

**AN EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF  
REVELATION**

By

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*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:3).*

To HIM

who is the spirit of Prophecy

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Prepared and edited by Oliver J. Siemens  
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## Chapter 1

### Preliminary Considerations

To the average Christian the word prophecy instantly calls attention to something about the future. This is a limited meaning of the word.

#### The Significance of the Word "Prophecy."

The term "prophecy" literally means to speak in behalf of another, in other words, to be a mouthpiece of the Deity. With this broad, definite meaning it is clear that anything that a man of God spoke while under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was prophecy—whether it referred to past, present or future events. This original, primary meaning of the word "prophecy" finds expression in the Hebrew Bible. Men who lived after the events which they related had to receive knowledge of that which they were writing by the aid and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In a true sense the writers of the historical portions of the Old Testament were prophets. At times they spoke concerning things that were present before them. God frequently made a revelation concerning these, but it was by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that He made the disclosure. This type of message from God was likewise called prophecy because the speaker was delivering a message from God. Again, the message from God frequently pertained to things in the future. From these statements we see that any message which a man of God delivered, irrespective of whether he was talking about things past, present or future, was a prophetic message.

In our day we have limited the meaning of the word "prophecy" to those matters which deal with the future. If we examine the Word of God carefully we shall see that a large portion of the Word is devoted to future events. In the Pentateuch there are some predictions with reference to the future. Throughout the historical portions of the Old Testament there are similar predictions. The book of Psalms is largely prophetic. There are a few of the Psalms that are devotional in their nature. Practically all of the messages of the writing prophets (and there are seventeen of them) are bringing messages about future things. In the Gospels we have much prophecy. For instance, the thirteenth chapter of Matthew setting forth the parables of the kingdom; the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and 25 are pure prophecy. The same thing is true with reference to Mark and Luke. In Acts we have several prophecies. There is also prophecy in the Jewish section of Romans, chapters 9, 10 and 11. In the Epistles we find various predictions. The last book of the Bible is devoted entirely to predictive prophecy. If one wishes to avoid predictive prophecy he will have to close his eyes to a very large portion of the revealed Word of God. No born-again child of God will want to do that.

### The Gradual Unfolding of the Prophetic Word

Prophecy properly begins with Genesis 3:15, which is the text of the entire Bible. Throughout this book of beginnings and in all of the Scriptures are many prophetic utterances which are of the utmost importance to a proper understanding of God's plans and purposes. One must have a fairly accurate knowledge of the revelation found in the Old Testament in order that he might comprehend that which is disclosed in the New Testament.

## The Book of Revelation the Culmination of Prophecy

Someone has written an exposition of the book of Revelation in two parts and entitled his volumes *The Crown Jewel of Prophecy*. This is an appropriate title. The first volume deals with the prophecies found in the Old Testament. The final volume deals exclusively with the book of Revelation. If one is to understand the book of Revelation properly he must know the prophecies in the Old Testament and in the New. Being thoroughly acquainted with what Moses, the prophets and the apostles said, the Bible student is prepared to look at the *Crown Jewel of Prophecy*.

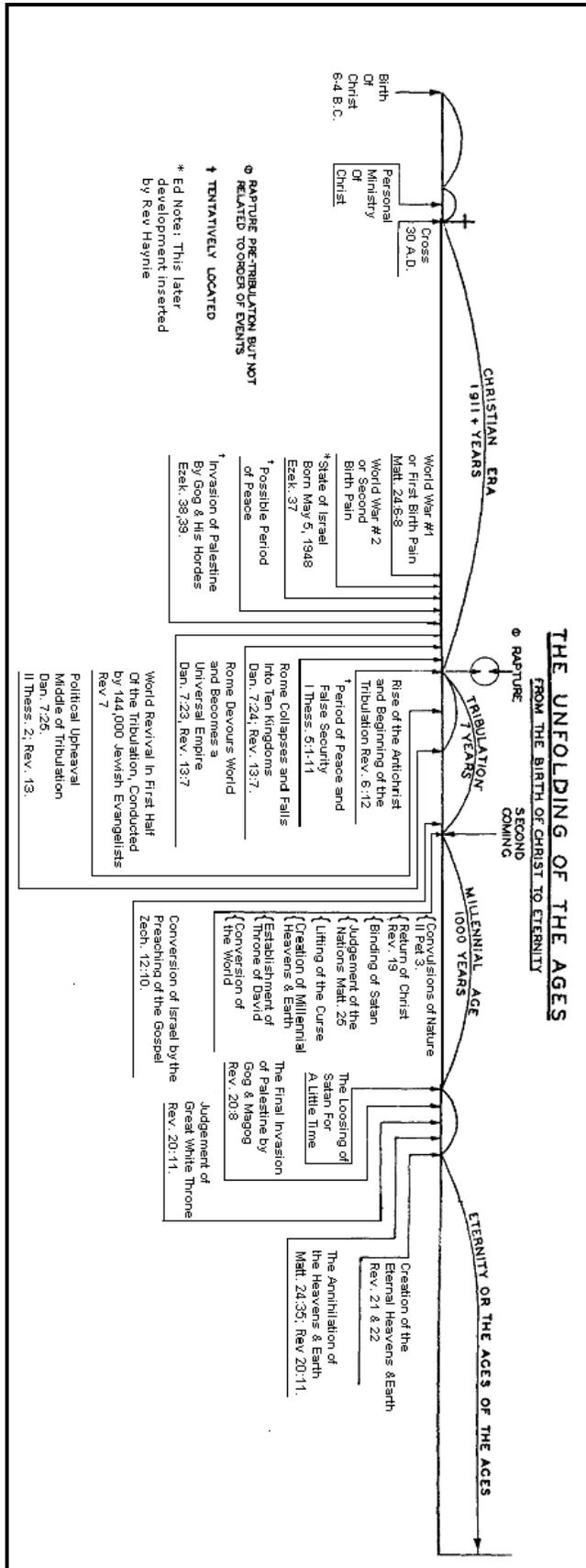
### Special Blessing to the One Who Reads the Book of Revelation

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, *even* the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John; who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:1-3).

In comparing the books of the Bible you will find that there is no other book that has more Gospel—that presents Christ in all the plenitude of His power and wisdom and might and glory than the book of Revelation. There are also many exhortations and much instruction for the people of God. So God especially promises a real blessing to the one who reads; to those that listen; to those that take the message seriously and keep the things that are written in the book.

There is a blessing for anyone who will read any portion of God's Word. In fact, God instructed His people of Israel to read the Word and the priests were appointed to teach it to the people. The Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth that the things that happened to Israel

occurred to them by way of example and that "they are written for our admonition upon whom the end of the ages is come." Moreover, the Apostle Paul told Timothy: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16,17).



THE UNFOLDING OF THE AGES: The chart, “the Unfolding of the Ages” reveals the major prophetic events from the birth of Christ to the ages of ages. Note particularly the culminating prophecies in the book of Revelation.

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This statement refers to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, but what is true of them is likewise true about all of the New Testament. Every Christian should aspire to be useful and profitable in the Master's cause. It takes every book of the Bible to make one furnished completely unto every good work. For instance, if anyone wishes to understand God's dealings with men and His overruling providence among the nations, he should read and study the book of Job. Its message is as fresh today as it was the day on which it was written, and the truths contained therein are as correct today as they were when they were penned.

In the Apostolic Age very few people, comparatively speaking, were able to read and write. Most people had to depend upon the literate ones to read for them. The illiterate were not barred from the blessings promised to the reader of the book. He could get someone to read it to him, could listen with an attentive ear, an open heart, a receptive mind and receive the blessing promised to them "that hear the words of the prophecy."

When doing research for my Doctor's degree, I went through at least one hundred fifty volumes of Greek papyri, selecting and studying everything that came from the first century of the Christian era. Literally hundreds of letters and documents would close this way: "I, so and so, write this in behalf of so and so, who does not know letters." There was very little education among those living in the

Greco-Roman world. Any man wanting to have a document written had to go to a public stenographer.

The things contained in the book of Revelation are so very clear that anyone can understand its contents. There are wonderful blessings promised to those who read it, who hear it, and who do the things contained in the book. The promise of blessing to those who keep the words of the book of Revelation shows positively that it can be understood by those who really are seeking to know and to do the will of God. God does not require anything of man that he cannot fulfill. He is not party to such deception. We therefore conclude that the book of Revelation can be understood and that the things therein can be kept.

### The Significance of the Word "Revelation"

The word in the original text translated "revelation" means to remove the cover, to take off the veil. That is, to expose to the view, or gaze upon that which has been covered up or unseen. Those Scriptures that deal with the past and reveal to us what was done in days gone by remove the covering from the past and bring to light that which has already transpired. The same thing is true with reference to the future. Certain portions of the Word, which we call prophecy, remove the covering from the future and enable people to see ahead of time that which is coming to pass. Moses and the prophets spoke of the first coming of the Messiah. Had the Jews read with open minds and receptive hearts the messages of the prophets, and had they known God in a personal manner, they would not have rejected Him. But not knowing God and being ignorant of the Scriptures, they literally fulfilled them in condemning Him. As people before the first coming of Christ could look into the written Word and could see what God said would come to pass, they were

able to recognize the fulfillments of the prophecies as they were being fulfilled. At the present time we can read the prophetic Word dealing with the present and the future and can recognize in current events the fulfillment of many predictions. In view of these facts it is no wonder that the Apostle Peter said that "we have the word of prophecy made more sure; where-unto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:19-21).

## SOME SPECIAL SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE PROPHETIC WORD

### Try to Divest Oneself of All Preconceptions

All preconceptions or prejudices are blinding and hinder one from seeing the truth. In other words, a person must have an insatiable desire to know truth and a determination not to allow his preconceptions and preferences to sway his judgment or to determine his thinking. Thus, anyone by the Spirit of God should pray that he might be divested of all preconceptions and prejudices.

### Hunt for the Truth

A man must make an honest effort in his quest for truth. He must remember the promise that God makes in such passages as Proverbs 2:1-5 in which we see the four conditions for understanding the Word of God: (1) To be willing to receive the Word of God; (2) to lay it up in the heart; (3) to pray for spiritual understanding; and (4) to search the Scriptures.

### Be Open to Conviction—But Not Gullible

A person must also be open aggressively in his quest for truth. He must have such a desire for righteousness, truth and justice that he is actually hunting for it. Some study the Bible from different motives. But the one and only motive that should actuate a student in his Bible study is to learn the truth.

When anyone assumes an open mind to receive any and all truth he must avoid being gullible and investigate that which is presented to him. Should not we be like the noble Bereans of whom we read in Acts 17:11,12? "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few."

### Put Into Practice Whatever is Learned

Whenever one learns any truth, he should put that into practice. If he does not, then it is soon lost. Whenever one learns a new truth and does not express it in words or actions, the truth just learned will not be his very long.

### The Golden Rule of Interpretation

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.

Do you know that much harm has been done by those who study the book of Revelation who do not observe this general, fundamental rule? As it states, we are to take every word at its primary, ordinary,

usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages, indicate clearly otherwise. We are never to say that a passage is figurative unless the facts of the context indicate that fact. Only when there is positive evidence that a passage is not used in a literal sense are we justified in departing from the ordinary, literal meaning. We should make allowances for figures of speech in the prophetic Word the same as we do in the historical portions of the Scriptures. Also, whenever the facts of a context indicate that a passage is used in a symbolic sense, we are to interpret the symbol according to God's significance which He attaches to the same.

