

**The
Revelation
to
Remember**

**Keys for Understanding the
Book of Revelation**



The Revelation to Remember

**Keys for Understanding the
Book of Revelation**



By Stephen P. Troxel

**Published by
Disciple Daily Publishing**

*The Revelation to Remember:
Keys for Understanding the Book of Revelation*

By Stephen P. Troxel

©2012 Disciple Daily Publishing

PO Box 700109

San Antonio, TX 78270

Phone (210) 846-2582

ISBN #: 978-0-9765252-9-5

Paperback format

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012935954

Also available in eBook format:

ISBN #: 978-0-9765252-2-6

REL067060 RELIGION / Christian Theology / Eschatology

REL006680 RELIGION / Biblical Reference / Handbooks

REL006140 RELIGION / Biblical Studies / Prophecy

Permission is required for reproducing or distributing the materials in this book. Contact the following for permission:

Shepherds' Support, Inc.
12500 San Pedro Avenue, Suite 475
San Antonio, Texas 78216
shepherdssupport.org
210.241.5675

Shepherds' Support, Inc., is an international outreach to pastors in the field, offering solid teaching, spiritual refreshment, and mentoring by way of conferences on location around the world.

Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

You may contact the author at: troxels@shepherdssupport.org

Acknowledgements

This book would not have made it into your hands without the help of a couple of people who were very hands-on with the project. Tracy Garza did the initial auditing and a final read-through, making valuable contributions.

Arlie Francis, my good friend and traveling companion for many years, spent hours on this project to see it through to its completion. We have conducted tours together to Israel, Jordan, Greece and Turkey. Arlie and I have also ministered together in many other places. During our times together on the road, he has heard me do overviews on Revelation a number of times, using the keys that I now give to you in this book. Arlie encouraged me to put this into writing and then personally made sure that it happened. So, I give him thanks. With a heart for biblically-based discipleship, Arlie has recently formed a new ministry called Disciple Daily. Information about this work can be found at DiscipleDaily.org. I hope that you will look him up and get involved in the disciple-making process wherever you are. I look forward to many other opportunities of serving, with Arlie, the leaders of the churches around the world.

I also want to thank my beloved and godly wife Connie who has stuck with me (and been stuck with me) for the past 50 years. We married on July 1st, 1962. She

has ministered by my side all over the world and has kept me calm and collected. I am most blessed.

Most of all I thank my Savior, who is the Awesome subject of this book. To Him be all glory and praise.

About the Author

In a sense, we have all been called as full-time ambassadors for Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:20); but there are individuals who feel the call of God upon their lives in a very special way.

In 1957, when I was 14, I had just returned from a Youth for Christ Annual Convention in Indiana, where 10,000 teenagers had gathered. The only speaker I remember was Dr. Bob Pierce, founder and president of World Vision. He spoke on Romans 12:1,2: *"I beg of you brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice..."* It was as though God was speaking personally to me. As a result, I felt drawn to go to the front of the old Billy Sunday Tabernacle there in Winona Lake and present my body to Him. I had trusted Christ around the age of 7, but it was during the summer of 1957 I received "the call."

*"But those who hope in the LORD will
renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint."*

Isaiah 40:31

Two weeks later, I was on a tractor with cultivators in the middle of a 40-acre corn field. Tears began to well

up in my eyes as I watched the corn go through the spades and realized that several months later, the crop would be harvested and we would need to go through the process all over again. I began to see people in those corn stalks—people who were perishing, and I felt the urge to make a difference in their lives.

At that very time, my dad was driving down the road, just checking on me, as was his custom with three sons. Fourteen-year-olds do need to be checked on from time to time! As I approached the fence, I shut the engine down so we could talk. Dad could see I was struggling emotionally and asked me how I was doing. When I shared what I had just experienced, his comment was, “If God calls you to preach, don’t you stoop to be President!” I’m not sure where he’d heard it, but it was so supportive and affirming to me. That sense of being called remained in my heart throughout my high school years.

In April of 1963, my mother died after a lengthy struggle with cancer, then President Kennedy was assassinated in November. Again I was reminded of the brevity of life.

I later transferred from a college in North Carolina to Detroit Bible College, which later became William Tyndale College. One day while in college, one of the maintenance men said to me, “Remember the saying, ‘Some are sent and some just went.’” I had never heard the expression, but again I felt that quiet sense inside that I was being sent. This is what kept me at Wayside

Chapel for 34 years and in the senior pastorate for 41 years.

More recently, I have felt the call to go beyond the boundaries of Wayside Chapel. Several events come to mind that have led to this decision. I have done many conferences in foreign countries over the past 20 years, but I want to share one of those experiences with you. I was part of a team from the States that went to Northern Burma three years ago. The event was a celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Barefoot Doctors ministry. Each service was 6 hours long. Lest your mind run away with you here, only about 1 hour of that was my preaching. Amazingly, I was the first preacher allowed to go there in 42 years.

Following the conference, a dozen or so pastors followed us to the place where we would be eating; they were sad to see the conference end. Through an interpreter, I went around the campfire and asked them who they were, what brought them there, and to just share some things about themselves. I will never forget one 80-year-old pastor, who shared how he had walked 21 days to get there and how he wanted more. I began to sense the call to be a pastor-at-large and to minister wherever God calls me, knowing pastors all over the world need to be encouraged. I also began to feel a sense of urgency about finishing well and responding to passions that God places in our lives.

I recognize that this will not be an easy ministry, that it needs lots of prayer and financial support. You are

welcome to come on board with us, and we will keep you posted.

Pastor Steve

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 - The Revelation of the Son.....	7
Chapters 2 & 3 – The Churches That Be, 4 + 3, ESP, TSP, L	13
Chapter 4 - Heaven’s Open Door, 24 Elders, 4 Creatures & More	27
Chapter 5 - The Lamb’s Alive, All Heaven Does Jive.....	31
Chapter 6 – 6 of 7 Seals Unfixed	36
Chapter 7 - 144,000 On Earth, Plus a Great Multitude in Heaven.....	39
Chapter 8 - 4 of 7 Trumpets Reverberate.....	41
Chapter 9 - The Locusts Dine, 200 Million Kill 1/3 of Mankind	43
Chapter 10 – Indigestion	45
Chapter 11 - 2 Witnesses From Heaven, Plus Trumpet #7	47
Chapter 12 - The 12-Starred Woman’s Travail, Satan Cast Out, But Cannot Prevail.....	50

Chapter 13 - 2 Evil Beasts Appear Upon the Scene	52
Chapter 14 - The Lamb Standing and then Reaping	54
Chapter 15 - The Songs of Moses and of the Lamb Singing	56
Chapter 16 - Seven Bowls Seething	58
Chapter 17 - The Great Harlot, Sitting, Reigning and then Burning	61
Chapter 18 - Great Babylon Falling.....	63
Chapter 19 - Heaven Delighting, Marriage Uniting, the Lamb Comes Fighting	64
Chapter 20 - A Thousand Years of Plenty, Great White Throne Not Funny	67
Chapter 21 - The New Jerusalem, No Need the Sun	69
Revelation 22 - The Curse Is Through, He's Coming For You, Three Warnings Are Due	71
REVIEW	76

The Revelation to Remember

Introduction

This study guide is an attempt to simplify the book of Revelation. It is designed for those who want to know what is in Revelation but cannot take the time to wade through all the commentaries that have been written on this one book alone. I have studied the book of Revelation for years. I have taught through the book at least 20 times, and I have discovered it to be a source of great comfort, strength and encouragement. My prayer is that you will find it helpful as well.

Over the years I have created a memory caption that goes with each chapter. These memory hooks have a rhythmic quality to them that make them easier to remember. Here is an example: **Revelation 1 - The Revelation of the Son**

The purpose of these catchy captions is to give you a handle on what is in each chapter. I believe that you will find these captions useful for your own benefit as well as the benefit of others. I believe that as we draw nearer each day to the end of this age, this book will become more valuable to us. The book of Revelation promises to be a blessing to those who read, hear and

keep the words that are written in it; *“for the time is near”* (Revelation 1:3).

I have had numerous requests over the years to put this study into print form. So, I am responding to this request by prayerfully and carefully dedicating this to The Awesome One Who is the subject of this book. It is also dedicated to the many students I have taught over the years at His Hill Torchbearers School in Comfort, Texas. My students humored me by sitting through twelve hours of lectures on the book. Lastly, I dedicate this to my former church, Wayside Chapel. During my 34 years as their pastor, I took the Wayside family on the same journey through Revelation twice, once for a whole year.

With that said, let me begin the journey again. I invite you to come with me. I encourage you to memorize the titles to each chapter. For extra points you might consider memorizing key verses. For example, Revelation 1: 1, 7, and 19 are key verses you should put into your memory bank.

The subject is the *“apokolupsis”* or the unveiling of Jesus Christ at the end of this age. The book is not called the Revelations, plural, but rather the Revelation, singular, of Jesus Christ. Many are misled into believing that Revelation is a series of judgments that are revealed at the end of this age. But all of these judgments and in fact the greater portion of the book lead up to the revealing of the Son of God who is also the Son of Man. In Revelation 19:11-21, the horrible

carnage that occurs will be put to rest once and for all when He ends all wars and unbelief. “Revelation” is a compound Greek word that means to “take away the covering, to unveil, or to reveal.”

From 1964 to 1967, I was studying at Detroit Bible College and pastoring a church. For a brief time, during my first year, I worked at a Chrysler plant nearby, driving a forklift. I will never forget those glory years in the car industry when each of the big three automakers were bringing out new models that were sportier, or bigger, with more muscle, or in some way better than all before it. The Ford Mustang was the new kid on the block. It was touted as being a revolutionary car. Ford motor company kept it covered with a canvas in the Ford Rotunda until the day of its unveiling. All the news media, photographers, and journalists were in place. When the right moment came, the canvas was pulled away, and there it was in all of its glory. That which had been there for months was finally revealed to the anxiously awaiting world. This gives us an idea of what that moment will be like when He is revealed to the world in all of His glory. And that is the theme of this incredible book of prophecy.

This book is to be understood as verse 1 clearly states, *“to show His servants the things that must shortly take place.”* I have heard pastors over the years say that they will never preach on Revelation because it is too difficult to understand. That reasoning goes against what we read in these opening verses.

When John writes that these things must “*shortly take place*” he uses the Greek word “*taxu.*” We get our English word tachometer from this word. A tachometer is an instrument that indicates the speed of rotation or the number of revolutions per minute. This word does not mean soon, but that when the moment comes it will be as the speed of lightning. “*As lightning comes from the East and flashes to the West, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be*” (Matt. 24:27).

