their rituals and liturgies might be. Their furnishings are replete with pagan symbols and expressions. Within these groups there are those who think they are Christians, but remain, thinking they can change the system. In most cases they see nothing wrong with what is going on.

THE EXHORTATION:

REPENT... or else...

As a -group- entity, they will NOT be invited, "Come up here!"

THYATIRA:

The very seat of the Roman catholic church. Utterly corrupt. Destined for God's judgment.

THE EXHORTATION:

To the faithful "individuals" within it, "Hold fast what you have till I come."
(2:25)

As a -group- entity, they will NOT be invited, "Come up here!"
"Repentance" isn't even an option for the entity. It will be destroyed.
(Rev17-18)

SARDIS:

This is the Pretend Church. But are dead. They also do not believe in the Rapture. (3:3) They have all the trappings, but no reality.

THE EXHORTATION:

REPENT... or I will come upon you..!

As a -group- entity, they will NOT be invited, "Come up here!"
Only the "few" individuals whose "garments" have not been defiled (3:4)

PHILADELPHIA:

The faithful Church. Those who have persecuted this entity will be made to "come and worship before [their] feet". (3:9) What God has intended in judgment for the world is not intended for this entity. (vs10) This is the collection of "individuals" from all the other entities who have been faithful, but who are not martyred. Yes, they have had the "open doors", but they have also received taunts from the pretend church.

THE EXHORTATION:

"Hold fast what you have..." Continue persevering!

--NO CONDEMNATION!

As a -group- entity, this group -WILL- be invited, "Come up here!" It will be in God's temple. (3:12)

LAODICEA:

This is Charismania and its relatives...the current apostasy all rolled into one. There are -NO- "individuals" in this group. They are -totally- ready to be "vomited" out.

THE EXHORTATION:

REPENT --NO PRAISE

As a -group- entity, they will NOT be invited, "Come up here!"

DEAR READER:

Of which entity are you? Philadelphia or Laodicea? While we can look around and see various subtleties of the preceding 'five', each (live)

"individual" claiming a connection to christendom essentially finds himself in either Philadelphia or Laodicea.

Notice that the choices (please read these two chapters, Rev 23) are either 1) Life with Christ and God in His kingdom and His temple, or 2) Being removed as an entity with God's label, being thrown out, being vomited out, being destroyed.

If the entity was not found pleasing to God, what is the exhortation? Believe the Gospel? Make a commitment? Pray? You know, that's what the modern apostasy is telling people to do. They tell people to "have faith", and "believe". Appropriate the "power of prayer". And that's -ALL- they tell people to do. Apparently they didn't read this passage..!

The repeated exhortation is to... --REPENT--

Much of the apostasy also says that you need to believe "first"..and that, once you've become a Christian, -then- you repent. There are also those who say you don't need to be "sorry" or "humbled" to be saved. I guess they missed, "For Godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation.." (2Cor7:10) Notice the order? "Lament and mourn and weep! Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (Jas4:9-10) When one sees one's utter sinfulness, they are "cut to the heart" (Ac2:37) with the conviction (Jn16:8) of their sin. They repent (Ac2:38), and then "receive" (Jn1:12) God's forgiveness.

Thus, the exhortation to the unbelieving churches is the first thing they need to do, "Repent". Once the sinner does that, the Lord takes care of the SAVING. But if the rebellion is so strong, what good does it do to present the Gospel? All of these churches, except the martyrs of Smyrna and the faithful of Philadelphia are into rebellion and sin of all sorts. They are blaspheming God, killing and persecuting His followers, worshiping satan and teaching "doctrines of demons". (1Tm4:1, Rev2:24) Of what good is the Gospel to them? And since they have the label "church", they actually -know- the Gospel. Ephesus knows all about "sola fide", and the catholic and mormon churches have the Bible and know about Jesus Christ dying on the cross. But they are under the condemnation of "or else.." The Gospel they proclaim is not saving them. They need to REPENT.