#### The Author and the Time of Writing the Book of Revelation

Among conservative scholars it is agreed that the Apostle John, the disciple that leaned on Jesus' breast, is the author of the Gospel, the three Epistles bearing his name, and the book of Revelation. There are those of the advanced school of criticism who challenge the Johannine authorship of the book of Revelation. One of the principle reasons for denying to John its authorship is that its vocabulary, style and diction vary considerably from that of the Gospel and the three Epistles. When a person recognizes that the subject matter of Revelation is entirely different from that of the Gospel and the Epistles and that God took John as he was and spoke through him, then he can see how John the Apostle could be the author of the book and yet use a different style and diction from that employed in the Gospel and the three Epistles.

Many scholars believe John was a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos for the Word of God and the testimony which he bore to the Lord Jesus. This occurred during the reign of Domitian, the Roman emperor, in the year A.D. 96. John addressed this revelation to the

seven churches (local congregations) which were in the west central part of Asia Minor.

### A Birds-Eye View of Revelation

From Rev. 1:19 we learn that it naturally falls into three general divisions: First, "the things which thou sawest"; secondly, "the things which are"; and thirdly, "the things which shall come to pass hereafter." Chapter 1 constitutes the first division. The second section consists of chapters 2 and 3, which contain letters written to the seven churches. The third division starts with chapter 4 and runs to the end of the book.

The regular apostolic prayer and blessing appears in the first chapter followed by a description of the glorified Son of Man. His countenance reveals that He was indignant over the situation which had developed among the churches. Though He is kind and full of compassion, His wrath is stirred at sin and wickedness.

A glance at chapters 2 and 3 shows that the seven letters to the different congregations cover every conceivable condition which may arise in the church. These messages also reflect different periods of Church History. This is confirmed by comparing these letters with the seven parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13 which forecast the course of Christendom through the centuries to the coming of Christ. Additional confirmation is found by studying the various periods of Church History in the light of these letters and the parables. In view of these facts there can be little doubt that these letters had, not only a local and historic application for the Apostle's day, but also a dispensational significance.

The data given in chapters 4 and 5 presuppose that the Rapture of the saints has already occurred. In this section we have a vision of Heaven as it will be immediately before and during the Tribulation.

Chapters 6 to 19 inclusive give us a graphic description of the judgments and their effects upon earth as they fall upon it during the entire Tribulation Period.

Chapter 20 presents a description of the 1,000 years' reign of our Lord upon earth and the judgment of the Great White Throne after the Millennial Age.

The last two chapters of the book describe the eternal heavens and earth which are created after the present heavens and earth have passed away. The present heavens and earth are repaired and remodeled at the end of the Tribulation. The new Jerusalem of these chapters comes down out of the eternal heavens and rests upon the eternal earth.

Let us enter this study with prayerful hearts that God may open our eyes to behold the wonderful things contained in the final message from Heaven to earth.

Suppose the New Testament closed with the book of Jude and we did not have the book of Revelation. All of the ragged ends of the Old Testament (and there would be ragged ends of the New Testament) would be left dangling. We would not have a complete revelation.

## Chapter 2

### Outline of the Book of Revelation

Introduction (1:1-8).

The Key to the Book (1:19).

- I. The Things Which Thou Sawest—Vision of the Glorified Son of Man (1:9-20).
  
- II. The Things Which are—Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. 2 and 3).
  - A. Ephesus (2:1-7).
  - B. Smyrna (2:8-11).
  - C. Pergamum (2:12-17).
  - D. Thyatira (2:18-29).
  - E. Sardis (3:1-6).
  - F. Philadelphia (3:7-13).
  - G. Laodicea (3:14-22).
  
- III. The Things Which Shall Come to Pass Hereafter (Rev. 4-22).
  - A. The Vision in Heaven (Rev. 4 and 5).
  - B. The Tribulation (Rev. 6-19).
    1. The Seal Judgments (6:1-17).
    2. The 144,000 Jewish Evangelists and the World-wide Revival (7:1-17).
    3. The Trumpet Judgments (8:1-9:21; 11:14).
    4. Small Parenthesis (10:1-11:14).
      - a. The Little Book Eaten by John (10:1-11).
      - b. The Temple and the Holy City (11:1-13).

5. The Great Parenthesis (11:15-15:8).
    - a. Advance Announcement of Outcome of the Second Half of the Tribulation (11:15-19).
    - b. The Woman, Child and Dragon (12:1-17).
    - c. The Two Wild Beasts (13:1-18).
    - d. Special Announcements (14:1-15:8).
      - (1) Regarding 144,000 Redeemed on Mount Zion (14:1-5).
      - (2) Regarding the Everlasting Gospel (14:6, 7).
      - (3) Regarding the Fall of Babylon (the Harlot) (14:8).
      - (4) Warning Against Taking the Mark of the Beast (14:9-12).
      - (5) Revelation Concerning the Martyrs of the Second Half of the Tribulation (14:13).
      - (6) The Harvest of the Earth (14:14-16).
      - (7) The Vintage of the Earth (14:17-20).
    - e. Vision of the Martyrs of the Second Half of the Tribulation (15:1-4).
    - f. The Seven Angels With Bowl Judgments Prepare for Action (15:5-8).
  6. The Bowl Judgments (16:1-21).
  7. Information Supplemental to Account of Second Half of Tribulation (Rev. 17-19).
    - a. The Fall of Babylon the Harlot in Middle of Tribulation (17:1-18).
    - b. The Fall of Babylon the City at End of Tribulation (18:1-24).
    - c. The Second Coming of Christ and Attending Events (19:1- 21).
- C. The Millennium and Its Aftermath (20:1-15).
1. The Millennium (20:1-6).
  2. The Short Period Following the Millennium (20:7-10).

3. The Judgment of the Great White Throne (20:11-15).

D. The Eternal Order (21:1-22:21).

### Four Theories of Approach

The contents of the book is of such nature that the viewpoint from which the book is surveyed determines its interpretation.

One of four familiar theories is that known as the *preterist* interpretation. This hypothesis assumes that John was writing about things that were in existence in his own day, A.D. 96. From this point of view all the data must be forced into a peculiar mold which sees and interprets the language as applying only to that day and time—a very illogical approach.

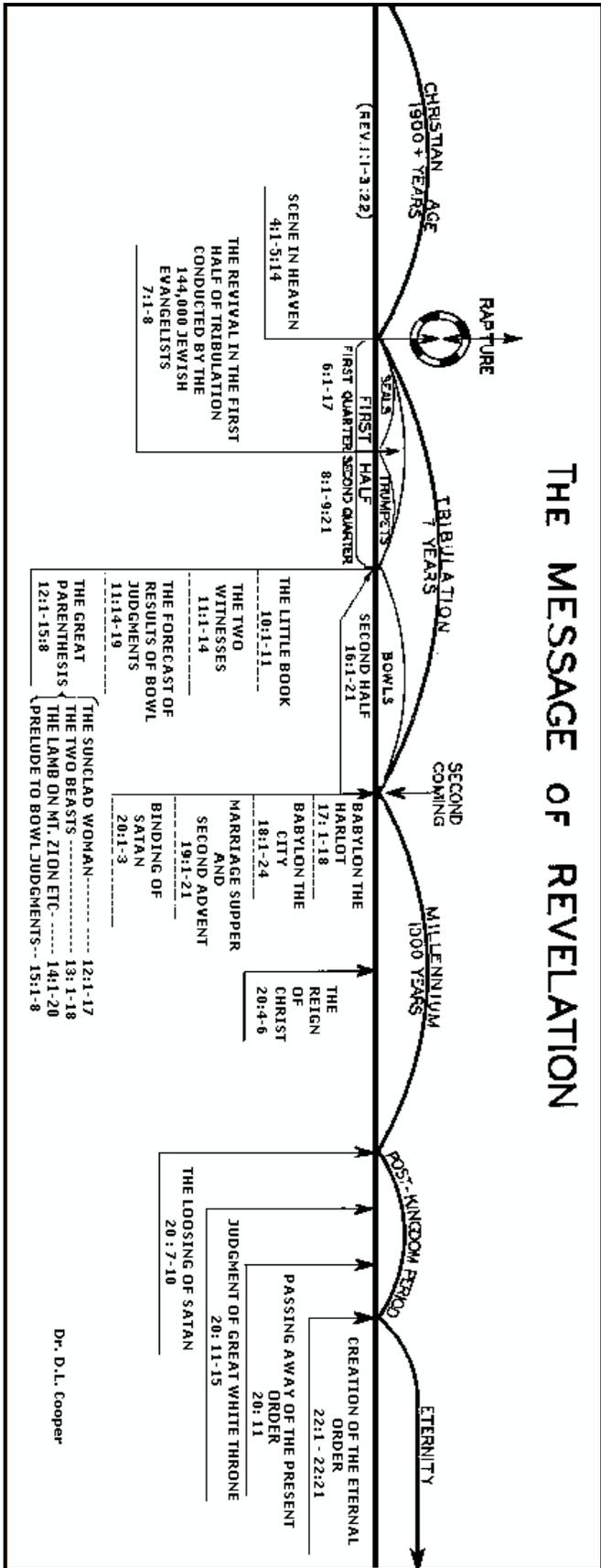
The second is known as the *historical* theory, or hypothesis. This point of view assumes that John was describing the major events which would occur during the Christian Dispensation. This view, therefore, must be doctored and forced to fit into the scheme of secular history. In other words, this theory assumes that the book of Revelation is Church History pre-written in a kind of symbolic or figurative manner.

Another system is known as the *spiritualizing* school. These interpreters assume that everything in the book is figurative or metaphorical. They believe John was describing a spiritual conflict: the fight between the forces of good and evil, and the ultimate triumph of Christ over the Devil and his forces.

The last of the four theories is the *futurist* view. Those holding this view simply take the book for what it says, interpreting its literal language at face value unless there are facts in the context which indicate a departure from the normal, or literal, meaning of the passage. They believe that the first three chapters of the book of

Revelation are historical, even though there are certain prophetic elements and promises contained in them. Beginning with Revelation, chapter 4, and continuing to the end, the Apostle wrote about things yet future; events that will occur in the Tribulation, the Millennium and throughout eternity. Taking everything into consideration, the student cannot avoid this conclusion: that the premillennial interpretation is the only logical system to be followed.

So far as predictions are concerned, there is nothing new in the first twenty chapters of the book. Practically everything appearing in this portion of the Word may be found in the Old Testament.



THE MESSAGE OF REVELATION—The chart, “The Message of Revelation”, is an uncovering of the future from the Christian age to the eternal order.

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The great fundamental truths, set forth by Moses and the prophets, are assembled in the Revelation and presented in various settings and combinations. There is simply a bringing together of the many lines of prophetic thought to be woven into a grand fabric of providential occurrences which are yet future. One must constantly study and refer to the Old Testament in order to determine fully the force and meaning of many of the passages in this book.

#### Introduction (Rev. 1:1-8)

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, *even* the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John; who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand.

"John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us *to be* a kingdom, *to be* priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall

see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

In the first statement we see the words "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The word "revelation" in the original, as already indicated, means *to remove the covering, to expose to view*. The book therefore claims to expose the future so that the people of God may see what is yet to come. Having confidence in every word of the inspired text, we shall believe that this book is indeed a divine disclosure, mediated through Jesus Christ, to the servants of God. We are told that God gave this revelation to Christ to pass on to His servants. Why is it said that God gave the revelation to Christ, since He was God and equal to the Father? The answer lies in the fact that the second person of the Holy Trinity limited Himself. Though He existed in the form of God, Christ thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself—laid aside the glory He had with the Father from all eternity and took on the form of a servant. He entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. He went to the cross to suffer and die for mankind. He was buried. He was raised with a glorified body. He ascended to Heaven and became our great High Priest to intercede in our behalf. All good and perfect gifts come to us from God, through Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

What do the names Jesus and Christ mean? The word "Jesus" comes from a Hebrew word transliterated *Joshua*, meaning *Jehovah-salvation*, "Christ" is the Greek word for the *Anointed One*. Christ is the Messiah, the King of Israel.