I liken it to the running of the Kentucky Derby. For many weeks before the event we begin to read about the horses, riders, owners, and trainers. Great speculations, and bets, are placed on various horses. People come from all over the world to see the event. Many come to see the hats that the women are wearing. News media converge from every corner of the country. There is much pomp and circumstance. Finally the riders and the horses make their appearances. Before you know it, they are in the gate and they’re off. In just a matter of a couple of minutes the race is finished. Months of preparation lead to the few moments when it is over. All that is in these first 18 chapters leads up to the main event.

There are four commonly held approaches to interpreting the book of Revelation.

First is the **preterist view**, taken from the Latin word meaning “past.” Those who hold to this position believe that the majority of prophecies in the book have already been fulfilled in the past. For example, they might find

their fulfillment under Nero, the Roman emperor from 54-58 AD, or Domitian who terrorized Christ's followers from 81 to 96 AD. In fact, the Apostle John who wrote this book was banished to the Island of Patmos during Domitian's reign. Preterists commonly interpret the two evil beasts of Revelation 13 as being these two emperors. The problem with this view is that it does not fit the facts. If Revelation was understood in this way it would have no meaning for Christians today.

Others have taken the **historically continuous view**, which is basically a span of time—a panoramic view of church history from the time of the Apostle John to the end of the world. Many of the reformers held this view including John Wycliffe, John Calvin, and Martin Luther. The difficulty with this approach is that you cannot make any real sense of Revelation this way. This view contradicts the facts given in verse 1 concerning how Revelation is to be understood. Martin Luther became so frustrated with this approach that he questioned Revelation's inclusion in the biblical canon.

A third view is the **allegorical or spiritualized view** of interpretation. Its roots are in the soil of the school in Alexandria, Egypt. Church fathers like Clement, Origen, and later Augustine and Jerome were known for this approach. They had a tendency to spiritualize everything they did not easily understand. In this view, Revelation simply becomes a conflict between good and evil. Eventually good wins.

There is an old rule of interpretation, which I first heard from one of my professors, Dr. Norm Geisler. It is the golden rule of interpretation. *“Where the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, lest it result in nonsense.”* The problem with each of the three preceding views is that they tend to spiritualize scripture and to not take it literally. Interestingly enough, all the prophecies relating to the first coming of Christ, given by the Old Testament prophets, were fulfilled literally. Why then, can we not assume that the same will be true of the events leading up to His second coming?

The final view, which is the interpretation that I take, is called the **futuristic view**. This view holds that most of this book, from Chapter 4 to the end of the book, speaks of yet future events. Futurists believe that there is a key to understanding Revelation given in 1:19 which states, *“Write these things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.”* Chapter 1 would be *“the things which you have seen,”* which is the Son of Man, in all His glory, depicted as Judge of all mankind at the end of this present age. Chapters 2 and 3 would be *“the things which are,”* the churches and this present church age. Chapters 4 through the end of the book are *“the things which will take place after this.”* After this present Church Age has ended and Christ has returned in the air for His people, His Bride, all that is in Chapter 4 through the end of the book will begin to come to pass.

So now let us take a look at each chapter of the book of Revelation and use the captions as keys. Chapter by chapter, you will be able to commit to memory the events that were, are, and will be.



Chapter 1 - The Revelation of the Son

John gives a greeting or salutation to the seven churches in 1:4. It is on behalf of *“Him who is and who was and who is to come.”* We keep time in three tenses, past, present and future. The One about Whom John is writing transcends all three. Prior to Albert Einstein’s discovery of the theory of relativity in 1905, the world was perceived through the assumption of absolute space-time (Newton’s theory of mechanics). Newton had declared space immovable and used this understanding to illustrate the permanence of God. Einstein’s theory shattered the existing paradigm. Space-time was not absolute, but rather existed relative to each and every observer. God alone stands as the only constant, the only absolute. His existence cannot be fully understood within the constraints of time and space.

God revealed Himself to Moses as the great *“I AM”* in Exodus 3:14. He is the self-existent One who had no beginning and who has no end. In the Gospel of John

Jesus refers to Himself as the great “I AM.” He always has been. He is. And He always will be. The writer of Hebrews in 13:18 speaks of Him in this way: “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*” First century Christians, including the Apostle John, found themselves in very trying and ever-changing circumstances. They needed to know about the eternal constant of the Godhead.

Today, we find ourselves in the midst of changing circumstances that touch political, economic, moral, international, and domestic areas of society. Look at the Middle East. Changes there impact every area of our lives. Nothing seems to stay the same. But in the midst of all this change stands the One who is the Creator and Sustainer of all. He has a plan, and that plan will not be thwarted.

Jesus reminds us in 1:7, “*He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.*” A beautiful picture of this is given to us in Genesis 45, when Joseph who had been mistreated and rejected by his own brothers and sold into Egypt as a slave, revealed himself to his brothers. He was elevated to second in command in all of Egypt. Only Pharaoh was greater in all the land. Likewise, at His second coming, Jesus, who was rejected by most of His own people at His first coming, will be revealed. This verse also speaks of all the tribes of the earth mourning His coming, because of their unbelief.

In 1:8, Jesus refers to Himself in this way, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”* This last word in the Greek is *pantocrator*. It literally means “the one who has His hand on everything.” He is at the controls directing all of history to its final destination.

Cruise ships are popular today. Our first cruise was on the SS Norway, which is no longer in service. In the eighties it was the largest cruise ship on the seven seas. Our cruise was a sportsman’s cruise. Many professional athletes were on board to entertain the passengers. Activities included volleyball, swimming, hitting golf balls into the water, or gambling for those who chose to do so. Games, recreation, and food were available in abundance. Everyone was well entertained and engaged in some activity. During the whole time the captain of the ship, oblivious to the passengers, was up on the bridge keeping the ship on its course. He had a deadline to meet, a destination to reach, and no one on the ship could change that course. The Lord of history is the captain of our salvation; and one day, aboard the forward sailing vessel of history, each one of us will reach our final destination. When we do, we will find the Lord of Glory standing there with nail-scarred hands welcoming us into His everlasting dwelling places that He has been preparing for us.

John 1:10-12 reads, *“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own and His own did not*

receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name.” The key to our future is in believing in Him. Our future destination hinges on how we see Jesus. His own people will look on Him at the end of the tribulation according to Zechariah 12:10. *“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”*

Now, let’s go back to our outline and review by saying,
Chapter 1 - The Revelation of the Son.

In 1:9-20, the Apostle John identifies himself as the recipient of this revelation. Tradition tells us that he left Jerusalem in AD 69, just prior to its destruction by the Romans. He went to Asia Minor and for 25 years was pastor of the Church at Ephesus, the first of the seven churches mentioned in chapters two and three. The Roman emperor Domitian banished him to the isle of Patmos for hard labor. Patmos was an island in the Aegean Sea. It was 10 miles long and 6 miles wide. It rose from the surface of the ocean about 40 miles south of Miletus, which was near Ephesus. Eusebius and Irenaeus, two early Church fathers, tell us that John was made to labor in the stone quarries on the island even though he was well advanced in age. But just like Joseph, God was with him. God had a purpose behind John’s circumstances. It was to receive this Revelation,

which would be a blessing to Christians everywhere throughout the ages. Paul wrote a number of great letters called the Prison Epistles while imprisoned. John Bunyan wrote the great classic Pilgrim's Progress while incarcerated. Most recently, Chuck Colson received a vision for a prison ministry that now reaches around the world during his brief stay behind bars. God can take all the negative, confining, difficult times of our lives and turn them into something positive that will not only bless us, but also will be used greatly in the lives of others.

All the way down through 1:18, John is describing this great vision of the Son of Man. In 1:13 He is described as one like the Son of Man. The best interpretation of scripture is other scripture. Back in Daniel 7:9-14 we have similar wording. *"I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened."* Jump on down to verse 13, *"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom*

the one which shall not be destroyed.” Daniel wrote this some 500 years before Jesus came the first time. He was given a vision of the awesome Judge of all mankind taking His rightful place upon the bench.

John was so stunned by this vision that he writes, *“when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me saying to me, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.’ ”*

When people tell me today that they have seen Christ, I like to ask them if they were flat on the ground and on their face when they saw Him. That is the effect of His awesome deity, His terrifying presence. John was made dramatically aware of the One who is alive forevermore. He was to be comforted by this reality. Because He lives, we too shall live. Revelation is all about Him, and His unveiling at the grand conclusion of history. Say it again, **Chapter 1 - The Revelation of the Son.**

Now might be a good time to ask if you are ready to go before the ultimate Judge of all mankind? In John 5:26 Jesus speaks, *“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of Man.”*



Chapters 2 & 3 – The Churches That Be, 4 + 3, ESP, TSP, L

E - Ephesus, S - Smyrna, P - Pergamos,
T - Thyatira, S - Sardis, P – Philadelphia
L - Laodicea.

Laodicea is the last of the seven churches to be addressed by Jesus in Chapter 3. The church age will be finished when the Church is taken up in what Paul refers to in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 as the “catching away” or the rapture of the Church. Let the “L” in Laodicea pointing upward be a reminder of this grand event for which believers in every age since Pentecost have been waiting.

With 1:19 being the key to interpreting Revelation, we can now look at the *“things which are,”* the seven churches. If you have a red-letter edition of the Bible, you will notice that this entire section is in red, meaning that these are the words of Jesus to these seven churches.

What do we know about these seven churches? First we note that these were very real local churches. Historically, they existed during the first century. They

were all located in ancient Asia Minor (modern day Turkey), and spaced about 40-50 miles apart. The Lord addressed these local churches in clockwise order. Ephesus was the farthest south. It was the first church to be addressed. We have visited these ancient sites. Today, very little remains. But there is still enough there for us to know that thriving congregations once existed in this area during the first century.

The second thing that we know is that in the Bible the number “seven” indicates completion. Each of the seven churches represented seven different spiritual conditions that the Lord identified. Look at the Church today. The conditions of the churches listed in Revelation are found in many of our own local churches existing in our time.

Each of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 received a commendation and/or a condemnation, a counsel or challenge, and a call, with the exception of Smyrna the suffering church and Philadelphia the faithful church who received no condemnation.

Revelation 2:1-7

EPHESUS, THE LOVELESS CHURCH

Early in the Christian era this was a thriving, dynamic church. It was located several miles inland from the sea. A number of important trade routes went through the city of Ephesus. It had an estimated population of 250,000 people. There was a theatre that would seat

approximately 25,000. The remains are still visible today.

The temple of Artemis (also known as Diana to the Romans) was located in Ephesus and was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Artemis was the goddess of fertility. Thousands of prostitutes were part of the celebrations at the temple. Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher, said that the morals of the temple of Artemis were worse than the morals of animals. Paul proclaimed the gospel in Ephesus, remaining there to minister the Word for three years.