The preceding Q/A begins by discussing the Rapture. You know, another error I was reminded of recently is regarding 'how' they perceive that God is going to make the kingdoms of this world into His own. They begin with the premise of God ruling from Zion. (Ps110:2) They say Zion is the "Church", and continue on with "your people shall be volunteers" (vs3) to do God's work. They say that Christ won't come back to earth until the "Church" has finished all God's work of rooting out the evil, and making the earth into a righteous place. Again... they miss the fact that Israel and the Church are not the same, and that Christ, Himself, will be coming and

waging war from His "white horse" (Rev19:11) [Editor: I just discovered the other day that the translator of the MKJV, even, included a chapter heading for Ps83 in the 1999 edition, labeling it as being about the "Church"! Well...he follows "calvin" and they specialize in the authors of the reformation. What else would one expect!]

Dear reader, you may think the 'tone' of this mailing is "harsh", but this is a matter of some urgency. The Lord's coming is soon! You can pretend, if you wish, that the Lord won't come until the Church as made ready for Him; even though He clearly promised to "prepare a place" for the Believer. (Jn14:2) You can pretend that you don't need to repent. You can pretend that you are a "Christian" because you have known the Lord 'all your life', or made a committment at some point, and that you "believe", or that you were suddenly one time overwhelmed by His presence and thus knew you were saved. And you can refuse the pleas of the small handful of God's messengers, to humble yourself before God. You can rest on the historical doctrines of the "great men" who taught "sola fide". But you, then, can also be recipient of God's "...or else.."

Yes, He is coming soon. If you REFUSE TO heed His exhortation to REPENT, and find that He came and you are left behind, you can pretty much kiss your chances 'good bye' that you can -then- be saved. God is going to "send..strong delusion" IN ORDER THAT you will "believe the lie". Why? "Because [you] -DID- NOT receive the love of the truth, that [you] might be saved" (2Th2:10-11) God is quite purposeful in this statement. If you continue in your rejection of His truth -now-, -then- it will be too late. Where He presently has "not purposed" for you to perish (2Pt3:9), -then- He will... "..THAT they all may be condemned who DID NOT believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2Th2:12) You had your chance, but REFUSED to heed. Then, God is going to SEE TO IT that you don't, "...for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still.." (Rev22:10-11)

That is why it says, "...now is the day of salvation." (2Cor6:2b) If you REFUSE to repent now, when you KNOW BETTER, Christ will come to call the Believers to Himself, and you will be left standing outside the door, knocking, and He will deny ever knowing you. (Mt7:23, Lk13:25)

It's not that you "don't know", you who cling to the Scriptures. You know. But your pride keeps you from humbling yourself before God. To repent requires humility; and not very many people are willing to be humbled. Even the word "humbled" has come to mean the opposite of its true meaning, in these days. When accolades are heaped upon somebody, when they get up to acknowledge the praise, they proclaim that they are "humbled"; while, meanwhile, their hearts are bursting, brimming with PRIDE. Most people are following satan who promised, "you shall be like God" (Gen3:5), as that was his clamor, "I will be like the Most High" (Is14:14) For a long time when people would object to the Scriptural exhortations to repent I figured Repentance was not understood. [If you

don't understand it because you are a more recent subscriber, please check it out at the website: TopicSearch -> "repentance". You will find a - multitude- of writings there, approaching the subject from every-which-way] But a month or two ago the Lord made me see, one day, that the problem is not any kind of lack of understanding. The understanding in individual hearts is -quite- clear. But that is the problem... the HEART. Pride.

The choice is yours. But don't dilly dally around! You haven't much time left! Repent... or else...!

Amen!

Revelation 4:1 not the Rapture?

READER QUESTION:

Rev. 4:1 is often quoted as being the last time the church is mentioned until after the tribulation. I cannot for the life of me understand how anyone get "church" out of this verse. It is specifically speaking about JOHN being "caught up" not the Church. What do you think?