The Lord gave this revelation to be delivered to "his servants," or "bondservants," as Christians are called. We have been set at liberty

by Christ and the Lord's freedman is the Lord's bonds slave and vice versa.

The things which are revealed in the book of Revelation, as stated in verse 1, "must shortly come to pass." The first things set forth in this prophetic program were to come to pass shortly, and they did begin to come to pass soon after the revelation was made. The word "shortly" may also be translated *speedily*, *quickly*, or *soon*. As the time arrives for any of the foretold events to come to pass, they do so with swiftness.

The word rendered "signified" has been misunderstood. According to a prevalent theory it means to *sign-i-fy*, that is, to *write in signs*. The Greek word conveys no such idea. It is a mistake to interpret this word as indicating that the book of Revelation is written in signs, or symbols. In some instances, as in Rev. 12:1, 12:3 and 15:1, God called certain things signs, and we dare not interpret them as being literal objects. We are never to interpret anything in the Bible as a sign except where the facts clearly indicate such to be the meaning.

This message was sent to John, the faithful witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of the Lord Jesus, he who was suffering banishment on account of his boldness in Christ.

According to Rev. 1:3 a special blessing is pronounced upon those who read the book of Revelation; upon those who hear it read (being unable to read for themselves); and upon those who keep, or observe, the things written in this book. God would not mock His servants by promising a particular blessing—even to the ignorant one who can only listen to the reading—if it were so very mysterious that it could not be understood.

If the time were near in the first century—when the message was newly given—certainly it must be much nearer in the twentieth century, for all of the signs of the times so indicate.

## The Prayer and Dedication

According to verse 4, the book of Revelation was originally sent to the seven churches. In behalf of these churches (and all other churches through-out the age) a special prayer is made by John: "Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:4, 5). Grace and peace in the soul come from God alone.

The word "grace" has various shades of meanings. For instance, grace "was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal" (2 Tim. 1:9). God's grace (spiritual power) is sufficient for us now (2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 4:16). Then grace is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus (1 Peter 1:13). The peace for which John intercedes in behalf of the churches is the peace of Christ in the heart which passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7). Christ miraculously bestowed that peace upon the Apostles. When a person accepts Christ today, the Lord puts peace and assurance in his heart. One of the fruits of the Spirit is peace (Gal. 5:22, 23). The grace and peace, for which John is making supplication, comes from the Holy Trinity: from God the Father "who is and who was and who is to come"; from "the seven Spirits that are before his throne"; and "from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." In Isaiah 11:1, 2 the Holy Spirit is spoken of in terms of the seven things which He does in and through Jesus Christ. All blessings which we enjoy come from the three Personalities of the Holy Trinity. Our prayers are to be directed to God the Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. This we learn by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Our Lord Jesus is "the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth." He always sought to do the will of God the Father and not His own. He faithfully declared the will of God, regardless of circumstances and conditions. He challenged His opponents by asking them to point out one thing in which He was wrong. They could not point to one. Jesus asked, "which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John 8:46).

He was the "firstborn of the dead" in that He was the first and only one who died, and who was raised back to life never to see death again. Others before Him had been raised from the dead, but not to immortal life. He, being the first one to have this glorious experience, is said to be the "firstborn of the dead." In the family of Israel the firstborn always had the preeminence, the double portion and the birthright. Christ is called the "firstborn" in Psalm 89:27: "I also will make him my first-born." He is to have the preeminence, the birthright.

He will also be "the highest of the kings of the earth." Moreover, He is "the ruler of the kings of the earth." All authority in Heaven and in earth has been given unto Him and He is the Supreme Sovereign. Sometimes it seems as if the nations of earth are having their own way and that Satan has full control. This is not true for our Lord is overruling, guiding and directing the course of human events and history. He is steering all things toward the great, grand and glorious consummation, yet in the future.

According to the latter part of verse 5, Christ "loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood." The word rendered *loveth* is in the linear verb stem and indicates continued action. He loved us in the past; He loves us in the present; and He will continue to love us! But the verb rendered *loosed* is in the aorist tense, and indicates one act that has already been accomplished. This passage is in accord with

the doctrine of the finished work of Christ on the cross, by which all who accept Him are saved and cleansed by His blood. The one who is thus regenerated has been loosed from all his sins—past, present and future. This is an accomplished fact because of the blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin.

### The Kingdom of God

We who are saved constitute a kingdom (vs. 6) and we now acknowledge the sovereignty of our blessed Lord and Saviour. We are in the spiritual kingdom of God now—having been translated from the kingdom of darkness "into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Col. 1:13, 14). There are five usages of the term, kingdom of God; unfortunately, too little study has been devoted to this all-embracing theme. For instance, in Psalm 103:19-22 it refers to the universe. In 1 Chronicles 28:4, 5 the kingdom of Jehovah is coextensive with the literal kingdom of Israel. In John 3:3-5 this phrase refers to the spiritual kingdom of God in which only regenerate men are found. It has a different connotation in the parables of the kingdom appearing in Matt. 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8; here it refers to Christendom which might be represented graphically by a large circle. The Church of Jesus Christ, the real kingdom of God in which all regenerate people are, is within this circle of Christendom—a circle within a circle. Matthew, in recording the parables of the kingdom, used the term, "the kingdom of heaven," where Mark and Luke have "kingdom of God." The fifth meaning of the expression, kingdom of God, is seen in its application to the Millennial age of our Lord (Matt. 6:10). One must examine the facts of each context in order to determine the significance of these expressions.

Moreover, we are priests "unto his God and Father." Every Christian is a priest (a go-between), approaching God in behalf of not only his own needs, but those of his fellow Christians and of the world.

To Christ will be "the glory and the dominion for ever and ever." The expression "for ever and ever" is literally "unto the ages of the ages" and the significance of that expression is what we should think of when we use the words "for ever and ever"; that is, into the ages of the ages of all eternity. At this point the Apostle John utters a fervent "Amen" which means "May it be thus!"

According to verse 7, Christ will come with the clouds: "Behold, he cometh with the clouds." This verse is the text of the book of Revelation. This same thought is made known by the angels who stood by the disciples as Jesus ascended (Acts 1:9-11).

When Jesus comes in fulfillment of this promise, at the end of the Tribulation, "every eye shall see him." This means that every mortal living at that time will see Christ as He comes in power and great glory. Jesus expressed the same thought earlier as recorded in Matthew 24:30: "and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." John also informs us that "they that pierced him" shall likewise see Him. This means that those who clamored for the death of Christ, as well as those who actually did the executing, will (from Hades, where they have been ever since their death) see Christ coming in power and great glory. That is what the Lord Jesus said to Caiaphas, when the latter asked Him if He were the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel (Matt. 26:63, 64). "But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith

unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." John was eager for the Lord Jesus to return, therefore he exclaimed, "Even so, Amen."

The introduction to the book of Revelation closes with a profound statement by God the Father concerning Himself: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (vs. 8). The Father, the Self-existing One, who sent this message to the churches, is the One who inhabits eternity: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit ..." (Isa. 57:15). He who is the Almighty Sovereign, seated upon the throne of the universe, has sent the message of the book of Revelation through "Jesus Christ ... the faithful witness" to all His servants in order that they might understand the future and conform their lives to His eternal plans and purposes.

## Chapter 3

### The Glorified Son of Man (Rev.1)

John, A Prisoner of the Lord

"I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience *which are* in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as white wool, *white* as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it has been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one: and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven

churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches" (Rev. 1:9-20).

For our first consideration is the fact that the Apostle John was in prison when he received this revelation. In writing to the seven churches of Asia, the Apostle spoke of himself as "your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience." An impressive thought here is that the apostolic writers placed themselves on the same level with all their brethren; they never elevated themselves to an ecclesiastical pedestal to usurp authority over them. John was simply a brother; he had the same precious faith which they possessed in common in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Other things held in common were "the tribulation and kingdom and patience *which are* in Jesus." So far as we know, the churches in Asia at this time were not suffering any great persecutions. But as John told them the church at Smyrna would experience some persecution in the immediate future. The apostolic writers never shrank from any persecution; rather they considered such to be a part of their lives. Let us differentiate between the statement by John—that he was a partaker with them "in the tribulation"—and that period of time which is usually called "the great Tribulation." The Apostle Paul assured the churches which he established on his first missionary tour that "... through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God [the Millennial Kingdom]" (Acts 14:22). John was referring to such tribulations. The Great Tribulation, mentioned in Revelation 7:14, is a period of seven years with which this present Christian Dispensation concludes, during which God's severest judgments will fall upon the earth.

John was likewise a partaker of the kingdom along with the brethren to whom he was writing. The kingdom about which he was writing is the present, spiritual kingdom into which we were brought

when translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of the Son of God's love (Col. 1:13). This spiritual kingdom was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. One enters it by being born again—by being regenerated by the Spirit of God. But those who are in this present spiritual kingdom will enter into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ when He comes with His saints, at the conclusion of the Tribulation Period. John was likewise a partaker of the patience which is in Christ. The word rendered "patience" is in the footnote of the Revised Version (published 1901) translated *stedfastness*. Persecutions and trials develop in the faithful child of God the qualities of stedfastness and patience.

John was on the Isle of Patmos because he was preaching the Word of God and giving testimony concerning the Lord Jesus. How long he was there we do not know. We have no information as to where and when he was arrested and banished to the island. It is quite probable that he was arrested in Ephesus where he was engaged in a longtime ministry.

### The Lord's Day

John states that he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" when he received this revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is the meaning of "the Lord's day"? Two answers have been given: first, that the reference is to the first day of the week; second, that "the day of Jehovah" or "the day of the Lord" is indicated. It seems probable that John is here referring to the first day of the week. The fact to consider is that the word translated "Lord's" is an adjective, used only twice in the New Testament; properly rendered it would read "lordly." In 1 Corinthians Paul refers to the "lordly supper" which our translation renders "the Lord's supper" (1 Cor. 11:20). Since, in this verse, John

was giving data concerning his location and the time, naturally this expression, "lordly day," would indicate what is called "the Lord's day," the first day of the week.

In what way does John use the designation "the day of Jehovah" or "the day of the Lord"? It is altogether possible that when the Spirit came upon him he was carried forward in vision to the time of the Tribulation. In the Old Testament this is called "the day of Jehovah" or "the day of the Lord." John could have been thinking in such terms and was indicating that he was transported to the time of the Great Tribulation. There is no doubt (see 2 Peter 1:19-21) but what he *was* carried forward by the Spirit and that he was let down in the midst of the judgments of "the day of the Lord." It is not likely, however, that this is his thought in Rev. 1:10. It is more probable that he was explaining that it was on the first day of the week when he received the revelation.

Pursuant to the instructions given to John, the book of Revelation was sent to the seven churches in the little province of Asia, then in the western part of Asia Minor. Since it was directed to seven different churches we might assume that a circular letter was dispatched to those respective congregations. It is quite likely that the original autograph penned by the Apostle John was first dispatched to the church at Ephesus since that is the first church mentioned in Rev. 1:11 and is the first of the seven to which a letter is addressed, as indicated in Rev. 2:1. It is possible that when this letter was received by the church at Ephesus, a copy was made and the original sent on to Smyrna, the next church on the list. This church also made a duplicate of the letter and, retaining their copy, forwarded the original on to the next church. Finally, it is quite likely that copies were made of this letter and were distributed to other churches in various parts of the world. How the New Testament letters, as addressed to particular

local groups, began to be circulated in larger circles, is hinted in Col. 4:16: "And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea." It was also in this manner that the letters addressed to various churches and the Gospels addressed to certain nationalities, were circulated throughout the Greco-Roman world—they were transmitted after having been copied by scribes.