In John's vision, Jesus first reminded the Ephesian church that He knew their true condition. He commended them for many good qualities in verses 2 and 3. But then He addresses a complaint in 2:4,5. They had left, but not lost their first love. His words here were so practical for recapturing that first love. This Greek word for "left" is a deliberate choice. It was used of the disciples leaving their nets in Matthew 4:20. Love is something that we choose, not lose. The Lord's formula for recapturing that love was simple in verse 2:5. *Remember* the way it once was. Next, they needed to *repent*, because they were going in the wrong direction. Finally, they needed to *repeat* and go back and do the first works, what they once did.

This process still works in our own relationship with Christ today. This process is also good counsel for husbands and wives who no longer have the feelings for one another that they once had.

Revelation 2:8-11

SMYRNA, THE SUFFERING CHURCH

This church was located about 40 miles north of Ephesus in a wealthy city that had little tolerance for Christians. During the second and third centuries an estimated five million Christians were martyred for Christ throughout the Roman Empire. The Greek word for Smyrna means “myrrh.” Myrrh was used as a sweet perfume for embalming a body. It speaks of suffering and death.

The Lord Jesus reminds this church in 2:8 that He is the First and the Last, who was dead and came to life. Jesus told them that even though many of them would be martyred for their faith, like Him they would be raised to life. They were experiencing tribulation and poverty according to 2:9. Tribulation means “a pressing together” like grapes that are trampled. The Christians of Smyrna were under extreme pressure.

I developed a severe case of pericarditis in the summer of 2010. At one point I thought that I might be ending my earthly journey because my pericardium filled with nearly a liter of liquid in just a couple of days. It was putting such pressure on my heart that if not addressed it would quickly result in my death. What Jesus was saying to the believers in Smyrna was that He knew the tribulation or the pressure that they were under.

He also knew that many of them were suffering economically, even to the point of poverty, because of

their identification with Him. He reminded them that they were really rich. Contrast these words with the words of Jesus to the Laodicean church in 3:17, 18. The Laodiceans were extremely wealthy in material goods, but poor spiritually. This word for poverty is the same word used in II Corinthians 6:10 and 8:9, where Paul spoke of himself as *“sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”*

The words *“Do not fear,”* in 2:10, occur some 365 times in the Bible in the form of a command. We either walk by faith or fear. He wants us to trust Him, even if this means our own dying for His winning cause.

Revelation 2:12-17

PERGAMOS, THE COMPROMISING CHURCH

This church at Pergamos was located about 60 miles north of Smyrna. It was famous for its idolatry and demonology. Smyrna had magnificent temples to Zeus, Apollo, Athena, and others. The name Pergamos comes from two Greek words, *perge*, meaning tower, elevation, or high place and *gamos*, which means married. This was the church that became married to the Roman Empire. It was also a center of Caesar worship.

The church at Pergamos allowed paganism to creep into its midst. The doctrine of Balaam, which is mentioned in 2:14, takes us back to Numbers 22-31

when Balaam persuaded the Israelites to intermarry among the Moabites, contrary to the will of God. The Jewish people became polluted socially and spiritually. The message for the Church of Jesus Christ could not be clearer today. Many of the mainstream churches are allowing unbiblical practices to enter the Church. In the words of Isaiah 5:20, *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.”*

There is the old saying that when you give the devil an inch, he will take a mile. To say it another way, when we begin to compromise with sin it will take us farther than we ever wanted to stray, cost us more than we ever wanted to pay, and keep us longer than we ever wanted to stay. It always begins with a little bit of compromise, whether it is toying with some perversion, giving ear to some false doctrine, or allowing greed to get a hold in our lives. Whenever we begin to depart from the Word of God we are going down a road that leads to ultimate corruption, collapse, and God’s judgment. Verse 16 was a reminder to Pergamos of the speed with which He would come against them with, *“the sword of my mouth.”* The sword speaks of judgment. The only hope for a compromising church is to repent and return to the life that once they enjoyed with Him.

Revelation 2:18-29

THYATIRA, THE CORRUPT CHURCH

This church was located about 40 miles southeast of Pergamos. The compromising spirit of Pergamos had found its way to Thyatira. This church seemed to be in the throes of full-scale corruption. Jesus called their attention to His *“eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass”* (2:18).

Each time I go to my ophthalmologist, he shines his bright light into my eyes to check my optic nerve. I get the feeling that he can almost look into my soul. Of course he cannot, but the Lord Jesus Christ can see deep down inside of us. His eyes of judgment, like a laser beam, burn into our hearts. Apparently this church overlooked that.

In 2:3, Jesus identified their most grievous sin as the one in which they allowed *“that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”* This may have been a woman who even called herself Jezebel, who found her counterpart in the Old Testament story of Jezebel recorded in I Kings 21:25, 26.

It is amazing how often the church over the past 2,000 years of its history has been influenced to engage in idolatry and immorality. Scattered around the world even today, some churches allow such practices and justify them. Once we depart from the Word of God as

our ultimate authority and begin to listen to slick and persuasive talkers like Jezebel, there is no limit to how far we can drift. As I am writing this there is a pastor of a mega-church here in the United States who has been accused by four young men of having an improper physical relationship with them. He has justified it as needed and acceptable as a servant of Christ.

Today we see that just about anything goes in our society. Not long ago a young mother here in our own city was convicted of not only killing her infant daughter, but also of eating part of her. We wonder where it will end. In II Kings 9:30-36, Jezebel met a fateful end as she was thrown down from the wall, splattering her blood on the horses that trampled her underfoot. Later when they went to bury her, they found no more than her skull, feet, and the palms of her hands. The dogs had eaten the rest of her as Elijah had prophesied in I Kings 21:23.

The Lord Jesus is serious about corruption in His Church. He will not tolerate it forever. It is only a matter of time before His hand of judgment will fall.

Revelation 3:1-6

SARDIS, THE DEAD CHURCH

This church was some 30 miles southeast of Thyatira. The city was perched 1,500 feet above the valley down below. Even today it is an impressive sight. It was almost impenetrable. Christ introduces Himself as *“the one who has the seven Spirits of God.”* What this

church lacked was life. It was missing the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. It looked alive. They even had a reputation of being alive (3:1). There was a frenzy of activity, like in many churches today. It might have even been drawing the crowds, like some of the mega-churches in our own country. These huge churches are beehives of activity. But when you really look closely at them, you begin to wonder, “Where’s the life?”

I remember my first trip to Disneyland in California, back in 1968. I was young and had lived a very sheltered life, having been raised on the farm. We went to a pavilion where a mannequin of Abraham Lincoln was seated in a chair. All at once I saw Abe’s head begin to turn. His eyes started blinking as he surveyed the crowd. Once the show time arrived and the crowd was seated, he slowly stood to his feet and began to deliver the Gettysburg Address. I was shocked for a time. Could it be him? How did they do that? He looked alive. But he was dead. Years later at another theme park, Magic Mountain, I was walking by myself by a saloon when all at once a gunslinger appeared and challenged me to a gun fight. He challenged my manhood. He called me a yellow-bellied, chicken-livered, something or other and wanted to know if I had the guts to fight like a man. It cost me some money, but he looked so real that I could not resist. I shot him. He was hurt, but came back out and challenged me again with the words, “I’ll bet you can’t do it again.”

The Sardis church was epitomized by the cold, dry orthodoxy of believing the right things, but having no

passion to reach out and make His name known and no desire to evangelize the rest of the world. This is the condition of many churches here in America and around the world. They too can be described as being dead. This certainly describes many of the State churches in Europe. We know that many of the grand physical structures called churches are closed or partially filled. Many have been converted into Islamic centers and mosques. Jesus Christ wants us to be filled with His Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). He wants to breathe new life into His followers. He is satisfied with nothing less.

Revelation 3:7-13

PHILADELPHIA, THE FAITHFUL CHURCH

This church was located in a city some 25 miles southeast of Sardis. As in the case of the church at Smyrna, Christ gives no condemnation. They were commended for their commitment to keeping the Word of God and not denying the name of Christ under extreme pressure and testing. It has been referred to as the true church of the open door. God gave this church open doors and opportunities to reach out with the Gospel and they went through those open doors. They were an opportunistic band of brothers and sisters. Their zeal had brought many Jewish people to the true faith in Messiah Jesus. As a result, they were being persecuted by the unbelieving Jews who were referred to by the Lord as the *“synagogue of Satan.”*

We are reminded that the message of Christ will be well-received by some. Sharing the gospel will also often result in persecution and pressure from the unbelievers around us. But, as the remainder of verses 9 and 10 tell us, we are on the winning side.

I remember hearing a story about a blue-collar minority maintenance man who worked at a liberal seminary. He would often have to wait on the seminarians to finish their time in the gym before he could lock up the building. One particular day, while waiting, he was reading his Bible. One of the young upstarts, thinking he had the upper hand on him intellectually, asked him what he was reading. He readily replied that he was reading the book of Revelation. The youngster asked him if he could understand it. He responded affirmatively. The young student then said with an attitude of arrogance, "Well, what does it say?" He responded with, "We win!"

That is the message here in the letter to the church at Philadelphia. No matter how difficult the times may be, the bottom line is that we eventually win. Verse 10 is a key verse. The promise to this faithful church, which represents faithful churches and believers everywhere, was that it would be "*kept from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*" The world-wide time of tribulation at the end of this age, consisting of seven years, seems to be the thought here. This church was promised by Jesus to be kept from this terrible hour. The expression means to "keep or protect someone from something."

For example, in John 17:15, Jesus prays to His Father for his disciples, *“that you should keep them from the evil one.”*

This seems to support a pre-tribulation rapture of the Church, which is referred to in John 5:28, 29, John 14:1-3, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, Titus 2:13, 14, and I Corinthians 15:51-52. When the time is right, prior to the beginning of that period of God’s judgment upon unbelieving humanity, Christ will descend from heaven in the air. The graves of all the saints will be opened and their bodies will be raised. The believers who are alive at His coming will join them in the air, and we shall always be with the Lord. This is to bring great comfort to us as times become increasingly difficult. We are not to be looking for the tribulation to begin, but rather *“looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”* (Titus 2:13). It will all happen *“in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. He is coming quickly”* (2:11).

These believers, who are taken up, will enjoy great intimacy and reward according to verse 12. May each one of us who read this, be included in that number.

Revelation 3:14-22

LAODICEA, THE LUKEWARM CHURCH

This church was located some 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia. Laodicea is a compound Greek word meaning “people-ruling.” The church was in a people-pleasing kind of state. This is often the case in cultures

of affluence. This was an extremely wealthy city as evidenced by our Lord's counsel. It was on one of the major trade routes, a great Roman road stretching to the inland of Asia from the coast at Ephesus.