VW ANSWER:

You are quite correct in saying that it was "John" who was being called up in that verse.

First of all, we should realize that the book of Revelation combines the figurative and literal. If we also read Daniel, we see that prophecy is full of images/pictures. World empires portrayed as statues, trees, animals, horns, toes, etc.

The messages to the "churches" are depicted via "lampstands" and "stars", etc. ch1 So, we are functioning in the realm of images. Chs 2-3 have spoken of the seven churches. The Church is something that Christ established on this earth. He finishes His discourse to the earthly churches, and then "after these things" (4:1) John sees the door open in "heaven", with the invitation to "Come up here.." in order to be shown what is to happen "after this". In other words, there is what we know from many other studies, as the "Church age". At some point in time the Church Age comes to an end, and as John, a Believer, is called up into heaven, he is then shown what happens -after- the Church Age. And as we understand the rest of Scripture about the Rapture, we could conclude that 4:1 is a picture of the Rapture, in its correct sequence... at the end of the Church Age, and before the things "which must take place after this".

With this in mind, we see a certain solemnity regarding just 'who' is going to be raptured. Last week's rerun on "Wrath" expressed how the rapture does NOT include the "hoopla church". The hoopla church is part of "Babylon". When the rapture happens, the hoopla church will remain on earth and receive of the plagues and Babylon's DESTRUCTION, NOT "purifying".

Notice that for most of the 'churches', the warning is given to "repent or else"; they had problems. And by the time we get to Laodicea, God is "vomiting" them out of His mouth. (3:16) And once the letters to the churches are finished, it is only "John" who is called up to Heaven. His vision does not show the "seven churches" -together- going up to Heaven.

Notice that each church entry ends with "He who has an ear"... INDIVIDUALS. Now, the faithful Smyrnan church does not fit, because the faithful ones from there are martyred, "faithful until death" (2:10) They will participate in the Resurrection. The church of Thyatira has "as many as do

not have this (false) doctrine" for whom God gives "no other burden" but the exhortation to "hold fast what you have till I come". And finishes with "-he- who overcomes". INDIVIDUALS (2:24-26) Sardis has "a few names (INDIVIDUALS)..who have not defiled their garments". (3:4) Where Smyrna is the martyred Believers, Philadelphia is the faithful Believers who are kept from the time of Wrath, and are exhorted to "hold fast" (3:11) But by the time God is vomiting Laodicea, there don't even seem to be any individuals left. But ends with "to him (INDIVIDUALS) who overcomes.." (3:21) What so many militantly reject today, is Laodicea's clarion called, "..be zealous and REPENT!" (vs19) If you rebelliously insist that salvation does not include "repentance", God is vomiting you out.

Just as there was the -nation- of Israel, but "most of them" were not pleasing to God; (1Cor10:5) if "most" of them were judged; that means it was the "few" (Mt7:14) who were "Israel of Israel". (Rom9:6)

It seems that the "Church" has the same affliction. Not all "christians" are "Christians". Not all church members are The Church. And so, just as Israel was broken off, so is the (hoopla) church. (Rom11:21) Just as it was the "few" of Israel who were "Jews...of the heart" (Rom2:29), so too, it is "individuals" from the Church Age who will participate in the Rapture.

Thus, it is quite illustratively fitting that -only- John is called up into Heaven in Rev4:1. Out of Sodom it was only Lot and his two daughters. Out of the whole world's population, only eight people survived the flood. The percentage as represented by John -ALONE- is the chilling reality!