### The Vision of the Glorified Christ

While John was in solitude on Patmos, on the Lord's day, he heard a great voice behind him. It sounded like a trumpet calling to him, saying, "What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches." Thereupon John turned and looked. There, presented to his vision, was the likeness of seven candlesticks, or lampstands. Moving among them was the glorified Son of Man. According to verse 13, He was "clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle." His head and His hair were "white as white wool, *white* as snow" (vs. 14). His white hair is probably indicative of His eternal existence. This thought is expressed in Daniel 7:9 which describes the Lord God Almighty, the Father, as having "the hair of his head like pure wool"—He is there called the "ancient of days," the One existing from all eternity.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire"—an expression that would naturally indicate wrath. In our day one's anger, in terms of his facial expression, is described in these words: "His eyes shot fire!"

In verse 15 we are told that "his feet [were] like unto burnished brass." With such feet He could go roughshod over any opposition or any obstacles that might lie in His path. "His voice [was] as the voice of many waters," indicates a perturbed spirit and indignation of soul. According to verse 16, "he had in his right hand seven stars; and out

of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword." The seven stars, as seen in verse 20, are symbolic of the seven churches. Since the sharp two-edged sword proceeded out of the mouth of the Son of God, we interpret this phenomenon as indicative of His word of indignation, pronouncing judgment upon those against whom He was indignant. In Eph. 6:10-20 the Apostle Paul is seen comparing the Christian to the Roman soldier and his armor. One of the things he said they should take was "... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). The Word of God seems to be symbolized by this sharp two-edged sword which proceeded out of the mouth of the glorified, indignant Son of God.

The Word of God is first seen in its creative aspect; God spoke and it was done (Gen. 1). The Word of God in its legal aspect, in Exodus, chapter 20, is presented by "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." The Word of God in its punitive force is seen in the case of Ananias and Sapphira who lied to God, not to men (Acts, chapter 5). Then there is the Word of God in its faith aspect, as reflected in the Gospel. Of these, verse 16 reveals the punitive aspect of the Word of God.

Also in verse 16 we are told that Christ's countenance was brilliant "as the sun shineth in his strength." Shining forth, irradiating from His person, were manifestations of His glorious, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent divine Being.

This description of the Son of God showed His attitude in the year A.D. 96, when the book of Revelation was written. The churches had not progressed as they should have; on the contrary, they were on a very low plane from that on which they should have been moving—hence the displeasure of the Lord.

The glorified Christ was moving in the midst of the seven golden lampstands which symbolized the churches, as shown in Rev. 1:20.

Though He was in Heaven, yet He was in a very real sense upon the earth, walking in the midst of the churches.

### John's Reaction to the Vision

John tells us that when he saw the Son of Man thus glorified he "fell at his feet as one dead." It is no wonder that this vision of Christ had such a paralyzing effect upon the Apostle. John had seen Jesus during His lifetime manifesting His lamb qualities, but on this occasion he saw Him manifesting His lion traits. He was indignant at the situation and His divine ire was profoundly stirred. He was and is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, but He is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He will go forth against all opposition when the time for action comes. We may well believe that John actually fell over, almost frightened to death.

John tells us that the Lord then took hold of his right hand and said: "... Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (vss. 17, 18). With these comforting words John's fears were allayed.

The Lord spoke of Himself as "the first and the last" and as being "the Alpha and Omega." "Alpha and Omega" are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Christ is from all eternity of the past and will continue throughout the ages to come.

He left glory, entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth and served His day and generation. He then went to the cross where He was crucified. His body was laid in the tomb, but His spirit went down to Hades. On the third day He came forth from the tomb, a triumphant Conqueror! His spirit had reentered His body whereupon He arose from the dead. During the forty days following His resurrection He appeared at various times to His disciples. There

were ten appearances altogether. The disciples had the opportunity of seeing, touching and feeling His body, and of hearing Him. Thus they *knew* that He had risen from the dead. He will never return to death anymore. He brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. At the time of His ascension the Lord Jesus sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. He is there making intercession for all who come to God by Him. He is able to save unto the uttermost all who desire to be saved and who come to Him for this redemption.

Jesus, after He had accomplished His work down in Hades, seized the keys of death and Hades, then came forth and liberated all the saved from the realm of death. In possessing the keys of death and Hades, He demonstrated that He is the Master of the spirit-world. In 1 Peter 3:18-22 we are told that Christ was put to death in the flesh and in the spirit He went and made an announcement to the spirits in prison, those that were disobedient in the days of Noah. Peter does not say that Christ, when He was put to death in the flesh, went and preached to the spirits in prison. This is a very misleading translation. The Greek word for "preach" means *to make an announcement*—whether good or bad. The character of the message is not implied by the word *kerusso*. Christ was put to death in the flesh and his spirit descended into *Sheol*, the Hebrew word corresponding to the Greek word *Hades*. When He ascended on high He led those to glory whom He had released from Hades. Ever since then He has had the keys of death and Hades. Is it not wonderful that the believer today upon death goes immediately into the presence of Christ and does not, as those prior to His victory, go down into Hades?

### The Threefold Division of the Book of Revelation

John was commanded to write three things (vs. 19): (1) The things which thou sawest; (2) the things which are; (3) the things which shall

come to pass hereafter. The things which John saw refers to the vision he had of the Son of Man walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, chapter 1. "The things which are" refers to the seven churches to whom the seven letters were addressed, chapters 2 and 3. The things which shall be hereafter pertain to those events described in chapters 4 through 22.

The stars symbolize the angels (messengers) of the churches; each possibly being the leading person in the congregation, the one to whom the people looked for guidance. The candlesticks symbolize the churches. Candlesticks cannot give light of themselves. Only when oil is in the lamps can they give light. The purpose of the Church of Christ is to be the pillar and the ground of the truth, to give forth the testimony concerning Jesus Christ to men who have never heard the Gospel. The Church of Jesus Christ is God's missionary society. These seven lampstands symbolize the complete Church, seven being the numeral indicating perfection, or completeness. In verse 20 a mystery is not something intangible, something that cannot be understood; it is a secret never revealed before, but is now being made known.

## Chapter 4

### Letters to the Seven Churches of the Province of Asia (Rev. 2 and 3)

We have looked at the introduction and the first section of the book of Revelation. Now we are ready to study the second section, chapters 2 and 3. This portion of Revelation is, in the language of Rev. 1:19, "the things which are," the letters written by the Spirit through John to the seven churches.

There was a general pattern in which these letters were written. A glance at each will yield the following facts: The Lord Jesus, at the beginning of each letter, spoke of Himself in terms derived from the vision presented in chapter 1; He called attention to the fact that He possessed certain characteristics or qualifications that enabled Him to meet their immediate need. In the second place the Lord Jesus complimented each of the churches for the commendable things they were doing and for which they were standing. In the third place He reproved them for any delinquencies or failures and sounded a warning. At the conclusion of each letter He held out a bright, thrilling promise of some glorious reward faithful ones would receive in the future.

Each letter was addressed "To the angel of the church in ..." As previously suggested, the "angel" was probably some leading personage in the congregation. The word "angel" means *messenger*. It is also quite possible that there were messengers from the various churches who visited John while he was in prison on Patmos. In this event it is likely that the term angel referred to these messengers, to whom John was to give a copy of the letter. For instance, to the messenger from Ephesus, John was to give the special message

addressed to him in verses 1-7 of the second chapter. While we cannot determine exactly the meaning of the word angel, or messenger, our understanding of it does not affect the interpretation of the message.

In Matthew, chapter 13, we have the parables of the Kingdom. Jesus is presenting the course of the Kingdom of Heaven. If you will notice the first parable is that of the sower (Matt. 13:1-23). The sower went forth to sow seed, and it fell upon four different kinds of soil. The sower, in the explanation, is none other than the Son of Man. Notice in the parable of the wheat and tares there is an advancement. The Word of God is the seed in the first parable. There are those of the Kingdom in whose hearts the Word of God has taken root and is dominating their lives. They have become the seed. In the last parable, verses 47 to 49a: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away. So shall it be in the end of the world [marginal rendering, 'consummation of the age']." This should never have been translated the "end of the world"; the "consummation of the age" is correct. The angels shall go forth and sever the wicked from the righteous, and shall cast them into the fire. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The first parable depicts the beginning of the Christian Dispensation and the seventh, or last one, ends it. This is quite a significant fact! In the parable of the wheat and tares there is another advancement—a development beyond the parable of the sower. This is evidently a setting forth, in a typical manner, the history of the church. The parable of the sower represents the Apostolic Age, beginning with the Lord Jesus Christ. The parable of the wheat and tares represents, or typifies, the subapostolic age—the age immediately following the

Apostles. Then follows the parable of the grain of mustard seed (vss. 31, 32). Here the Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a grain of mustard seed that a man sowed in his field. It grew and developed into such abnormal size the fowls of the heaven could come and build their nests in it. This represents the days of Constantine, who became a nominal Christian in 323 A.D. and made the Christian religion the official religion of the Greco-Roman empire. That which was a small plant suddenly developed into a great, mighty and towering tree.

Next, the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal. This represents the period beginning with 600 A.D. By this date the Roman Catholic Church had developed into a dominating organization.

The next parable, in verse 44, tells us that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." This parable does not strictly refer to any one age. It shows that the man who bought the field did so that he might obtain the treasure. In the Old Testament Israel is referred to as being a treasure. The parable of the treasure in the field is considered to be a reference to God's paying the purchase price for the Jewish nation in sending His son.

The Lord Jesus, in verses 45 and 46 says, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it." A pearl is a gem that is made this way—a grain of sand gets into the oyster shell and penetrates the body of the oyster. The oyster then secretes a kind of fluid that crystalizes around the grain of sand and develops into a pearl. That pearl is formed out of the side of the oyster. There is a theory that states from Christ's side flowed the blood that purchased the Church and that this pearl is the

Church. Christ gave up His life and bought the field with the view of purchasing the Church out of it.

The last parable is the dragnet which is drawn in at the end of the age, describing the separation of the wicked from among the righteous. While this is not an exact parallel to Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, there are certain very pronounced features. Keeping in mind an advancement in the parables: The first parable began with the first coming of Christ; the last parable ends with the second coming.\*

With these observations in mind, let us notice briefly the messages presented in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3.

#### First, to the Church in Ephesus

The church at Ephesus represents the Apostolic Church. Applying His language from the description found in chapter 1, Jesus presents Himself to this church as the one who "walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." We have seen that the candlesticks, or lampstands, symbolized a local congregation. The Lord Jesus had ascended to Heaven approximately sixty-six years prior to this time, to be seated at the right hand of the throne of God. In spirit He was in the midst of the churches, observing their conduct. Being an old established congregation, and having enjoyed the ministry of such men as Paul and John, it should have been a brightly burning light for the Lord Jesus. The church at Ephesus needed to recognize this fact and to be reminded to walk always as in the presence of God.

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\* For a detailed study of the book of Matthew, see *Messiah: His Historical Appearance* by Dr. David L. Cooper, Ph.D., Litt.D.

To its credit, it had performed many wonderful works and was exemplary in patience and endurance. This church was thoroughly orthodox—a very important matter.

What does Christ say in verse 2? "I know." In each letter He says, "I know." That too is important! Notice Psalm 139—God knows everything! The Psalmist said, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" If a person could go into the Heaven of heavens, he would find God there. You cannot hide anything from Him. In this instance, what does He know? "I know thy works." People are saved for service. "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10). Every Christian should be working for God. We are saved by the grace of God, through faith, but we are to be rewarded according to our works. The church in Ephesus had performed some good works. There are three things the Lord said He knew about them: The kind of works they were doing; the motives which prompted them; and whether or not they were putting their hearts into their work.