The trade route ran straight through the heart of Laodicea. Laodicea might be likened to Chicago, Dallas, Atlanta or Denver today. It was known for its famous gloss black wool, banking assets, and school of ophthalmology and medicine. They discovered a special ointment known as Phrygian powder, which was effective in the curing of eye diseases.

But, for all of its wealth, Laodicea lacked a good supply of natural water. A six-mile long aqueduct brought water to the city from the south. The water came from both cool and hot springs. By the time it reached the city and its inhabitants it was just lukewarm. The water tasted horrible because of the high mineral content, including sulphur. The Lord referred to the spiritually lukewarm condition of the church at Laodicea as being putrid. In verse 16 Jesus said, *"I will vomit you out of my mouth."*

Laodicea was a proud church according to 3:17. It prided itself in its riches and believed that it had need of nothing. It did not know how *"wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked"* it really was. But Christ knew the true condition of this church. Historically, we can see that many churches have grown exceedingly wealthy by accumulating vast buildings, land, and other material holdings. Rather than using them to support

missions and reaching out to the rest of the world, these material things often remain in the possession of the lukewarm church. Someone has said that money is like manure. If you pile it up it stinks. If you spread it around it does a lot of good.

The noted missionary doctor David Livingston wrote in his diary: “I place no value on anything that I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of Christ. If anything will advance the interests of His kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keeping it I shall promote the glory of Him to who I owe all my hopes in time and eternity.” Where is that attitude towards possessions among believers and churches today?

The Laodicean church had shut the Savior out of its life. Our ministry conducts conferences for pastors and wives overseas, mainly in the developing countries. We have done over 20 conferences since Shepherds’ Support began in 2006. We tell attendees that our focus will totally be on Jesus, not on lesser doctrines and issues. In keeping the focus on Him, I can honestly say that we have never had any doctrinal issues divide us even though the conferences often have a number of different denominations represented.

The Laodicean church had lost its focus. Christ had been shut out. For us, like the Laodiceans, the invitation now goes out in verses 20-22 to the individual who would like to enjoy intimacy with Him.

In 3:22, we have the last time that the word for “Church” is mentioned in Revelation. We see a similar invitation given in 13:9, which occurs during the tribulation period: *“If anyone has an ear, let him hear.”* However, notice the absence of the word “Church” in 13:9. This is because the Church will no longer be present on earth. This is another reason that we might assume that the rapture of the Church occurs at this point, sometime between 3:22 and 4:1.

Now before we move to Chapter 4, we need to review our chapter outline. Say, **Chapters 2 & 3 - The Churches That Be, 4 + 3, ESP, TSP, L.**



Chapter 4 - Heaven’s Open Door, 24 Elders, 4 Creatures & More

The divine outline given in 1:19 is, *“The things you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.”* This indicates a sequence of events. Chapter four takes us into the future. After the Church age, in 4:1, John sees an open door in heaven.

Two open doors occur in Revelation. The first one is before us in this chapter. The second one occurs in 19:11 where John writes, *“Now I saw heaven opened and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was*

called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war." The rider on this white horse is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ, coming with His saints at the end of the Tribulation period. Could it be that 4:1 might be a reference to the event where He comes for His saints as written in I Thessalonians 4:13-18? John, as the last of the original Apostles, might have been representative of the entire Church. In verse 1, John was invited to *"Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this"* (*meta tauta*, in sequence).

This is one of the great passages on worship in the Bible. The scene is set in heaven. Chapters two and three describe the churches on earth. Chapter 4 might well be describing the Church worshipping in heaven. Whether John was having an out-of-body experience or being for a moment transported into heaven is debatable. But what he sees and describes goes beyond the ability to put into human language.

First, John sees a throne and One seated upon it. Since the Father has committed all judgment to the Son (John 5:22, 27), and the Father and the Son are One (John 10:30), it might be prudent to see the throne as representing two of the members of the Trinity. In writing this, I am aware of the action of the Lamb (Christ) in 5:7, taking the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. Thrones mean little to us today. Even British royalty is beginning to lose its glitter. Many are calling for an end to the royal monarchy. Royalty now has little power or influence beyond the

imagery and pageantry of special events. But in biblical times, thrones meant absolute power. John saw the One Who has unlimited power in His rightful place, seated upon the throne.

Around that throne were 24 thrones. Those who were seated upon the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white robes, and they had crowns of gold on their heads. The white robes indicate salvation. They are wearing *stephanos* crowns given out at the Judgment Seat of Christ to those who persevere and overcome. “Elders” is a term used of positions of authority in the synagogue and in the New Testament Church. In Revelation 7:9, 10 they are clearly distinguished from being angelic beings. The conclusion is that they must represent saved humanity, perhaps both Old and New Testament saints.

The four living creatures, with eyes in the front and in the back (verse 7), probably are angelic beings. Ezekiel 1 and Isaiah 6 might well be the best commentary on these beings. Isaiah 6:2,3 reads, *“Above it [the throne] stood seraphim; each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.’”* Isaiah then is made aware of his own sin and the sin of his people. Then the seraphim touched his mouth with a burning coal; his mouth was cleansed, his iniquity was taken away, and his sin was purged. Isaiah was then ready to worship and was willing to “go” for Him.

In 3:8-11, the One Who is on the throne is given the worship that is due to Him. As the seraphim in Isaiah 6 are proclaiming the holiness of God, so they are here as well and leading a great chorus of redeemed humanity in adoring Him.

Our destiny is to worship. We function best when we are worshipping the Lord. As a young believer, C.S. Lewis was bothered by the fact that God demanded worship of Himself. Lewis could get no satisfactory answer to his question of “why” until one day he realized the answer. “I did not see that it is in the process of being worshipped, that God communicates His presence to men.” For the Jewish people in the Old Testament, the essence of sacrifice was not that men gave bulls and goats to God. It was by their doing so that God gave Himself to them.

The meaning of the Greek word “*proskuneo*” is to “come before or bow down before and kiss.” David Mains tells the story of a man going out on a cold, frigid night. He found a stray dog, half-starved, half-frozen, and helpless. Some boys had tied a can to its tail, to torment it. He took it home to feed, water, and care for it. He decided to keep the dog. One day, the dog sat down before the master, to look into his eyes. He didn’t want anything. He simply wanted to sit before his master, to lick his hand in an act of worship and say, “Thank you. I love you. I shall be forever grateful to you.”

In 4:11, Jesus is worshipped as our Creator. In 5:9,10, He is worshipped as our Redeemer. For review, say it

one more time. **Chapter 4 - Heaven's Open Door, 24 Elders, 4 Creatures and More.**



Chapter 5 - The Lamb's Alive, All Heaven Does Jive

In 5:1-7, John sees a scroll in the right hand of the One sitting upon the throne. At first there is no one who is found worthy to loosen the seven seals and open the scroll. This scroll contains the title deed to the forfeited inheritance of the earth, lost by the first Adam in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3. This legal document contains the name of the real owner. Satan, for a time usurped the Creator's place and took possession of the earth.

Who is worthy to cast Satan out, to "repossess" God's Creation as we might say it today? I enjoy watching a repossession program on TV. There are people who make a living at repossessing items financed by banks, items such as cars, trucks, boats, motorcycles, etc. The "repo" men plan very carefully what they are going to do. Sometimes they put themselves in great danger. So it was for our Lord. Our Lord was killed in the act of reclaiming what was rightfully His to begin with.

A strong angel with a loud voice proclaimed, “*Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?*” At first, no one was found. This caused John to weep. He was without comfort. Then one of the elders in 5:5 encouraged John to stop weeping because “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals. And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into the earth.*” In 5:5-6, the Greek word for “prevailed” is *nikao*, from which we get the word Nike, which means victory. Lions are the animals that fear nothing. They are the kings of the jungle. In Genesis 49:9-10, Messiah is prophesied as coming from the tribe of Judah. “*Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter [a symbol of kingship] shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.*” So, in the Bible’s first book, Jesus is prophesied to be the lion of the tribe of Judah. Here again in the last book, He is referenced as the lion of the tribe of Judah.

In 5:6, He is seen standing “*as a Lamb, as though it had been slain.*” Standing is a position of victory. A boxer still standing after the knockout of his opponent is the victor. Standing is also a position where one is preparing to take action. If you are sitting on the bench,

you are resting. If you are standing, you are about to enter the game again. The Lamb is pictured as victorious and about to take action. His judgments at the end of this age are about to be poured out, beginning in Chapter 6. The perfect tense in the Greek for *“as though it had been slain,”* indicates a past event with results that continue into the present. He was slain at a point in time. But the results of that crucifixion carry on in our lives through all eternity. Isaiah 53:6-7 reads, *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.”*

Back in 1997, Connie and I went to Romania to dedicate a church building that Wayside Chapel had for the most part funded. The building was state-of-the-art, by Romanian standards. We left the United States the day after Easter. Because of the Eastern Orthodox influence, Easter is celebrated a week later in Romania. So that year, we celebrated Easter twice! On Saturday, we were surprised that as we went to the downtown marketplace in Braila, we found lambs everywhere for sale. Some were standing there with a rope tied around their necks. They were bleating loudly. Others had their legs tied. They were lying down on the ground. Those lambs were silent. I was reminded of how Jesus went quietly, obediently and willingly to the cross. He came the first time quietly as the Lamb to die.

But when He comes the second time, He will come as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to reign.

The Apostle John refers to Jesus as the Lamb. We have the first occurrence in John 1:29 where we read, *“the next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”* Someone has pointed out that this is a summary statement of the whole Old Testament. He is not just any lamb, as lambs were offered regularly by all of the worshippers in Israel. He is the Lamb of God, the precious One and only Lamb of God. He doesn't just cover our sin as sin was covered in the Old Testament. He takes it away. He doesn't take away just the sin of Israel, but rather the sin of the entire world. He takes away the sins of all who believe in Him and trust that His sinless offering satisfies the righteous judgment of God.

Some 28 times in the book of Revelation, Jesus is referenced as the Lamb. The next glimpse we have of Him as “the Lamb” comes at the end of Chapter 6 when all who are dwelling on the earth begin to experience His anger. They will be crying out to the mountains and rocks, *“Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come and who is able to stand?”* (6:16,17).