Downfall of the Queen of Heaven (Is47)

"Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground. There is no throne for you, O daughter of the Chaldeans. For you shall no more be called tender and delicate...you shall no more be called the Queen of Kingdoms...Now therefore hear this, O voluptuous one, who lives securely; who says in her heart, I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children. But these two things shall come to you in a moment in one day: The loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness for the multitude of your sorceries, and for the great power of your enchantments." (vs1,5,8-9)

Please read this entire chapter for yourselves. But here, in this one chapter we see the downfall of that 'woman'. In Revelation "Babylon" is spoken of. In chs17-18 is recorded the future of its downfall. There are things within those chapters that make us look at the church of Rome. There are also things that make us wonder about the UN, and world commerce, and New York City as being the location where these things are centered. There are some self-proclaimed prophets who suggest that one reason Saddam needs to be gotten rid of is because he has been re-building the old Babylon at its original location. All these details of all those things will come to light as those prophecies are fulfilled.

However, this chapter 47 of Isaiah narrows down very specifically who/what one of the aspects of those prophecies is all about. And it focuses our attention squarely on that woman, "Jezebel". (Rev2:20) Throughout history, in various world-centers, she has been known by various names. After Babel she began to be known as Isis in Egypt. During the days of Israel and her judges and kings, she was known as Ashtaroath (Jug2:13) and Queen of Heaven. (Jer7:18) As the world powers became centered in Greece and Rome, she was called Aphrodite, Libertas, Artemis. And when the Roman empire took on the label "christian", she took on the name "Maria".

Under Roman domain she has been made to be more "pure" seeming, being called the "virgin", and endowed with -perpetual- virginity. While she has been given Jesus' attributes as "advocate" before God, and is not typically thought of in sensual ways, her predecessors were. The so-called "Mary" is portrayed to be a 'holy' advocate. But in her prior mutations, she was a goddess of fertility. When a particularly attractive woman is being especially appreciated, and drooled over by male admirers, one expression the thusly-captivated male might say is, "She's a -goddess-!" As "Christians" who know God's Laws on morality, we understand the concepts of purity and fidelity; and that is part of God's holiness. God's Law required punishment for whoredom, lewdness, lasciviousness. But the pagan goddesses were creatures of lust, allure

and enticement. Prior to the so-called "Mary", many are the depictions of uncovered legs and bared breasts.

The above Scripture quotes are taken from the VW-Edition. The term "voluptuous" is actually what the text says. The goddess of fertility, supposedly responsible for fruitful crops, and endowments to the fruit of the womb; having many children.

Notice God's judgment upon her in vs2. Uncover the veil...a symbol of modesty. Strip off the skirt, bare the thigh. That which she was used to doing for allure, now is forced upon her in judgment. Much like when some women are raped. (Now please, ladies, don't go ballistic on me here! Read this in context.) Yes, many rapists are depraved and would rape anything that would give them pleasure, or boost their power/ego. But how many are the cases where a woman is raped, and she complains about it; but what was her normal behavioral trend? She was used to getting herself up to 'allure' the male, gain the whistles and admiring looks. For what? To be seen in a sexual way, to be seen to be an object of desire to a man, in the bed. And so, a man seeing her 'invitations', "accepts". Only, now, on her own personal whim she decides she doesn't -want- it. Well, sorry lady...as some say about such situations, "You asked for it!" And some do not have much sympathy for such a woman who is abused. She was "out there", exposing herself, smiling and batting her eyelashes in language that men understand to say, "Come and take me." So, a man came and 'took' her. So now she sits there, crying, "I got raped!!" That -terrible- maaan!! It doesn't matter to her that he did what she invited him to do. How about so-called "date-rape"? The girl spends all evening enticing and alluring her male companion; but when the evening ends up going "all-the-way", she complains that she was "raped"! She was spending all evening turning the switches "on", and then has the nerve to complain that he didn't turn it "off". She got exactly what she was after! Or the hussy who was making-the-rounds at the tavern to all the men, sitting on laps, giving out kisses, wiggling various parts of her body suggestively, flirtingly...and then the men collectively gang-rape her. Oh, those "terrible men", right? Well, yes. But also, she spent all evening "asking for it"...so they gave it to her.