Jesus leveled a serious complaint against this church: "But I have *this* against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love." The quintessence of religion is love—the love mentioned in 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, which manifests itself in sixteen different ways in daily life and conduct. The church in Ephesus was losing this priceless possession.

The Lord threatened to remove its candlestick if it did not repent and come back to its original state, in divine love, communion and fellowship with God and Christ. The word "repent" means *to change the thoughts, purposes and intentions of the heart or mind*.

In verse 7 the Lord gives a personal call to each one to listen to the message of the Holy Spirit. Christ made a promise, that the overcomer would have the privilege of eating of the tree of life in the Paradise of God. The significance of this statement may be seen by referring to the promise found in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. For the overcomer, this is a thrilling hope and expectation. An overcomer is defined in 1 John 5:4, 5: "For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

### Second, to the Church in Smyrna

In introducing Himself to this church, the Lord Jesus said that He was the First and the Last, the One who has always existed and who continues to live throughout all eternity. Though He was God, in entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth He became the God-man. The purpose of His coming into the world was to purchase man's redemption, to provide atonement for man's sin, and to open up the new and living way of approach to God through His shed blood. At the appointed time He walked into the jaws of death, allowing the Roman authorities to seize Him and nail Him to the cross. He died in our stead, shedding His blood for our redemption. Being God in human form, He arose from the dead, bringing life and immortality to light through the Gospel. He therefore told this church that He had died, but that He came to life again, never to see corruption.

His reason for calling this church's attention to these basic facts was this: There was a storm of persecution brewing that would soon bear down upon its head. Self-preservation is the first law of nature. It is natural for men to try to preserve their lives. In times of danger,

under pressure people are prone to soft-pedal their convictions. By so doing they hope to escape persecution and death. Such dangers are common to all. By implication the Lord asked those who would be facing trials by persecution to follow Him as an example. This church represents the sub-apostolic period.

In verse 9 He is seen as recognizing their situation: "I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty." He added that He knew those among them who were blaspheming and claiming to be Jews, "and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." They were not Jews in the real sense of the term, because they lacked the spirit of Abraham. It was a consoling thought to these endangered Christians as they were made to realize that the Lord was looking on and was taking their entire situation in hand. He would be meeting their needs and would assist them in times of danger. In verse 10 we see Him giving this word of encouragement: "Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer; behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days." This may mean one tribulation lasting ten days. Some scholars, looking at church history, point out ten different, general persecutions that were directed against the early church. If there were any reason for saying that this means ten different persecutions and not ten literal days, it would be best to take it that way. We shall here be guided by The Golden Rule of Interpretation. The various persecutions, launched by the Roman government against the Church, sometimes affected the whole empire, but there were times when they affected only the local provinces. Therefore, it would seem to indicate a single persecution of ten days. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." They were to be of good courage and remain faithful, even though the path of duty might lead them into the jaws of death.

The letter closes with this promise: "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." During His earthly ministry Jesus urged His disciples not to fear those who could kill the body but afterward could do nothing else. He told them to fear and reverence God, who, after having killed the body, can cast the soul and body into hell (*Gehenna*). This is the first time the second death is mentioned. The first death occurred in Adam's sin. Adam and Eve were separated from God and from the presence of His might, and expelled from the Garden of Eden. That was the first death (Rom. 5:12). The second death will be the lake of fire that burns with brimstone, as seen in Rev. 20:11-15. Be an overcomer! You cannot be an overcomer unless there is something to overcome. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. John believed in the security and the final perseverance of the saints.

Against the church in Smyrna no complaint or reprimand is recorded. Had there been any occasion for censure, the Lord would have mentioned it.

### Third, to the Church in Pergamum

Pergamum represents the period beginning with Constantine, when the church began to grow to such great proportion. It represents the time of controversy and the bringing in of false teachings, ending with the year 600 A.D. The Lord's letter to the church in Pergamum first calls attention to the fact that He is the One who has the sharp two-edged sword. That there is an implied threat in the language is proved by the epistle itself.

The Lord said, "I know where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's throne is" (vs. 13). Notwithstanding that fact it had stood firm, not having denied His name or the faith during some former persecution. One outstanding brother, Antipas by name, had been killed because of

his loyalty to the Lord. There are places in different ages where Satan has had his throne. He has a kingdom over which he is reigning. There is some locality from which he directs operations through his servile spirits. We must realize that there is a kingdom of darkness, and its forces are arrayed against the children of God. Satan is the prince of the powers of the air. He has a well-organized government under his control. Satan's headquarters were first located in Babylon. In the days of John he had transferred his base of operations to Pergamum. During the Middle Ages his seat was in Rome. At the present time Moscow is his head-quarters (Ezek. 38:2, 3). In the very end of this age we may believe that Satan will have his throne in Babylon—old Babylon restored. From a materialistic viewpoint it will be the most beautiful of the world's kingdoms. Antipas may have been the first Christian martyr. "Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth." In the fifteenth chapter of Revelation we see how millions of people (possibly of those who are now alive) will go home by way of the chopping block.

The things which the Lord had against this church are set forth in verses 14 and 15: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner."

In Numbers, chapters 23 through 25, God is seen not allowing the hireling prophet, Balaam, to pronounce a curse upon the children of Israel; on the contrary, he required him to pronounce a blessing. Then Balaam counseled Balak, the king of Moab, and revealed how he could have his way: Prepare a great festival and invite the children of Israel over. So they cleverly planned a religious festival; Israel attended and participated in their evil deeds. Then the judgment of

God came upon them. Thousands of Israelites died on that occasion. Certain ones in Pergamum were adopting the principle of Balaam. They were participating in worldly social functions and were becoming ensnared even as the children of Israel had in their religious functions. Satan is very crafty and cunning. His major method is to transform himself into an angel of light—to disguise his presence and purpose.

According to verse 16, the Lord called upon this church to repent. At the same time He pronounced a drastic warning, saying: "Repent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth." To repent is to change the thoughts, intents and purposes of the mind or heart. Such a resolution will result in a change of conduct and attitude. The Lord would fight against those guilty ones in the church who did not repent.

Verse 17, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna." God's provision in feeding the children of Israel in the wilderness, is echoed here. "And I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." There is a story which I think is true; one that correctly explains the expression, "I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written." We are told that there was a beautiful custom in the Greco-Roman world. When two close friends would separate, one going to some other country, they would choose a white stone and have some word or words engraved on it. Then they would break the stone in two and each would take a half. Years, or possibly a century later, two people would meet and become friends; on some occasion while talking about their heirlooms, one would say, "Here is my inherited piece of stone, indicative of a covenant of friendship that existed between my ancestor and someone else." The

other would find among his antiques a stone that matched the other exactly. Those matching stones would cement their friendship as nothing else could do. Jesus took that beautiful little custom and said, "To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." The overcomer receives one part of the stone, Christ keeps the other part; they correspond to each other. In other words, it is a beautiful way of expressing the security of the believer and the eternal union that shall exist around the throne of God.

#### Fourth, to the Church in Thyatira

The message to the church in Thyatira is found in Rev. 2:18-29 and is a very searching one.

To this group the Lord spoke of Himself as "the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass." His eyes being like flames of fire and His feet as burnished brass indicate that His divine ire and indignation were stirred to the very depths. Unless there was a change in the prevailing situation He would immediately take drastic action. People need to realize that while God is a God of love, He is also a God whose indignation is unwaveringly set against sin in every form and phase. He is able, if necessary, to go roughshod over any situation and to deal with the guilty culprits. God sometimes uses the motive of fear, other times of love, kindness and gentleness.

This Thyatiran church had a good record: "I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first" (Rev. 2:19). The Lord could not say this of most congregations. In fact, there are very few churches about which He could speak so very glowingly. This church was noted for its good

works. Moreover, it had love, the quintessence of Christianity. In addition to these, it was a church consisting of people having genuine faith in God; those who laid emphasis upon the ministry of the Word and who were patient and long-suffering. It was a church growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

Notwithstanding all of these favorable things, a very serious defect in this church was noted by the Lord. Against a certain evil, the Lord had this to say: "But I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works" (Rev. 2:20-23). There was a woman of the very lowest character who was being tolerated in the fellowship of the saints in Thyatira. She claimed to be a prophetess. It is altogether possible that she was a spiritist and was issuing her utterances and leading many astray. God gave her time to repent and doubtless overruled and worked everything for good in order to get her to repent. However, she set her will like a flint against turning from her sins unto God. The call of God is to separation. This church is interpreted as being symbolic of the Roman Catholic Church during the medieval period.

The Lord hurled this terrible threat against the woman: "I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works."

The Lord laid no other burden upon the rest of the congregation than to stand aloof from this wicked woman and her influence. He spoke to as many as were not under her inducement, who did not know the deep things of Satan, as was the common saying in the church there. There are many deep and sinister things that Satan palms off upon the children of God as being genuine. One is to prove all things—test all things by the Scriptures. To such the Lord said: "Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come" (vs. 25).

The Lord constantly speaks of His return. It seems that He has been away a long time, but He is coming back! Everything points in the direction that it will not be long now. But let us not set any date. Only remember, "everyone that hath this hope set on Him purifies himself, even as He is pure." The overcomer is promised that he will have authority over the nations and will rule them with a rod of iron. This is a promise that goes back to Psalm 2. The overcomers are promised the privilege of reigning with Christ during the Millennium and also of reigning in the eternal world.

Christ overcame and sat down with His Father in His throne. In a similar manner those who overcome will sit down with Christ in His throne and share His regal authority with Him.

To the overcomer the Lord promises to give "the morning star." Christ is the Morning Star and is spoken of in this capacity in His relation to His coming for His saints before the Tribulation.

The letter to the church in Thyatira closes with the following exhortation: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (vs. 29). We should ever be alert in our attention to the Word of God and seek to know what is His will and to do it.

### Fifth, to the Church in Sardis

This church represented the church in the Reformation. The Lord speaks of Himself as He did in chapter 1, "he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." What is meant by "the seven Spirits of God"? As was seen in our study of Rev. 1:4 the expression, the seven Spirits of God, refers to the Holy Spirit. This is doubtless an echo of such a passage as Isaiah 11:2. The Holy Spirit is spoken of in a sevenfold manner, in terms of the seven different things that He would do in and through the Messiah when He came at His first advent. When Christ went back to the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit, who proceeded from the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit was sent to carry on the work that had been started by the Lord during His earthly sojourn. The seven stars are the seven angels, or messengers, of the seven churches. As noted before, these messengers are some leading personages in each one of the churches, who by natural qualifications and surrender to God seem to be occupying the most prominent position in each local congregation.

Following His regular pattern, the Lord next called attention to the merits and praiseworthy things connected with this church. Thus He said, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead." This church, about which very little is said in a commendatory manner, had *works*. But if we are to judge from the way in which the Lord spoke of its works, we would probably conclude that they were not very good.

The Lord called their attention to the fact that they had a name that they were alive, but in reality they were dead. The congregation had deteriorated to more of a social club. By the preaching of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ people are brought to a saving knowledge of Him and are regenerated. When the Gospel ceases to be preached in its fullness and power, people may come into a congregation and

become numbered with them without the new birth, or regeneration. Although the corporate body appears to be what it was at first and there is no impartation of the new life in Christ to those constituting such a social unity, it is dead, spiritually speaking. This congregation doubtless was continuing because of the momentum that it had when the true Gospel was preached and spiritual life was present. We might illustrate it by a train that dashes across the prairie and approaches a town. Before reaching the station, the engineer cuts off the steam or power, but the train continues to go forward by its momentum. It was probably so with this church in Sardis. It was going along on the momentum gained by constant habit, without any new life. Yet there was a little life here and there, as is evident from the exhortation found in verse 2: "Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God." Doubtless there were a few in number who knew the Lord, but their spiritual light was not shining brightly.