So, back in our text in 5:8-14, after He receives the scroll from the right hand of Him who sits on the throne, all of Heaven begins to celebrate and worship. Thus we

have the title: **Chapter 5 - The Lamb's Alive, All Heaven Does Jive.** What a celebration this will be! All of those various groups mentioned in the previous chapter are singing a new song, proclaiming that He is worthy to open the seals. *“For you were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And you have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. (Rev. 5:9)”*

It is hard to put into words the incredible scene of worship given in these verses. One earthly scene that I shall never forget occurred in Northern Burma in 2004. About 5,000 people were gathered to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Barefoot Doctors Ministry. I had been asked to be the featured speaker. After the final session the leaders wanted to pray for us. They asked the eleven members of our team to kneel before them. The leaders came and laid hands on us and began to pray. It wasn't just the leaders that prayed. All 5,000 of them cried out to the Lord together. It was the most moving worshipful experience I had ever encountered to that point in my life. They too, the Rwang and Lisu, will be gathered with every other tribe, tongue, people and nation, worshipping the Lamb because He alone is worthy. Let's review. **Chapter 5 - The Lamb's Alive, All Heaven Does Jive.** After repeating the title of this chapter, take a few minutes and review the previous titles and commit them to memory.



Chapter 6 – 6 of 7 Seals Unfixed

In Chapter 1, the focus is on the Son of Man in heaven. In Chapters 2 and 3 it is on the churches on earth. In Chapters 4 and 5, the scene switches back to heaven. Now here in Chapter 6, it is back on earth.

This is the beginning of the time referred to by the Old Testament prophets as *“the day of the Lord.”* This is the time when God makes His presence known on earth in a series of judgments that will be poured out on the unbelievers who remain on earth after the catching up into the air of the true believers at the Rapture. The *“day of the Lord”* is referred to in Isaiah 24:21-23, 34:1; Jeremiah 30:7; Joel 1:15, 2:11, 3:1, 9-16, and numerous other passages. In baseball terminology, this present time or day can be thought of as the time when man is at bat. But the time is coming when God will say, “It is time for me to take the bat.” There are two primary purposes for this time of judgment that begins here in Chapter 6 and continues all the way through to the end of Chapter 18. First, it is to judge an unbelieving world that is given over to humanism and secularism, that has allowed no room for God. Paul writes in Romans 1:18 of how, *“the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in*

unrighteousness.” Second, it will be a time to chasten Israel, now regathered in their own promised land in unbelief, to prepare them for the national acceptance of their Messiah, Whom they rejected at His first coming.

In the first in a series of seven judgments, we have the seal judgments. As the seals are loosed, God’s judgment begins. With the loosing of the first seal in verses 1 and 2 we have the first of the four horsemen. This horseman is riding on a white horse, conquering peacefully. This is the antichrist, an imitation or a counterfeit of the true Christ who will come on a white horse in 19:11. This strong charismatic world leader will be accepted by the masses and given world-wide authority. For a period of time there will be a false sense of peace and prosperity.

At the opening of the second seal, a fiery red horse appears. Its rider removes all semblance of peace on the earth and warfare erupts. This rider represents war and conflict. I Thessalonians 5:2, 3 reminds us, *“For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.”*

With the third seal, the rider of a black horse represents famine and scarcity on the earth. As many Africans can testify, famine naturally follows warfare. Food is so

scarce that a day's wages will barely purchase a quart of wheat.

A rider on a pale horse appears with the breaking of the fourth seal. He brings widespread death over the whole earth. Death always follows war and famine. One quarter of the earth's people will die in this way. That means that in terms of today's population numbers, over one-and-a-half billion people will die in this fourth seal judgment.

With the opening of the fifth seal, the scene shifts back to heaven as the cries of the martyred saints are heard. These are most likely the cries of those who turn to Christ during the first half of the seven-year Tribulation period, covering three-and-a-half years, who are killed because of their faith in Christ.

The breaking of the sixth seal brings a great earthquake. *"And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth"* (6:2,13). Recently, earthquakes in the ocean caused the death of several hundred thousand people in Asia, as a tsunami hit land and swept them away. Hundreds of thousands have died in earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, and in March 2011, a devastating earthquake and tsunami occurred in Japan. Jesus reminded His disciples in Luke 21:25, 26, *"There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are*

coming upon world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”

Man’s response creates worldwide anarchy as the people cry out for the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. Can you imagine this? All the kings, great men, rich men, military leaders, slave and free, will be running for cover. But no cover from His wrath will be provided.

So, to summarize: **Chapter 6 - 6 of 7 Seals Unfixed**. We still have the seventh and final seal to be opened. That occurs in Chapter 8, verse 1.



Chapter 7 - 144,000 On Earth, Plus a Great Multitude in Heaven

This chapter seems to indicate that the greatest spiritual awakening of all time will occur during the tribulation period. But, as Jesus said, *“When the Son of Man comes shall He find faith on the earth?”* (Luke 18:8). In II Thessalonians 2:1-4, Paul indicated that there would be a falling away from the faith before the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition. This is a reference to the great end-time world leader mentioned in 6:1,2 who brings about some order following the disappearance of the true believers and the incredible

chaos resulting after the Rapture. Paul also spoke of the coming end of the age when men will not endure sound doctrine, but rather turn away from the truth (See II Tim. 4:3, 4). After the church is caught away, an awakening will occur, perhaps sparked by the disappearance of so many people so quickly.

In Revelation 7:1-8, we have 144,000 Jewish evangelists appearing who will come from the twelve tribes of Israel, 12,000 from each tribe (7:4-8). The fact that they are sealed would indicate they will be sealed for some kind of service, though it is not specified in this chapter. Chapter 14 appears to be a further commentary on their activity. In verses 4 and 5, they are described as pure and undefiled, being virgins, following the Lamb wherever He goes, and redeemed from among men. There is no deceit in them and they are without fault before God. Having been redeemed, they will proclaim the message of redemption. Because I know a number of Jewish Christians who when they came to Christ became bold in their faith, it is not too far-fetched for me to see this great number among the Jewish zealots. They will not be silenced.

After seeing the 144,000, John looks and sees a great *multitude* “*which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes*” (7:9). The white robes indicate salvation. One of the elders asks, “*Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?*” They are identified as those who had come out of the great tribulation and

washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Whereas the 144,000 are elect Jews, this great multitude from all over the earth is probably the elect Gentiles who come to faith through the preaching of the Jewish converts. They are now before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple, according to 7:15. We can assume they were martyred for their faith. Furthermore, God is seen wiping away every tear from their eyes (7:17). This is said of heaven in 21:4. Before moving on, repeat the chapter title now and commit it to memory. **Chapter 7 - 144,000 On Earth, Plus a Great Multitude In Heaven**



Chapter 8 - 4 of 7 Trumpets Reverberate

It appears that out of the seventh seal's opening in 8:1, seven angels are seen. Each angel has a trumpet that announces another judgment at its sounding. Each judgment is more severe than the first seven seal judgments.

There are two prominent views of this middle section of Revelation. First is the **recapitulation approach**, which sees the trumpet judgments as simply a repeating of

the previous judgments, with ever increasing intensity. The second view is the **successive approach**, which sees the trumpet judgments coming out of and following one another. Like a dramatic fireworks show, these build on one another until we reach the dramatic end in the last several verses of Chapter 16.

The first trumpet sounds in 8:7. One-third of the earth's grass and trees are scorched by fire. One can only imagine the food shortages that will be created by this world-wide event.

The second trumpet judgment in 8:8 creates a meteor shower, or possibly a massive volcanic eruption. A large object like a burning mountain is cast into the sea and a third of all living creatures in it are destroyed. A third of the ships on the ocean are destroyed.

The third trumpet sounds and one-third of the fresh waters of the earth are destroyed by a falling star named "wormwood." Many men, an unspecified number, will die from a plague caused by it—a plague much like some of the plagues that occurred during the time of Moses.

As the fourth angel sounds the trumpet, the heavens are affected. This is similar to what we read in 6:12 and 13 but here one-third of the heavenly lights will be affected. Days are shortened, and nights are lengthened. This will dramatically impact the growing seasons and the food supply. Yet, so much more is yet to come. Another angel flying through the midst of

heaven is crying out “*woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpets*” (8:13). The remaining trumpets are sounded in Chapters 9 and 11. Let’s say this chapter title right now. **Chapter 8 - 4 of 7 Trumpets Reverberate.**



Chapter 9 - The Locusts Dine, 200 Million Kill 1/3 of Mankind

The fifth angel sounds its trumpet and a star falls from heaven. The fact that the star is identified as some kind of personage is clear from 9:1 where we read “*to him*” was given the key to the bottomless pit. Evidently this bottomless pit is where many of the evil angels, those who fell prior to creation, are incarcerated. Second Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 refer to the angels who sinned, lost their first estate, and are now reserved in everlasting chains under darkness.

Like bats out of a cave, these demonic spirits are released. They are going to cover the earth. They will be given power to afflict torment upon those who dwell on the earth at that time. They have no power to kill. However, they will torture humanity for a period of five months. The torture will be like the sting of a scorpion, but there will be no relief. Men will seek to die but will not be able to do so (9:6).

Even though they are referred to as locusts, it is obvious that they are not the locusts that we know about today. Their description is given to us in 9:7-10. John had difficulty describing them because he had never seen anything like them before. I remember our first visit to Africa back in the early 80s. We were in remote areas, not under any direct plane routes. I used the illustration of a plane in one of my messages. The translator said that many of the people I was speaking to had never seen an airplane. How do you describe an airplane to someone who has never seen one before?

According to 9:11, the leader of the locusts is Abaddon or Apollyon. These names mean “Destroyer.” This indicates that it is Satan himself who will send out his demonic hordes to torment all of humanity.

Next, the sixth angel’s trumpet is blown. Four angels that had been prepared for this time (9:15) are released to lead an army of 200,000,000 out to kill one-third of mankind. Revelation 9:17-19 indicates this must be something more than a literal army of 200 million. It may well be a description of modern day military armament, such as missile launchers, tanks, rocket launchers and other high-tech weaponry.

Mankind’s response is not what we would expect. There is no sign of repentance. Man refuses to have God reigning over him. So, here is the result. Fifty percent of the earth’s population has now been destroyed. One third of the earth’s vegetation, light, and water supply have been decimated. Yet man will

not repent of his demonic worship, idolatry, murders, and sorceries (The Greek word *pharmaceia* might well indicate the illicit use of drugs, which is often associated with demon and devil worship). Man will not repent of his sexual immorality. There will be a complete moral breakdown in society. Human life will become cheap. Trafficking in sex, and lack of respect for what belongs to others will be commonplace. One can well see modern day terrorism alluded to in these verses. This is a description of life apart from God. It is not a pretty picture. But God is giving man what he wants, life without Him. Now, let's summarize Chapter 9. **Chapter 9 - The Locusts Dine, 200 Million Kill 1/3 of Mankind.**



Chapter 10 – Indigestion

John sees a mighty angel with a little open book in his hand. This may be the same book that is described in Daniel 12:1-4, where in verse 4 we read, *“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”* In Daniel's case, Michael is the angel that is spoken of. Some suggest that the mighty angel in Revelation 10:1 is Jesus. There are many similarities seen in verse 1. But there are a number of problems with this. Jesus is never seen as

an angel in the New Testament. In Hebrews 1:1-14, He is identified as being much greater than the angels. Furthermore, Jesus does not descend from heaven at this point. Finally, this angel swears by *“Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it.”* Therefore, this angel would not be Jesus, because He is the one who made all things, according to John 1:1-4, Colossians 1:16, and Hebrews 1:1-3.