Well...you see...regarding the Queen of Heaven...she is going to get exactly what she was enticing others to do. "Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her." (Rev18:6) "Your nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, your shame shall be seen; I will take vengeance and I will not meet you as a man." (Is47:3)

Now how do we know this is speaking of the same one who is now called "Mary"? Rome has another name for "Mary". In their prayers they also call her "Queen of Heaven".

Notice what she says about herself...

She says, "I shall be queen forever" (vs7) And also "who says in her heart, I am, and there is no one else besides me.." (vs8) Are these not God's attributes, which she claims for herself! God -is- Jehovah, the existing One. Satan aspired to be "like the Most High". (Is14:14) But this Queen says, "I am". Is that not how Jesus identified Himself, "before Abraham came to be, I AM". (Jn8:58) That is God's 'memorial' name, "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex3:14) This Queen has sought to totally usurp the Most High, and not only be equal to Him, but to -REPLACE- Him totally. Since God is Someone "else" compared to her, and she claims there is "no one else", she is proclaiming that God does not exist. And, in practice, is this not what the church of Rome has done? They have given Mary Christ's advocacy attributes. They name the name of "Jesus", but they -worship- "Mary", not Christ! The current pope has been quoted saying that Mary has his highest adoration. She is highest on his list. Above Jesus, above the Father...well, the pope is called "father". Not to mention everything else it says in the passage about her occult and demonic connections; that also fits Rome. Whatever the pope proclaims usurps the Scriptures, God's Word.

But notice her downfall. "Therefore evil shall come upon you, and you shall not know its origin. And disaster shall fall upon you, and you shall not be able to cover it over. And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, which you shall not be informed of." (vs11) Notice that Babylon's fall is "in one hour" her "judgment has come". (Rev18:10,17,19) And notice that it is given to the "beast" to destroy her. "And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and consume her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled." (Rev17:16-17) Ah yes...remember above, how God is in control of world powers and kingdoms to His own will and purposes.

Perhaps the current war-drums will address the followers of Allah? But then, Babylon/Rome/Mary/Queen of Heaven will also come crashing down.

And notice who else will receive understanding at her downfall. ".and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the inner thoughts and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works." (Rev2:23)

Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7)

ADJUDICATOR'S DISTINCTIVES--

- Holds seven stars in His right hand
- Walks in midst of the seven golden lampstands

*** I KNOW YOUR WORKS ***

ACCOLADES--

- Labor
- Patience
- Cannot bear those who are evil
- Hate deeds of Nicolaitans
- Tested for false apostles
- Labored and not become weary

CRITICAL EVALUATION--

- Left first love

VERDICT--

- Remember from where you have fallen
- Repent
- Do the first works

CONSEQUENSES--

- Lampstand quickly removed...Unless you Repent

OVERCOMERS--

- Eat from the tree of life, in the midst of Paradise of God

***** HE WHO HAS AN EAR - LET HIM HEAR *****
what the Spirit says to the churches

Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11)

ADJUDICATOR'S DISTINCTIVES--

- The First and The Last
- Was dead, and came to life

*** I KNOW YOUR WORKS ***

ACCOLADES--

- Tribulation
- Poverty...(but you are rich)

CRITICAL EVALUATION--

- None

VERDICT--

- You are about to suffer
- False Jews from synagogue of Satan
- Satan will throw some of you into prison
- You will have tribulation 10 days

ENCOURAGEMENT--

- Do not fear
- Be Faithful until death
- Crown of life

OVERCOMERS--

- Shall not be hurt by the second death

***** HE WHO HAS AN EAR - LET HIM HEAR *****
what the Spirit says to the churches

Pergamos (Revelation 2:12-17)

ADJUDICATOR'S DISTINCTIVES--

-Sharp two-edged sword

*** I KNOW YOUR WORKS ***

ACCOLADES--

-You hold fast My name
-Did not deny My faith
-Martyrdom

CRITICAL EVALUATION--

-Satan's throne, where Satan dwells
-Doctrine of Balaam...stumbling blocks (monetary bribes)
-Eat things sacrificed to idols
-Commit sexual immorality
-Doctrine of the Nicolaitans (license: commit sensual sins)