Following this exhortation, the Lord gives a warning, urging the church to repent. If they do not do this, He threatens that He will come as a thief in the night, and they will not know the hour of His coming.

Notwithstanding the low spiritual life of this church there were certain ones in Sardis who had not defiled their garments. Though one lives in a very poor environment he does not have to succumb to the evil influence of the same. By the grace of God he can live above the sordid things of this world.

To those who were living separated lives, consecrated to God, the promise was made that they should walk with Him in white, being worthy because of the merits of the Lord Jesus alone. Those who overcome shall be arrayed in white as conquerors. Their names will never be blotted from the book of life. There are two books of life.

There is the book of life in which is written the name of every individual, from Adam until time shall be no more on this earth. The name of every individual is written in that book because they have received life. There is another book: The Lamb's book of life. That is an entirely different thing from the book of life. The large book is the book of life, the smaller is the Lamb's book. Remember, the name of every individual that was ever born upon the earth is in the book of life; but there are erasures from this book (Psalm 69:28). In Psalm 69:19-28 the Psalmist is talking about Judas Iscariot, his betrayal of our Lord and those who were associated with him in crime. He says, verse 28, "Let them be blotted out of the book of life, And not be written with the righteous." Those who are righteous are so because of the imputed righteousness of Christ. The names of those who accept Christ are righteous, and they are all written in the Lamb's book of life. Everyone who has ever been born has had his name in the book of life. "It is appointed unto men once to die, after this *cometh* judgment" (Heb. 9:27). When one comes to the end of life and has never accepted Christ, his name will never have been written in the Lamb's book of life. His name will be erased from the book of life and he is banished from the presence of God for ever and ever. But when those who overcome appear before the Lord, He will acknowledge them before His Father and before the angels. The letter concludes with an exhortation to those that hear and give heed to "what the Spirit saith to the churches."

### Sixth, to the Church in Philadelphia

This church was recognized as reflecting the period of modern missions. It is considered that it began about 1648. In addressing the church in Philadelphia, the Lord Jesus declared that He was the one "that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that

openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth." The Lord Jesus is holy in the highest sense of the term, because He is God. Holiness is both a positive and a negative term. It is positive in the sense that His very being was and is set toward holiness. It is negative in the sense that He was and is free from all taint of contamination, of defilement and of pollution. He is the True One, true as opposed to false, the One who is the very embodiment of truth. He has the key of David, that is, He is the descendant of David about whom the prophets spoke. For instance, David spoke of Him in his "swan song" in 2 Sam. 23:3-5. He is the One who has the key of David. He unlocks the future for the Davidic house and the establishment of the kingdom of God here upon earth. He will do this when He mounts the throne upon His return at the end of the Tribulation. As is revealed in Isa. 22:22, when anyone was invested with an office of government they had a ceremony in which they gave a key as a symbol of authority. Jesus had the key of David and is the One of whom the prophets spoke in the Messianic prediction—the One who has all authority and power! Moreover, He is the One who opens doors of opportunity and none will be able to shut; He also shuts and no one is able to open. He is the One who is an absolute authority in all matters. This is in perfect accord with what He said to the disciples when He appeared to them as recorded by Matt. 28:18: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." He can dispose of situations, unravel perplexities and solve difficulties. It is important that we recognize Him as the One who can solve all our problems. If we would go to Him with all our difficulties and with our pleasures and plans as well, He would solve them for our good and for the glory of God. Having told them what He was and could do and does do, He acknowledged the works of the Philadelphian church.

All power that belongs to God is accessible to the one who by faith and consecration avails himself of it. Notice that they have a *little power*. In Eph. 1:15, 16 Paul says, "For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which *ye show* toward all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention *of you* in my prayers." Now here is his prayer, verses 17-21: "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Paul says, I want you to know power that you can take hold of, the power that raised Christ from the dead, the power that caused Him to ascend on high and sit at the right hand of the throne of God. That power is yours! "I know ... that thou hast a little power." From this it is evident that it is a reprimand, a censure, they could have had more power, but they did not appropriate it.

There was a synagogue of Jews in Philadelphia. They were racially Jews but did not have the spirit of the true Jew, just as Jesus said to His opponents in John 8:31-59. Jesus told these Jews that they were not the children of Abraham because they were attempting to do that which Abraham would never have done. In order to be a true Jew one must be racially a Jew and must have the spirit of Abraham. Concerning these Jews who were "the synagogue of Satan" (that is, they were under Satan's domination and control) Jesus declared that

He would overrule and cause them to come and bow down before the church in Philadelphia and acknowledge that He, the Lord Jesus, had loved that church.

There is a wonderful promise made to this church in verse 10: "Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that *hour* which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." You have kept the word of my patience, and I am going to keep you from the hour of trial. What hour? That hour which is to come upon the whole world and to try them that dwell upon the earth. There is a controversy among premillenarians as to the significance of this passage. I am of the profound conviction that before that hour of trial comes—that hour that is coming upon the whole world—the Lord is going to deliver us out of this present evil age. Paul tells us in 1 Thess. 1:9,10: "ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come." Unfortunately the King James Version has not translated that correctly. That passage in 1 Thess. 1:9, 10 declares that the Rapture of the Church occurs before the Tribulation begins. Rev. 3:10 is a similar promise. There is the hour of trial—the Tribulation Period—that is coming upon all who live upon this earth. From this we know that there is a period of time when there will be worldwide, universal trials, troubles and difficulties. This is known by prophetic students as the Great Tribulation Period, "the day of Jehovah," when He pours out His wrath upon the world. When this passage is studied in the light of related ones, it appears to be a promise that the Lord will take His people out before that time of Tribulation bursts forth upon an unsuspecting world.

The promise of the second coming is affirmed in verse 11. When the time comes for Him to return to the earth, He will come very quickly. Those who have His Word should hold fast to it and not allow anyone to cheat them out of their crown. If someone turns us away from doing the service of God from the heart and causes us to squander our time and to use the means which He places in our care for other purposes, such a one will be causing us to lose our crown, or a certain amount of its brilliancy.

As usual, in this letter the Lord makes a definite promise to the faithful ones who overcome. "He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name" (vs. 12). The eternal Jerusalem comes down out of that eternal Heaven and rests upon the eternal earth, Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. There is a vast difference between the Millennial Jerusalem that comes down out of Heaven upon Palestine and the eternal Jerusalem that will come down out of the eternal heavens and rest upon the eternal earth. That Millennial city will cover only 100 square miles. Eternal Jerusalem, of which He is here speaking, will be a city 1,500 miles wide; 1,500 miles long; 1,500 miles high. The ground floor alone amounts to 2,250,000 square miles, and it goes up into the air 1,500 miles with various levels. We read in John 14:2, 3: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am *there* ye may be also." The Lord Jesus is now preparing the new Jerusalem for the eternal order to come.

There are to be two new Jerusalems. The first new Jerusalem is mentioned in Isa. 54:1, 2, and that passage is referred to in Gal. 4:21-31. When you study these two passages, you cannot avoid the conclusion that he is talking about the beginning of the Millennium, and there is going to be a new Jerusalem that will come down and rest upon this earth in Palestine. The topography of Palestine is going to be changed. The land will be leveled down. There will be a high mountain, 50 miles by 50 miles, and Jerusalem will come down from Heaven and rest on the southern part of that mountain (Ezekiel, chapters 40 through 48). But, there is an eternal Jerusalem! At the end of the Millennium the material heavens and earth will pass out of existence upon the authority of Rev. 20:11. In Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, John was given a vision of the eternal order, and he saw the eternal Heaven that God creates, the eternal earth and the eternal Jerusalem. That is where we will be forever. Since the evidence is not positive in Rev. 3:12 as to which one of these Jerusalems he is speaking of, we will not be positive. He says, He will make everyone that overcometh a pillar in the temple of God in that Jerusalem. What does he mean, "I will make him a pillar"? The answer is found in Gal. 2:9 where Peter, James and John in Jerusalem were said to be pillars in the church. That is, the one that overcomes is going to be given a most prominent place in that eternal Jerusalem for ever and ever.

A special appeal to the one who wants truth concludes the letter: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

#### Seventh, to the Church in Laodicea

Overlapping with the church in Philadelphia is the Laodicean church, which brings us to the second coming of Christ. Spiritually the Laodicean church was the poorest of all. To this group the Lord

spoke of Himself as "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." The word "Amen" means *to believe God*. It came to be a petition meaning *May it come to pass*. Jesus was the faithful and true witness to the truth of God and to God Himself. He came, not to do His own will, but to do the will of Him who sent Him. He sought not His own pleasure but the welfare of the human race and the glory of God. He asserts that He was "the beginning of the creation of God." This phrase is capable of two interpretations: First, it has been understood to mean that Jesus was a created being, that God alone existed in eternity and finally created the Son as He did the rest of His creatures; second, that the Son of God is the creator of all things—the source of all things. It is impossible to accept the first interpretation, namely, that Christ was a created being. There are many passages in the Scriptures that indicate that Jesus, the Word, was with God in the beginning, was God, and was in association with God (John 1:1; Phil. 2:1-11; Heb. 1). Many other passages teach that Christ is God—that He existed with the Father before all eternity and will continue to be with Him throughout all eternity. For these reasons we reject the interpretation that the phrase "the beginning of the creation of God" means that Christ was a created being. In the Colossian Epistle there is an expression which is somewhat similar to this one which says that Christ "is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible" (Col. 1:15, 16). Christ was "the first-born of all creation" because, as we are told, in Him were all things created. Thus, this passage tells us in what way He was "the beginning of the creation of God" or "the first-born of all creation"; namely, He was the Creator of all things.

That Christ was God in human form, entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, is the cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion. Any system of teaching or group of people that reject this fundamental doctrine is anti-Christian.

Christ recognized the works that had been performed by the Laodicean church. They were in a pitiful condition. Those who are neither hot nor cold are a positive detriment to the cause of Christ. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (vss. 15, 16). He is speaking about the church group as being neither hot nor cold. They did not take their Christianity seriously. There were some people who were regenerated and saved, but the majority of them were not. They came together more as a social group. Because they were in this lukewarm state the Lord declared that He would spew them out of His mouth. Judgment was bound to fall upon them if they continued in this condition.

There seems to have been quite a bit of wealth in this church. Unfortunately most people cannot stand prosperity. They immediately focus their attention upon riches that are here today and gone tomorrow. They were boasting about their riches. It seems to have been a wealthy church materially. They were all sufficient. They needed to learn the lesson of Psalm 39:4: "Let me know how frail I am." How many are my years? "Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity." All men appear as though they were in a parade—like our California Rose Parade on New Year's Day—a lot of glamour and show, but soon all is faded! Because these people were depending upon their riches the Lord counseled them to buy of Him "gold refined by fire" that they might become spiritually rich; and "white garments" that they might clothe themselves in order that their "nakedness" might not be seen; "and eye-salve" that they might

"anoint" their spiritual eyes and see realities as they are. Archaeologists have dug up the old city of Laodicea and found positive proof that there was a noted factory that manufactured eyesalve. They had become wealthy by manufacturing and commercializing this product. They thought they had the genuine eyesalve, but this comes from Christ alone. Spiritual eyesalve may be obtained by claiming Psalm 119:18: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold Wondrous things out of thy law."

The Lord informed this church that He reproveth and chastens everyone whom He loves. The time has come, declared the Apostle Peter, in 1 Peter 4:17, that judgment must begin at the house of God. The wicked receive their punishment in the eternal world, but the children of God are chastened and corrected now, for their good.

The Lord represented Himself as standing outside the door of the Laodicean church and knocking in order that He might gain entrance. He did not expect the church as a group to open the door and welcome Him. He therefore called upon each individual who would hear His voice and open the door so that He could come in and have fellowship with them. The Gospel with all its privileges of association and fellowship with Christ is a personal matter.