Since the name Gabriel means “strength of God,” this mighty angel might be a reference to Gabriel. The proclamation in verse 6 is that, *“there should be delay no longer.”* The final assault upon unbelieving humanity is about to begin. The mystery of God is about to become complete in verse 7. The mystery to the world is that Jesus, as the creator, will also be the consummator of all history. All things had their beginning in Him, and they will have their finality in Him.

The indigestion comes in 10:8-11. John went to the angel and asked for the book in its hands. The angel commanded him, *“take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.”* Ray Stedman tells the story of a king by the name of Menelik II, who reigned in Ethiopia from 1889 to 1913. He was forward in thinking but had some strange peculiarities. Whenever he felt sick he would eat several pages of his Bible. He died in 1913 after being very sick, having consumed the story of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

We are commanded to live on the Word of God. Matthew 4:4 reads, *“It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”* In Psalm 1:1-3, we are to meditate on the Word of God day and night. In Jeremiah 15:16, Jeremiah writes, *“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, Oh Lord God of hosts.”* The taste of the Word first brings joy. John describes it as being as sweet as honey in his mouth. As the Word reached John’s stomach, acid reflux set in and it became bitter. Why? It appears to be because of all the suffering that was yet to follow during this terrible Day of the Lord. That brings us to Chapter 11. Before moving on, repeat the title of this chapter. **Chapter 10 - Indigestion.**



Chapter 11 - 2 Witnesses From Heaven, Plus Trumpet #7

John is given a measuring rod about 10 feet long. He is commanded by the same angel to measure the Temple of God. We know from other passages that the Temple will be rebuilt and standing at this time. Jesus refers to it in Matthew 24:15. He speaks of the *“abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet,”* which is recorded in Daniel 9:23-27. In 2 Thessalonians 2:4,

Paul mentions that time at the end of this age when the *“man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”*

The two witnesses from heaven, appearing in verse 3, come in the likeness of Elijah and Moses. They will prophesy for 1,260 days. They will have power to perform all kinds of miracles, to withhold rain, to turn water to blood, and to strike the earth with all kinds of plagues. No one will be able to stop them. They are untouchable during their ministry, until it is finished according to 11:5. It is another reminder that nothing can stop us or touch us until we have finished the course or race that God has for us. Acts 20:24 and 2 Timothy 4:6-8 are good verses to remind us of that truth. Jesus Himself said in John 17:1-4 that He was now ready to receive back the glory that He had previously with the Father because, *“I have finished the work that you have given me to do.”*

When God finally removes His hand of protection and they have *“finished their testimony”* they will be put to death by the beast. *“And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city where our Lord was crucified (Jerusalem).”* All of this is according to Revelation 11:7,8. The whole world will view their dead bodies for three-and-one-half days. The earth will celebrate their death like it is Christmas and send gifts to one another, *“because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.”*

This is one of the most amazing prophecies. Only recently has the capability of something like this happening been possible. Nearly 50 years ago many of us watched live the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald as he was being transported from the jail following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In recent times, we have watched live the wars being fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. Modern day technology has made it possible for this prophecy to become a reality in our generation. Satellites allow for the live transmission of events from around the world. The world recently watched live the wedding of the decade as Prince Phillip and Princess Kate exchanged their vows.

But, after three-and-a-half days, God breathes life into the two witnesses again and they are caught up into heaven in a cloud. All their enemies will see this happen. This is followed by a great earthquake; as a result, some fear of God will begin to grow among the earth dwellers according to 11:13. Now, let's review. Say, **Chapter 11 - 2 Witnesses From Heaven, Plus Trumpet #7.**

As the seventh angel sounds its trumpet, there will be loud voices in heaven. They are proclaiming what is about to happen: *"The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"* (11:15).

Three judgments are about to take place according to 11:18. First we have the judgment of the nations. In

Psalm 2 the writer asks, “*Why do the nations rage and the peoples imagine a vain thing?*” Next, we have the judgment of the unsaved dead about to take place. In 20:11-15 we learn that this will happen at the Great White throne judgment. Thirdly, we see the reward of “*Your servants the prophets and the saints.*” This is a reference to the judgment seat of Christ mentioned in 1 Cor. 3:10-15 and 2 Cor. 5:10.



Chapter 12 - The 12-Starred Woman's Travail, Satan Cast Out, But Cannot Prevail

Three women are mentioned in Revelation. The first appears here. We will see in a moment that this one refers to Israel. The second woman is referenced in Chapter 17. She is the great harlot. This is a reference to the religious monstrosity at the end of this age—a counterfeit of the true church. The third woman is the true Bride of Christ, appearing in Chapter 19. That the woman here in Chapter 12 is Israel can be determined by her appearance in 12:1, 2. Joseph had a dream in Genesis 37:9 in which he saw his father and mother as the sun and the moon, and his brothers as twelve stars. This is a clear reference to the twelve patriarchs of Israel. Israel gives birth to a male child, which must be

the Christ. The personage mentioned in 12:3 is the devil. His fall and those who fell with him are mentioned in 12:4. He seeks to persecute the woman and her child, which he has done throughout the past 2,000 years. Revelation 12:5 does not mention Jesus' life and ministry. The text moves quickly from His birth to His ascension. John's vision then jumps from Jesus' ascension to Israel's persecution. Between verses 5 and 6 there are over 2,000 years of history, as of our day.

During the tribulation, war will break out in heaven between Michael and his angels and the devil and his angels. The devil and his angels will be cast out of heaven according to verses 7-10. He will bring persecution to the believers and create havoc on the earth because he knows that he has a short time to get it done. The Saints will overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by not loving their lives even to death.

We can see that although Satan is cast out of heaven, he cannot prevail. Though he would love to destroy Israel, God gives the Jews divine protection according to 12:13-17. God uses two things. First, He gives her the wings of a great eagle, just as He brought Israel out of Egypt on the wings of an eagle. She will be miraculously cared for as Israel was in the desert during her wandering for forty years. She will be cared for during the last half of the Tribulation, which is called the Great Tribulation. Second, God will open up the earth according to verse 16, as in the days when the

sons of Korah had rebelled against Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:31-33), and swallow up the enemy and his evil forces. Today, anti-Semitism is on the rise again and here is where it will meet its final end. Now let's review. **Chapter 12 - The 12 Starred Woman's Travail, Satan Cast Out, But Cannot Prevail.**



Chapter 13 - 2 Evil Beasts Appear Upon the Scene

The first beast comes out of the sea in 13:1-10. This is the end time gentile world dictator who is the personification of Satan himself. All of his authority and power comes from the dragon mentioned in 12:2. What we have in these verses is a counterfeit trinity. This is the unholy trinity.

His popularity and power will be unprecedented among world rulers. He might even be killed and resurrected. This will cause all of mankind to worship this beast, much like the adoration of Hitler. Many of Hitler's followers alluded to his personal magnetism and his enormous power of suggestion. Hitler was a type of the end time antichrist. He is full of blasphemies. Thankfully his power will be limited to only a short time.

Interestingly, 13:9 says, *“If anyone has an ear to hear, let him hear.”* But there is no mention of the church as we saw in Chapters 2 and 3. This was the charge given at the conclusion of each letter to each of the seven churches. A reference to the Church may well have been deleted because the true Church of Jesus Christ will have already been caught away before the man of sin comes to power.

The second beast comes out of the earth in 13:11-18. He has the appearance of a lamb but the voice of a dragon. He causes all that are on the earth to worship the first beast. He is often referred to as the false prophet. He is able to perform great signs and even make fire come down from heaven, as did the prophet Elijah in the Old Testament.

He engineered the making of an image to the first beast, much as we read in Daniel 3 regarding King Nebuchadnezzar. At the sound of music, all were commanded to bow down and worship Nebuchadnezzar’s image. We know from Daniel’s account that there were three young Hebrew men who refused to do so. They stood firm in their refusal.

The second beast was able to make the image of the first beast appear to come to life. In 13:16, “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads.” Of course, the mark of the beast on everyone in his domain, on either the right hand or the forehead, without which no buying or selling can take

place, has become a reality in this hi-tech age which is rapidly moving towards a computerized, cashless society. It is that time again, so let's review. **Chapter 13 - 2 Evil Beasts Appear Upon the Scene.**



Chapter 14 - The Lamb Standing and then Reaping

John looks and sees the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion. His posture is one of victory that is about to come. Again, he sees the 144,000 standing with him. They have the Father's name written on their foreheads, in contrast to the mark of the beast in Chapter 13. They are divinely protected just as the three young Hebrew men were protected in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3. They are singing a new song. They are serving the Lamb and following Him wherever He goes.

One of the great missionaries of the past, Robert Moffat, supposedly said, "We have all of eternity to celebrate our victories but only one brief moment in which to win them." These 144,000 Jewish evangelists understand that. They keep themselves undefiled, morally pure, and free from deceit. So should we.

Then we have the proclamations of three angels in 14:6-13. The first angel in verse 6 is *"flying in the midst*

of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.” Perhaps God will use this means to proclaim the gospel to the whole world. This might be the fulfillment of the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:14, *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”* The other two angels announce the coming judgment on Babylon and upon everyone who receives the mark of the beast.

In verses 14 to 20 John portrays the Lamb reaping. He uses the imagery of the grain harvest in verses 15 and 16, which was always done with a sickle. The grape harvest in 14:17-20 is a reference to the trampling underfoot the grapes in the vats so the juice would be squeezed out. The idea is that the earth is ripe in its wickedness. It is ready for the final judgment upon mankind, much as it was in the days of Noah in Genesis 6:5, *“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”* Further down in 6:11,12 we read, *“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.”* It will be a similar scenario at the end of this age.