VERDICT--

-Repent

CONSEQUENCES--

-Fight against them with sword of My mouth

OVERCOMERS--

-Eat hidden manna
-New (secret) name on white stone

***** HE WHO HAS AN EAR - LET HIM HEAR *****
what the Spirit says to the churches

Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29)

ADJUDICATOR'S DISTINCTIVES--

- Son of God
- Eyes like flame of fire
- Feet like fine brass

*** I KNOW YOUR WORKS ***

ACCOLADES--

- Love
- Service
- Faith
- Patience
- Growth

CRITICAL EVALUATION--

- You {allow} Jezebel (calls herself prophetic) to...
 - Teach
 - Seduce My servants to sexual immorality
 - Eat things sacrificed to idols
- Depths of Satan

VERDICT--

- I gave her time to repent...and she did not

CONSEQUENCES--

- Cast into sickbed
- Great tribulation
- Kill her children
- All the churches will know that I search minds & hearts
- Give to each according to your works

TO THE FAITHFUL--

- No other burden
- Hold fast what you have till I come

OVERCOMERS--

- Power over the nations...as received from The Father
- Morning star

***** HE WHO HAS AN EAR - LET HIM HEAR *****
what the Spirit says to the churches

Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)

ADJUDICATOR'S DISTINCTIVES--

- Seven Spirits of God
- Seven stars

*** I KNOW YOUR WORKS ***

ACCOLADES--

- None

CRITICAL EVALUATION--

- Claim to be alive, but you are dead
- Works not perfect before God
- What little remains is ready to die

VERDICT--

- Remember what you have received & heard
- Watch
- Strengthen what remains
- Hold fast
- Repent

CONSEQUENCES--

- I will come upon you as a thief
- You will not know when

A FEW FAITHFUL--

- Not defiled
- Worthy
- Walk with me in white

OVERCOMERS--

- Clothed in white garments
- I will not blot his name from Book of Life
- I will confess his name before My Father
- I will confess his name before His angels

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what the Spirit says to the churches

Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13)

ADJUDICATOR'S DISTINCTIVES--

- Holy
- True
- Key of David
- He who opens & no one shuts, and shuts & no one opens

*** I KNOW YOUR WORKS ***

ACCOLADES--

- Little strength
- Kept My word
- Not denied My name
- Perseverance

CRITICAL EVALUATION--

- None

VERDICT--

- Open door set before you
- False Jews will worship before your feet
- I have loved you
- Kept from the hour of trial
- Hold fast what you have
- No one take your crown

CONSEQUENSES--

- Hour of trial upon the whole world

OVERCOMERS--

- Pillar in the temple of My God
- Go out no more (not be expelled-cast out-forsaken)
- Write on him Name of My God
- Write on him Name of New Jerusalem
- Write on him My new name

***** HE WHO HAS AN EAR - LET HIM HEAR *****
what the Spirit says to the churches

Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22)

ADJUDICATOR'S DISTINCTIVES--

- Amen
- Faithful & True Witness
- Beginning of the creation of God

*** I KNOW YOUR WORKS ***

ACCOLADES--

- None

CRITICAL EVALUATION--

- Lukewarm
- Pride of wealth & self
- Wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked

VERDICT--

- Buy from Me refined gold...that you may be rich
- Buy from Me white garments..that your shame not be revealed
- Buy from Me eye salve.....that you may see
- Be zealous
- Repent

CONSEQUENSES--

- Vomit you out of My mouth
- Rebuke & chastening

INVITATION--

- I love you
- Hear My voice
- Open the door to My knock
- Dine with Me

OVERCOMERS--

- Sit with Me on My throne
- I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne

***** HE WHO HAS AN EAR - LET HIM HEAR *****
what the Spirit says to the churches