In the letter to this church the Lord made a promise to those who would overcome. He told them He would allow the overcomer to sit down with Him in His throne as He had sat down with His Father in His throne. Those who are Christ's and who suffer with Him will reign with Christ when He returns. 1 Cor. 6:1-4 tells us that believers shall judge the world. That is the same thing that He is talking about here. We shall judge the world—we shall judge angels—we will reign with Christ! "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." This last of the seven epistles closes with the usual call for those who are willing to hear to do so and to listen to

what the Spirit says to the churches. God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are all eager to pour out the fullness of their blessings upon all who will receive them.

We have completed our study on the church age that covers all the centuries from the first coming to the second coming.

## Chapter 5

### The Vision in Heaven (Rev. 4 and 5)

With this chapter we begin the third division "The Things Which Shall Come to Pass Hereafter" (chapters 4-22), which falls into the following subheads:

- A. The Vision in Heaven, chapters 4 and 5.
- B. The Tribulation, chapters 6-19.
- C. The Millennium and its Aftermath, chapter 20.
- D. The Eternal Order, chapters 21 and 22.

The first subdivision, The Vision in Heaven, divides into two principal sections:

- 1. The Vision of the Throne of God, chapter 4.
- 2. The Lamb of God, chapter 5.

#### John Invited to Heaven

"After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, *a voice* as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter" (Rev. 4:1). In this verse John informs us that he was invited to ascend into Heaven and to observe the situation there. Let us remember that there are *three* heavens: First, the atmospheric heavens, which are immediately around the earth; second, the sidereal heavens, the great expanse where the stars and the constellations are; and finally, the immediate presence of

God, called in the Hebrew Scriptures "the heaven of the heavens." Paul referred to this as Paradise in 2 Cor. 12:4. In the third Heaven, or Paradise, is the Temple of God, eternal in the heavens (Ps. 11:4; Hab. 2:20; Rev. 11:19).

John was invited, when "a door opened in heaven" to "Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter." This language is to be taken at its face value. Unfortunately a spiritual application has been made of it and the language has been interpreted as a prediction of the Rapture of the Church before the Tribulation. While it is true that the Church is caught up out of the world before the Tribulation, as is taught in various passages, this language has no bearing upon that subject whatsoever. The Lord wanted John to come up, in vision, into Heaven and to see what was there. Paul was caught up to the third Heaven and saw things that were not lawful for him to utter. John was caught up into Heaven and he saw things that he has told us about. When, therefore, the invitation was given to John, he was ready to ascend to Heaven.

### The Throne of God

"Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; and he that sat *was* to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon" (vss. 2, 3). When John was caught up into Heaven, he saw a throne and the Almighty seated upon it. He does not give a specific, definite word picture of the Almighty as he saw Him; but he spoke of Him in terms of the most precious stones known to man. There was a reason for John's not describing the Almighty. When Israel was at Sinai, God warned Moses to impress upon the minds of the people that they saw no form

or shape of the Eternal Being. They therefore should not make any image of Him. God has consistently throughout His entire revelation withheld any definite idea of Himself so that man, who is prone to idolatry, might not make any likeness of Him.

There was a rainbow encircling the throne. Does it not seem probable that the appearance of the bow at this time signifies that God is displeased with man in general and will bring the penalty of the broken covenant upon mankind? In order that we may see the significance of this it becomes necessary for us to study Gen. 9:1-16. God entered into a covenant with all mankind when Noah came out of the ark. There are four conditions which man now, as a rule, is violating. A reference to the breaking of this everlasting covenant is found in a prophecy concerning the Tribulation (Isa. 24:5, 6). A holy and righteous God can do nothing but punish the race for their violations of the conditions of this covenant.

If anyone wishes to see other pictures of the throne of the Almighty, he may view them in Job, chapters 1 and 2, and Psalm 89:5-8.

### The Twenty-Four Elders

"And round about the throne *were* four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones *I saw* four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold" (vs. 4). Round about the throne John saw twenty-four smaller, subordinate thrones, upon which were seated twenty-four elders who were arrayed in white garments. On their heads were crowns of gold. Who are these elders? Some answer that they are twenty-four men, who are saved, who are crowned in Heaven, and who represent the saved of the Old Covenant and of the New. The presence of these are interpreted as evidence that the Rapture has occurred before the Tribulation begins. About this

position there can be no question for the one who has thoroughly studied the prophetic Word. But is the interpretation that these are representative of the raptured Church correct? There is nothing in the context that indicates that these elders are used representatively. Never should one resort to a figurative, symbolic or secondary meaning of any passage of Scripture unless there is a warrant for the same in the context. The language simply states that there were twenty-four thrones and twenty-four elders who were seated upon their thrones and who had crowns of gold upon their heads. Since believers do not receive their crowns (rewards) until the second coming of Christ (Ps. 50:1-5), the most rational interpretation of these elders is that they are celestial beings of an especially high order. They, under God, are assisting in the administration of the universe. These are heavenly beings.

#### The Lightnings, the Voices, and the Thunders

"And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders" (vs. 5). Are we to assume that these lightnings, voices and thunders are to be understood literally? If we are to evaluate the Word properly we must say that John knew what he was talking about because he saw and heard these things. We immediately ask, what is the significance of such a demonstration? The answer is not far to be found. Whenever there are winds and thunders and lightnings we understand that they are destructive forces in nature that leave havoc and chaos in their wake. They indicate here that the wrath of God is gathering like a mighty thunderstorm which will soon burst upon the world. This interpretation is confirmed by the study of Revelation, chapters 6 through 19.

It is very interesting to study in connection with Rev. 4:5 the following passages: Rev. 8:5; 11:19 and 16:17, 18. A person is

immediately impressed with the fact that as the Tribulation advances the storm of God's wrath increases in intensity, finally bursting in all its fury upon the earth at the end of the Tribulation.

### The Seven Lamps Before the Throne

"And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (vs. 5). John saw seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God. Here we are given the interpretation of the significance of the seven lamps. They signify the "seven Spirits of God." What is the significance of the term "seven Spirits"? We have already seen in the discussion of Rev. 1:4 that the seven Spirits of God are mentioned in connection with God the Father and God the Son. Their being placed between the first and the second persons of the Holy Trinity and on the same level signifies the Holy Spirit in His sevenfold plenitude. The seven lamps are an echo of the marvelous prediction found in Isa. 11:2. This passage speaks of the Holy Spirit and His work in and through the Messiah in terms of the seven things which He did in and through the Son of God when He was here upon earth 1,900 years ago. In this vision in Heaven, chapters 4 and 5, we see God the Father on the throne; God the Holy Spirit is symbolized by the seven lamps before the throne and God the Son appearing as a Lamb standing in the midst of the throne.

### The Crystal Sea of Glass

"And before the throne, as it were a sea of glass like unto crystal" (vs. 6). At times, especially in the Mediterranean Sea, the water appears perfectly motionless. The bright sun shining upon it makes it look just like glass. John said that the space in front of the throne reminded him of such a glassy, crystal sea. Why it had this

appearance no one can say dogmatically. It is quite possible that it indicates the calmness that exists in God and about His throne. There is nothing that can disturb Him or destroy the peace which He controls. It is true that Satan and his emissaries are the cause and occasion of much turmoil in the world. But nothing that he or they can do or say can affect the tranquility of the throne of God.

### The Four Living Creatures

"And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne; four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come" (vss. 6-8).

Who are these four living creatures? Each has six wings. This feature instantly takes our minds to the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 6, where we see seraphim round about the throne singing the same "triple holiness" as these six-winged creatures in Revelation are doing. From the two passages we see that they are a high order of celestial beings that engage in divine service of the Almighty. It seems that they are constantly engaged in this worship. Of course, it is a most delightful thing for them to do.

They may have other duties to perform since they assume the forms that are indicated in this passage. One assumes the form of a lion; another, the likeness of a calf; the third, the appearance of a man; and The fourth is seen in the form of a flying eagle. It may be that the first one has some definite connection with the kingdom of wild beasts. The second, who is like a calf, may have some special

filiation with the domestic animals. The third one may have some special function to perform with reference to the human race, while the fourth may have some definite relationship with the fowls of the air.

The song which they sing, in all probability, is a melodious strain of the Holy Trilogy to the Godhead. In verse 8 it is sung to God the Father who is designated in chapter 1 as the "One who was, and who is to come." But the same words can be addressed to each of the persons of the Holy Trinity.

### Worship in Heaven

"And when the living creatures shall give glory and honor and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created" (vss. 9-11).

There is a place somewhere in the universe that is called in the Hebrew the "heaven of the heavens." There are indications in Ezek. 1:4 and Isa. 14:13 that this throne of God is in a position north from this earth. One of the best statements in Holy Writ about the throne of God is found in Ps. 103:19-22. From this statement it is clear that there is a place somewhere in the universe that is called the throne of God, the heaven of the heavens, which belong to Jehovah but the earth He has given to the children of men. That there is a celestial hierarchy and that God sits as the ruler on the throne of all these celestial hosts may be seen from Ps. 89:5-7. (God sits as supreme in the council of all these celestial hosts.) Here are statements and

pictures that portray the fact that God does have a kingdom that rules over all and that there is a celestial hierarchy that does the bidding of God Almighty at all times. But, we are thinking of the throne of God in Rev. 4:9 as the throne of judgment. A passage of Scripture that will throw a great amount of light on this is 1 Kings 22:19ff.

According to verses 9-11, when the living creatures offer praise to God, the elders cast their crowns before Him—and they sing the hymn of creation. This hymn acknowledges God as the Creator of the universe which He brought into existence to reveal His glory to His creatures. God will, throughout all eternity, be revealing more and more of His might, power and glory.

### The Lamb of God

Chapter 5 is appropriately called the "Lamb" chapter, the reason is this—the Lamb is seen in His official capacity as Master of Ceremonies through the Tribulation Period.

### The Roll of the Book

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals" (Rev. 5:1). In New Testament times usually the books were in the form of scrolls or rolls, made either of papyrus or vellum. About the beginning of the present era books with folios, such as we have today, began to come into use.

John saw in the hands of the Almighty, as He was sitting upon the throne, a book that was "written within and on the back" and that was sealed with seven seals. This description leads us to believe that the form of the book which he saw was that of a scroll which had seals at various intervals and which had to be broken as the book was

unrolled. This book was written on both sides. It reminds one of that which Zechariah saw in vision as found in Zech 5:1-4.

### The Cry, "Who is Worthy to Open the Book?"

"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice. Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon" (vss. 2, 3). All intelligible writings are to be read and understood. The strong angel in this verse proclaimed with a great voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" He doubtless was not asking for information but to make the announcement that there was no one able or worthy to break the seals and to read the book. Among all the creatures of God—both celestial and terrestrial—there was found no one who was able to break the seals and to read the book. Obviously it takes might, power and wisdom to perform this feat. Let it be noted that none of the elders, living creatures, or any of the angels could perform this task. If none of the angels of the celestial hosts were worthy or powerful enough even to look on the book, certainly none of Adam's race could look upon it and break the seals.

### John's Reaction to the Situation

"And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon" (vs. 4). John was given understanding that there was great significance and importance attached to this book—that mighty and eternal issues were involved. He therefore wept much because none of God's creatures could do this. It is quite likely that John jumped to the hasty conclusion that there was no one who could, or would, open it and carry out the plans and purposes inscribed on the scroll.