Revelation 14 seems to be a preview of Armageddon if you will, as in a trailer in a movie theatre announcing a coming attraction. A terrible carnage is pictured in this judgment, with blood flowing nearly 200 miles from

north to south and it is as deep as the horses' bridles. Don't forget to review! **Chapter 14 - The Lamb Standing and then Reaping.**



Chapter 15 - The Songs of Moses and of the Lamb Singing

God's final judgments are about to be meted out on unbelieving humanity. In them, the wrath of God is complete. There are two commonly used Greek words in the New Testament translated as wrath. The first is "*orge*" which speaks of God's settled disposition against sin. John 3:36, Romans 1:18, Ephesians 2:2, 3, and 5:6 are all references to this form of wrath. When we sin we pay the penalty of that sin. We do reap what we sow. When we sow unrighteousness we eventually experience His wrath in one form or another. Nowhere is that more evident than when it comes to sexual sins and the sexually transmitted diseases that come with immorality along with all the other psychological consequences.

The second Greek word for wrath is "*thumos*." It is the more volatile form of anger or wrath. This is the word that is used in Revelation 14:19, 15:1, 7, and in 16:1. His wrath has now reached the tipping point.

Pictured are those who have the victory over the beast. They are singing the victory song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb, verse 3. There are similarities to the victory song in Exodus 15 as Israel overcame Pharaoh and the Egyptian armies, so these suffering ones have overcome the beast and his forces.

God's great works are mentioned in verse 3. His great ways are also referenced. They are just and true. At this point in the book, because of the severity of the judgments, God's character and fairness might be in question. The song declares that He is altogether just and fair in what has transpired.

Finally great worship is given to God in 15:4. The declaration is that a day is coming when all will praise Him. Even those who have denied His very existence will one day bow before Him, but then it will be too little too late.

In 15:5-8, we have the seven angels being given seven bowls of God's wrath in the form of more judgments in view. The scene is one of awesome power, as the Powerful One is about to unleash these final judgments formally ending this present age. Be sure to review the chapter title now. **Chapter 15 - The Songs of Moses and of the Lamb Singing.**



Chapter 16 - Seven Bowls Seething

The word “seethe” means to boil or to become violently agitated. The Greek word for bowl refers to a broad shallow bowl much like one might use to eat breakfast cereal. In biblical times it was used for incense and drink offerings that were used in the temple. These bowls containing God’s final judgments are now about to be tipped over.

The *first bowl* contains severe and malignant sores upon mankind, like the plagues upon Egypt, but far worse than leprosy or cancer sores.

The *second bowl* affects the sea. The seas become as the blood of a dead man. Every living creature in the sea will die. The sea will become one vast burial ground.

The *third bowl* attacks the fresh water in verse 4. We are now rapidly approaching the end of the Great Tribulation, the final three-and-one-half years of judgment. The situation concerning man’s food source is becoming increasingly more dire with each judgment. As many have observed, God does not settle His accounts at the end of the month, but He does settle them. This is the final accounting. He has judged these

things. Yet He can never be accused of unrighteousness. Here He is simply giving to man what he deserves. His mercy has run its course. The mills of God's justice grind slowly, but they do grind exceedingly fine. The persecutors of His people are given blood to drink in verse 6.

The *fourth bowl* affects the sun. Scientists tell us that the sun is precisely where it needs to be in relationship to the earth for life to be maintained. All God needs to do is turn the dial a little bit and man becomes scorched with the heat of the sun. Yet man, like Pharaoh, will not repent.

This unleashes the *fifth bowl* where the whole kingdom of the antichrist will be darkened. The end of this age is frequently pictured as a time of extreme darkness. Joel 2:2 described it as a day of "*darkness and gloominess, a day of thick clouds and thick darkness.*" In Matthew 24:29, 30 Jesus said, "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*" Out of this blackness and darkness the Son of Man will appear.

The *sixth bowl* is aimed at the Euphrates River, to dry it up. This opens the way for the armies from the East, which includes all the Islamic nations that border on

Israel to the East, to come to Megiddo. What draws them all into this great battlefield called Armageddon (Mt. Megiddo), is described in verses 12 to 16. Clearly there are demonic powers behind it all, led by Satan himself into this horrific ambush. Megiddo is a large valley in lower Galilee where the armies of the world will gather for this final conflict. Napoleon Bonaparte referred to this valley as, “the ideal battleground for the armies of the world to gather.”

The *seventh bowl* is now poured out with a loud voice proclaiming that the judgments are now about to be finished. The great cry is accompanied by a great earthquake, greater than any in the history of mankind. I am writing these words just ten days after a giant 9.0 earthquake that brought great destruction upon Japan. It was so massive that it was felt around the earth. The destruction from the earthquake and the tsunami that followed, including the destruction of the nuclear reactors is a harbinger of things to come. On top of this massive earthquake is the downpour of hailstones weighting between 75 to 100 pounds, and yet men will continue to blaspheme God and show no repentance. Now say, **Chapter 16 - Seven Bowls Seething.**



Chapter 17 - The Great Harlot, Sitting, Reigning and then Burning

This woman is not to be confused with Israel in 12:1 or the Bride of Christ in 19:6-9. She represents counterfeit Christianity and is guilty of a number of things:

- Exploitation, verse 1
- Prostitution, verse 2
- Being spiritually destitute, verse 3
- Having corrupt political power, verse 4
- Exceedingly rich in this world's goods like the Laodiceans of Chapter 3, verse 4b
- Abominable works, verse 4c, with no regard for God's Word

This woman persecuted God's prophets, His true spokesmen. I suppose that in our day it would include the politically correct crowd that throw up the argument that there are many approaches to God and including Jesus as simply being one of those ways.

This woman is identified with Babylon in verse 5, founded by Nimrod back in Genesis 9-11. This was the

first world-class city, perhaps five times the size of the modern city of London. The people desired to make a name for themselves. They wanted to establish their own religion, independent of God. Their motivation was pride, the basis of all sin. It represents the beginning of man-made religion and idolatry.

This woman can further be described as apostate Christendom, a whole system of evil. The term *Babylon* is used in the same way that we speak of Wall Street as referring to a whole economic system. Her name means “confusion.”

God will use the beast and his forces to destroy this woman according to verses 7 to 14. Verse 17 describes how she will be made desolate and naked and how her flesh will be eaten. She will be burned with fire. It’s time to review. **Chapter 17 - The Great Harlot, Sitting, Reigning, and then Burning.**

As I am writing this, the U.S. and several allied countries have made a decision that the Libyan leader, Colonel Khadafi, must be removed. According to Chapter 17, this too will be a joint decision. Under the direction of the false Christ, this entity, ecclesiastical Babylon, must be destroyed; and it will be brought to pass.



Chapter 18 - Great Babylon Falling

With the destruction of ecclesiastical Babylon in Chapter 17, the impact will be felt around the world economically. We see how our world is so tied together by events that happen, such as the earthquake in Japan leading to the world financial markets going into a tailspin. What we have in the chapter before us is a complete meltdown of the world's financial markets.

The *declaration of the destruction* comes in the first 8 verses. True believers who have yet to be put to death by the beast are issued an invitation to come out of this evil system in verse 5. They are to have no part with this present evil system. So much evil has been perpetrated upon humanity due to the love of money. Certainly the drug cartels, right here at our door in Mexico, are a picture of the terrible atrocities that humans can inflict on one another. One day all of this will end.

The *lamentation over her destruction* is described in verses 9 to 19. The kings of the earth, including all world leaders, will mourn and weep over the demise of Babylon. The merchants of the earth feel the impact and weep and mourn over her in 18:11-16. Finally the sea merchants in verses 17 to 19 are pictured as

throwing dust over their heads and crying out, weeping and wailing, mourning her destruction.

Virtually all commerce came to a standstill following the destruction of the Twin Towers on 9/11. Planes were grounded, TV shows were drastically altered (comedy disappeared), Wall Street shut down. Everywhere the impact was felt. All of this again is but a foreshadowing of this final judgment.

Now for the change in tone. Whereas there is mourning on earth, it is jubilation in heaven in verses 20 to 24. There is great rejoicing over her destruction because God has finally avenged His faithful ones. Justice will prevail in the end. **Chapter 18 - Great Babylon Falling** will help you remember this chapter.



Chapter 19 - Heaven Delighting, Marriage Uniting, the Lamb Comes Fighting

Heaven is delighting in 19:1-6 over the destruction of Babylon. This great multitude, which may be the same crowd as in 7:9-12, is singing praise songs. Four times in these first six verses the familiar word Alleluia occurs. In fact, here is the only place in the New Testament where this specific word is used. In verse 6,

we see that all glory belongs to the great Omnipotent Creator (Almighty One, Pantocrator) and Redeemer.

In 19:7-10, we have “marriage uniting.” This is the marriage between the Lamb and His wife, His bride, the Church. I often kiddingly tell couples, when I stand before them at their wedding, to take a good look at each other because this is as good as it gets. Never again will they go to the expense of looking so perfect for one another. The bride takes great pains in making sure that every part of her dress and makeup is as good as it will ever be.

There were four parts to a Jewish wedding. First the Father of the groom pays the bride price. This was done for us at Calvary. Next the bride is fetched and brought to the Groom. This will occur in that moment when we are caught away with Him in the clouds. Following that comes the wedding ceremony, which is by invitation only. And finally, the marriage feast takes place, which could last for seven days.

John’s response to this great moment occurs in verse 10. He falls face down at the feet of the angel, but then is reminded that he is only to worship God.

In 19:11-21, the “Lamb comes fighting.” We have the climactic second coming of Christ. At His first coming, He rode into Jerusalem on a lowly donkey. At His return in the clouds of glory He will be pictured on a white horse, a symbol of royalty and power, such as the victorious Roman generals would ride. This will be

perhaps the first righteous and just war in all of history, and it really will be no contest. This is the ultimate shock and awe campaign, all coming from Him.

As seen in verse 14, He will be accompanied by His troops, the armies of heaven, clothed as the bride (verse 8). One could conclude that this is the bride herself (the Church), all true believers. Jude 14 reads, *“Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with tens of thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all...”*

The only weapon used in the campaign is a sharp sword (v. 15), presumably the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12 and Ephesians 6:17). The spoken Word will silence His enemies. This will be much like the Roman soldiers who numbered anywhere between 200 and 1,000 troops in John 18 who when they, with Judas, came to arrest Jesus, *“drew back and fell to the ground,”* when Jesus simply said, *“I am He, Jesus of Nazareth.”* Oh, there is power in the Creator’s Word.

Verses 17 to 21 describe the carnage that will occur at His coming. All the great militaries, and military leaders, including the world leaders involved will become a giant feast for the vultures. Psalm 2 and Zechariah 12 and 14 describe this horrible carnage.

Even the beast and false prophet are captured and cast into the lake of fire. We’re almost finished. Let’s review!

Chapter 19 - Heaven Delighting, Marriage Uniting, the Lamb Comes Fighting.



Chapter 20 - A Thousand Years of Plenty, Great White Throne Not Funny

Following Jesus' second coming, we have a literal thousand-year period known as the Golden Age, the millennial (Latin for 1,000 years) reign of Christ. During this age, Satan will be bound. Today, he is roaming free according to Ephesians 2:2, and I Peter 5:8 as well as other passages. The one thousand year period of time is mentioned six times in the first seven verses. I believe that this is the period of which the prophets spoke in the Old Testament referring to this coming Kingdom of Israel when Christ will rule over the world from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2, 11, 35, 65; Hosea 14; Joel 3; Amos 9; and Zechariah 14:16-21). With Satan bound, it will be a time of unprecedented prosperity and peace. In Acts 1:6, during the 40 days that Jesus appeared to His disciples, He proved Himself to be alive and spoke to them of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. They asked him, "*Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*" He didn't deny that it would be restored. He answered simply, "*It is not for you to know*

the times (eras) or the seasons (events) which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Our mission today is to be His witnesses.

But, as verses 4 to 6 declare, we shall rule and reign with Christ during that 1,000-year period. Following this 1,000-year period, Satan will be released a final time. He will return to his ways of deception (Rev. 20:8, John 8:44), perhaps to show that he cannot be rehabilitated, and that man, even in a perfect environment, absent the devil, is prone to sin. Then he is given the same destiny as the beast and false prophet. He will be cast into the lake of fire where all three will be tormented forever and ever.

Following the 1,000-year reign, we have the "Great White Throne Not Funny" in verses 11 to 15. All unbelievers who have ever lived will be brought before the throne of God. Even those lost at sea, whose bodies were never recovered, or those who have been cremated, all will be brought before Him (20:13). All the somebodies and the nobodies will be present at this judgment regardless of how well-known or unknown, significant or insignificant they might have been.

All of our works in life are recorded in the books. Doctors keep records on us. Would it be any surprise that the Divine Physician does the same? Nonbelievers will be judged according to their works, whether good

or bad. This will evidently determine where they spend their time in the lake of fire. As has been said, they are all going to the lake of fire. But this is to see where in hell they go. North hell might be cooler than south hell. There will be degrees of punishment in hell just as there are degrees of rewards in heaven.

If you have been memorizing the chapter titles as you go along, you should have a good overview of the teaching in the book of Revelation. You are almost finished! **Chapter 20 - A Thousand Years of Plenty, Great White Throne Not Funny.**



Chapter 21 - The New Jerusalem, No Need of the Sun

The last two chapters of Revelation address the eternal state that follows the 1,000-year reign of Christ. Much is said about heaven in these verses before us. First, heaven is a permanent state or place (verse 1). It is a new heaven and new earth. The first heaven and earth have passed away. Perhaps there is no more sea because the sea represented separation. The seas are dangerous places, as the recent tsunamis have reminded us. There will be nothing on earth left to destroy. This present heaven and earth is destined for destruction. *“By faith Abraham looked for a city which*

has foundations whose builder and maker is God,” Hebrews 11:10. *“For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”* Second, it is a prepared place. According to verse 2, *“It is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”* No detail is left out. In John 14:2 and 3 Jesus said, *“I go to prepare a place for you...”*

I remember when I first laid eyes on my bride as she came down the aisle on the arm of her father. Wow! There will be a lot of “wowing” in heaven. It is also a perfect place (verses 3 and 4). God Himself will be there. There will be no tears, death, sorrow, or crying. Neither shall there be any pain. I cannot get out of my mind the video of the granddad in Japan wailing over the loss of his wife, his son, and all of his grandchildren following the horrific earthquake and tsunami recently. What a tragedy! But there will be none of that in heaven. No more body bags and funeral processions.

The New Jerusalem is described in 21:9-27. It descends out of heaven from God. It has His glory. It is a dwelling place fit for the Creator. It will be a reflection of God’s own glory. Glory speaks of worth and weightiness. The city has beautiful walls around it that measure some 1400 miles, the distance from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. The shape of the city is a cube. There is plenty of room in this new city. The walls are made up of all kinds of beautiful stones that will take our breath away the moment we see them. Twice we have stood at Victoria Falls in Africa and been overwhelmed at the awesome display of

power and beauty. Nothing on this side of heaven can begin to compare with the beauty that we will see in the New Jerusalem. There will be twelve gates that might well represent the twelve tribes of Israel in the Old Testament and the twelve apostles in the New Testament.

John is also intrigued by what he does not see there. There is no temple (verse 22). There is no need for it. The Old Testament temple only symbolized the dwelling place of God. Now God will be present with His people. There is no sun there, and neither the moon. In verse 23 we learn that the glory of God and of the Lamb will furnish more than enough light. There is nothing that defiles or is unholy. II Peter 3:13 remind us that, *“We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”* We can only imagine a world without sin. Remember! **Revelation 21 - The New Jerusalem, No Need for the Sun.**



Revelation 22 - The Curse Is Through, He's Coming For You, Three Warnings Are Due

John now has a vision of the eternal state in which the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal is flowing down from the throne of God and of the Lamb. There is

something appealing about pure water in a creek, river, lake or ocean. Some bodies of water are so clear that you can see the fish several feet below. There is no pollution in this river of life.

This River represents prosperity and productivity according to verse 2. The curse placed upon man and his environment in Genesis 3 is now removed. Paradise has been restored. Everything about this environment is perfect—a fitting tribute to its Creator.

The Lamb's servants will be serving Him, for this is what gives us the most fulfilling existence. We will be seeing Him in all of His beauty. As the great hymn writer Fanny Crosby, who was blind almost from birth, wrote:

*Some day the silver chord will break, and I no more as
now shall sing,
But, Oh the joy, when I shall wake, within the palace of
the King.
And I shall see Him face to face and tell the story saved
by grace.
And I shall see Him face to face and tell the story saved
by grace.*

Yes, finally His servants will see Him, according to verse 4. Fanny Crosby was also reported to have said that if she could live her life over, she would like to be blind, so that the first face she ever sees will be the face of Jesus.

His servants are reigning with Him. What a day that will be! There is an old legend of an eagle and a crane:

A beautiful eagle came down out of the heavens and lit on the banks of a river where a crane was wading about seeking snails. The crane asked, "Where are you from?" The eagle replied, "I came down from heaven." The crane asked, "Where is heaven?" The eagle responded, "Heaven, have you never heard of heaven? It has gates made of pearl and walls made of all kinds of precious stones. The Creator's glory enlightens it. The streets are of pure gold. There is never any night there. A beautiful clear river runs through the heart of the New Jerusalem."

In eloquent terms the eagle described the celestial city, but he never aroused the slightest interest on the part of the crane. Finally the crane asked, "Are there any snails there?" "Snails," the eagle said, "No, of course not."

"Then," said the crane as it continued its search through the dirty murky waters along the slimy banks, "You can have your heaven," it said. "I want my snails."

Many today respond as the crane. How about you? Are you the crane or the eagle?

The curse is lifted and a new day has come. **Chapter 22 - The Curse Is Through, He's Coming For You, Three Warnings Are Due** is the memory title I have assigned to this final chapter of Revelation. Three times we have in red letters Christ's final words to His people, "*Behold I am coming quickly*" (22:7,12,20). In the Old Testament there are 1,845 references to Jesus' second coming. In the New Testament there are 318 references to His second coming. To say it another way, one out of thirty verses in New Testament make reference to Jesus as coming again. These are faithful and true words (verse 6). You can take them to the bank. He is coming again to receive His own, and to rule and reign. The word "quickly" in each of these three verses refers to the suddenness and rapidity in which that moment will come about. It will be "*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*" according to I Corinthians 15:52. Are you ready?

The humorous story is told about a young preacher in a small town pastorate, who one Sunday night was preaching on this passage. As he touched on verse 7, he thundered, "*Behold, I am coming quickly.*" He leaned a little heavily on the pulpit, but not enough to do any damage. Then He shouted out verse 12, "*Behold, I am coming quickly.*" This time he leaned a little bit more on the pulpit and it began to give way. Finally, he cried out in verse 20, "*Surely, I am coming quickly.*" This time he put his full weight on the pulpit. It collapsed forward, taking him with it. He fell over the pulpit and landed in the lap of an elderly woman in the front pew. He got up, dusted himself off, and deeply

apologized to the lady for what had just happened. She said, “Oh pastor, you need not apologize. You warned me three times that you were coming.”

He has given us plenty of warning. One of these days the heavens are going to be opened and we will see the regal King of Kings in all of His glory. The Bible is clear that Jesus came the first time to pay sin’s penalty. Today, He is interceding on our behalf to save us from the power of sin. But when He comes again, He will save us from the very presence of sin.

He came to bring us deliverance from sin’s penalty, sin’s power and sin’s presence. The good news from Revelation is that “We Win!” Are you on His side? Have you trusted Him as your only means of salvation? That is the most important question that you can ever be asked, because how you answer it will determine where you spend all of eternity.



REVIEW

Let's review the entire list of chapter titles as your keys to *The Revelation to Remember*.

- ☞ Chapter 1 - The Revelation of the Son
- ☞ Chapters 2 and 3 - The Churches That Be, 4 Plus 3, ESP-TSP-L:
 - Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos
 - Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia
 - Laodicea
- ☞ Chapter 4 - Heaven's Open Door, 24 Elders, 4 Creatures & More
- ☞ Chapter 5 - The Lamb's Alive, All Heaven Does Jive
- ☞ Chapter 6 - 6 of 7 Seals Unfixed
- ☞ Chapter 7 - 144,000 On Earth, Plus A Great Multitude in Heaven
- ☞ Chapter 8 - 4 of 7 Trumpets Reverberate
- ☞ Chapter 9 - The Locusts Dine, 200,000,000 Kill 1/3 Of Mankind

- ☛ Chapter 10 - Indigestion
- ☛ Chapter 11 - 2 Witnesses From Heaven,
Plus Trumpet #7
- ☛ Chapter 12 - 12 Starred Woman's Travail,
Satan Cast Out, But Cannot Prevail
- ☛ Chapter 13 - 2 Evil Beasts Appear On
The Scene
- ☛ Chapter 14 - The Lamb Standing, and
Then Reaping
- ☛ Chapter 15 - The Songs of Moses and
of The Lamb Singing
- ☛ Chapter 16 - 7 Bowls Seething
- ☛ Chapter 17 - The Great Harlot Sitting,
Reigning and Then Burning
- ☛ Chapter 18 - Great Babylon Falling
- ☛ Chapter 19 - Heaven Delighting,
Marriage Uniting, The Lamb Comes Fighting
- ☛ Chapter 20 - 1,000 Years of Plenty,
Great White Throne Not Funny
- ☛ Chapter 21 - The New Jerusalem,
No Need of the Sun
- ☛ Chapter 22 - The Curse Is Through,
He's Coming For You, 3 Warnings Are Due