### The Message Regarding the Lion of the Tribe of Judah

"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof" (vs. 5). One of the elders admonished John to stop his weeping and stated that there *was* one who was able to deal with the situation, and who was "the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David." The expression, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is an echo of the prophecy made by Jacob (Gen. 49:8-10). In this prophecy Judah was compared to a lion. This graphic description focuses its rays of light upon some descendant of Judah who undoubtedly proves to be Shiloh, the One to whom the right of reigning belongs, cf. Ezek. 21:27. This One is not only of the tribe of Judah, but is of the house of David, the founder of the throne in Judah. David was granted a vision of Him as is seen in 2 Sam. 23:3c-5: "One that ruleth over men righteously, That ruleth in the fear of God. He *shall be* as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, A morning without clouds, *When* the tender grass *springeth* out of the earth, Through clear shining after rain. Verily my house is not so with God; Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, Ordered in all things, and sure: For it is all my salvation, and all *my* desire, Although he maketh it not to grow."

The seed thought of our Lord's being the Root of David is couched in the expression "Although he maketh it not to grow." The verb in the Hebrew text rendered "to grow" is the word from which we get our noun translated *Branch*. Based upon this one prophecy are four important predictions regarding Messiah. The first is to be noted in Isa. 4:2: "In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." Here the two-fold nature of the Branch is brought forth most graphically: It is the Branch of Jehovah,

having the divine nature; it likewise is the fruit of the ground, having human nature. Jeremiah likewise refers to Him in the following words: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jer. 23:5). Here the Branch becomes King of Judah and shall be recognized as "Jehovah our righteousness." The third passage involving the Branch is Zech. 3:8: "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men that are a sign: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch." Here the Branch is called a servant, because He serves humanity, although He is God in human form. The fourth and last passage on the subject of the Branch is Zech. 6:12: "and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah." The human nature of the Branch is here emphasized—He is a man, though He is the God-man.

The elder, in calling John's attention to the fact that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is the Root of David, is referring to all these promises that are contained in the Branch passages. He will carry out all the predictions that are foretold of Him. At His first coming He fulfilled all that related to the first coming of the Messiah. When He returns He will carry out the program as outlined.

### The Lamb of God Slain for Sinners

"And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. And he came, and he taketh it out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne" (vss. 6,

7). Though the Messiah is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He is also the Lamb, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world as the One who would deal with the sin question and who would procure salvation for all who will accept Him. "And in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though"—the word that is translated "as though" is the Greek word *Hos*. In some connections it does mean "as though" but it may also mean "as." In the present case it does not mean "as though"—that would imply that He was not slain. My translation is this: "a Lamb standing, as he had been slain." "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1: 29). This is an echo of Isa. 52:13 to 53:12. John's language "Behold, the Lamb of God" attests that He was slain in the purpose of God from all eternity and He is slain now. There is a song which we sometimes sing: "I shall know Him, I shall see Him, I shall know Him by the prints of the nails in His hand." These words are Scriptural. It is in line with that which is described here: "a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth." "Horn" is always a symbol of power or of a king. Here it is a symbol of power, "having seven horns." Seven is a number of completeness, the equivalent of saying that Christ has ALL power—complete power! He has "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God." He has perfect knowledge—perfect vision—He sees everything. He is an all-seeing eye; He knows everything! Psa. 139:7-11a says: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, And thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm

me"—to Him, the night is the same as the day. There is no such thing as going anywhere in the universe and not being under the watchful eye of God. That is the significance of the "seven eyes" in verse 6.

His death was carried out literally as foretold in Isaiah, chapter 53, and in many other predictions. Christ, who is the Lamb of God and who suffered at His first coming, comes forth and takes the book out of the hand of the Almighty, who is seated on the throne, in order that He might open it.

### Hymns of Praise to the Lamb

"And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them *to be* unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth" (vss. 8-10).

Only these heavenly beings engage in this act of worship and praise. Not only does each one have his harp, but each has a golden bowl full of incense—the prayers of the saints. We are given the significance of the bowls of incense, namely, that they represent the prayers of God's people, which they have presented to Him, and which He, in the time of the Tribulation, answers. No prayer ever goes unanswered but in His own time and way God fulfills every petition.

The reader is urged to note especially verses 9 and 10. The ASV 1901, following the Greek literally, declares that "thou" the Lamb, "didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." There is no occasion for any racial

prejudice. God showed that He wanted to keep the races separate by His segregating them at the Tower of Babel, Gen. 11:1-9; Deut. 32:8. He sent each one to his own place and set up natural barriers. Acts 17:24-28 says: "The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

Those who are worshiping according to verse 9 "and didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe" do not include themselves with those who have been purchased by the Lamb. The reason for this is that they have never been lost and need no salvation. These who are saved and purchased from among men constitute a kingdom and priesthood. They are at present in the spiritual aspect of the kingdom of God but will enter the outward visible manifestation of it at the second coming of our Lord. Moreover, we who are in the present phase of the kingdom are priests in that we can intercede in behalf of others, bringing them before the throne of grace constantly. When our Lord returns we shall reign with Him upon the earth as the last statement of verse 10 declares: "and they reign upon the earth." The King James Version unfortunately states in the margin "they reign *over* the earth." The ASV 1901 says "they reign *upon* the earth" and it means exactly that. In looking at that idiom in the Greek Testament, the genitive case, it is the regular phrase to mean right here on this earth where we are. There is an idea that there is going to

be a new Jerusalem that is created and that will be suspended in the air over Jerusalem. They believe Christ and the saints are going to be in that heavenly Jerusalem that will be suspended in the air and that David and the converted Jews will be in the Jerusalem upon the earth. Some of the very best Bible students hold to that view, but I have never been able to see it. I believe that Christ is going to reign in Jerusalem in Palestine, notice Zeph. 3:14-16. In Rev. 5:10 it does not say that Jehovah will be up in a Jerusalem suspended in the air. It says He is going to be here "upon the earth." This passage says that the saints who are purchased from the various nations will reign upon the earth and not up in the air.

"And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (vss. 11, 12).

Here we have a description of the second song of praise that is offered by the angelic hosts to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Note the fact that many angels joined their voices with the living creatures and the four and twenty elders. The number in this chorus are ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. Ten thousand times ten thousand equals one hundred million; in addition to these there are thousands of thousands.

The soul-stirring chorus which they sing is "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing." This is a sevenfold statement of the things which our Lord will receive because of His

having purchased from among men those who would accept the truth and receive His salvation.

"And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped" (vss. 13, 14). Here is the largest chorus, or choir, that is ever assembled. We are told that "every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea" will engage in this mighty song of praise to the Lamb for His redemption. At the beginning of the Tribulation will every man, woman and child on this earth, every lost person in Hades all join one mighty chorus and say "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, *be* the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever"? No, they will not be doing that. When will they do it? At the end of the Tribulation. Since they do not do this at the beginning of the Tribulation but they do it at the end, then we know that these two verses, 13 and 14, are anticipatory—looking forward to the end of the period of judgment.

Phil. 2:9-11 speaks of the time when all the angelic hosts, all the people who will be upon the earth and all the lost in Hades, Satan and all of the demons, will bow the knee and confess with their tongues that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. All the lost will see that God has been absolutely righteous and just in His dealings, even in consigning them to the place of the condemned. He could not do otherwise. See also Matt. 26:64 and Rev. 1:7.

They will, therefore, render praise to Him who sits upon the throne (God the Father) and unto the Lamb who purchased redemption for the human family. Ah! this Lamb is One that had been slain from the foundation of the world in the plan and purpose of God. John the Baptist saw this truth when two of his disciples were talking with him and Jesus appeared on the scene. Then John pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" All of the animal sacrifices from those that began in Eden, all those through the Patriarchal Age, through the Jewish dispensation on up to the cross of Christ, foreshadowed the supreme sacrifice that Christ made on the cross of Calvary for you and for me.

When this hymn is finished the four living creatures will close with a hearty "Amen." Then the elders will fall down and worship. This heavenly scene closes that which is set forth in Revelation, chapters 4 and 5.

## Chapter 6

### The Seal Judgments (Rev. 6:1-17)

### The Tribulation (Rev. 6-19)

There have been many calamities and catastrophes that have struck various nations, groups of nations and even the entire world. Whenever such a catastrophe occurs, thinking people begin to question and reason as to why an event of such great magnitude happened. Men in times of such crises instinctively acknowledge that God is responsible. They naturally accept the proposition that He is the Creator and Controller of all things even though they might in a spirit of argumentation and reasoning, deny this thesis.

Reason and logic show us that there is a Being whom we call the omnipotent, eternal God, the Creator of the entire universe. All men reason that there must be an adequate cause for every result. The material universe is a result therefore there must be some adequate cause. The impression which one receives from observing the material order is that this adequate cause is an intelligent, rational Being—a personal God. Men instinctively accept these things though they cannot by the finite mind grasp the proposition as to how God could have existed throughout all eternity.

Believing then that there is a rational, thinking, intelligent Being who is the Creator of the entire universe and who sustains it by His mighty power, we are led to ask something about His being and His character. From the Hebrew in Deut. 6:4 we learn that *Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity*. In Mark 12:28-30, Jesus tells that the above verse is the most important verse in the Word of God. In other words, we are given information concerning the Holy Trinity that constitutes the Godhead. From Exodus 34:6,7 we learn of God's character: "And

Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth; keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation." This statement by God of Himself is of the utmost importance if we are to evaluate any event. We cannot understand or comprehend any act of the Almighty unless we have a very clear, definite idea concerning this sevenfold statement given by God of His nature, attributes and characteristics.

Another thing that we must understand is the Scriptural teaching that God controls and overrules all things, directing everything toward a grand consummation that will be for the good of all concerned and for the manifestation of His glory (Heb. 1:3).

A fourth Scriptural teaching that we must understand is that God has given to all of His creatures, both celestial and terrestrial, the power of free choice. Of course, in speaking of terrestrial beings this does not refer to dumb animals but of intelligent, rational, thinking human beings. Moreover, God does not force the will of anyone. He allows each one to make up his mind and to act according to his own preferences and choices. At the same time He overrules every situation and makes it contribute to the ultimate goal. In overruling the free acts of men the Lord cannot always work out what might be termed His "number one plan" for the individual; nor His number two, etc. (Prov. 3:1-12). He brings out the best that can be developed of every situation. It will be seen that the general trend of events is headed in the direction of the great and final consummation. As Tennyson puts it: "Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing

purpose runs, And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

When we understand these vital fundamental principles we are in a position to look at the judgments of the Great Tribulation and evaluate them.

One other consideration we must have clearly before our minds: That "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). That Christ tasted death for every man: "But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every *man*" (Heb. 2:9); and that Christ Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6). We must also remember that "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). These passages of Scripture and many others that could be given show us God's attitude toward all His sinful creatures. He wants to bring the greatest blessing possible into the lives of every one of His creatures.

### The Seventy Weeks of Daniel

In order to have a more complete understanding of the Tribulation Period, which we are to study, we turn to Daniel, chapter 9. Israel is the nation of destiny. This fact is seen from the prominence she occupies in the unfolding of the Almighty's plan, beginning with Genesis, chapter 12, and running throughout the Scriptures. The Jew was created in order that God might be glorified through him (see Isa. 43:1-7). Palestine, the land granted to Israel by the Lord, is the center of the earth (Ezek. 38:12). God has, figuratively speaking, a universal

chronometer which strikes off the days, weeks, months and years of universal time. But He has a special one, as it were, which might be compared to a stop-clock (made for a specific purpose) which counts off the time when Israel is in fellowship with Him and which stops when she has lost His special favor and protection. These are facts with which we must reckon in our investigation of the Scriptures. The "Jewish Calendar" is given in Dan. 9:24-27. The entire chapter, however, should be studied in order to get the import of the message.

One must note carefully the words of verse 24 of this chapter: "Seventy sevens [of years] are decreed upon thy [Daniel's] people and upon thy holy city" (Literal Translation).

Daniel had been studying about the years of the desolations of Jerusalem, found in Jeremiah, chapters 25 and 29. He had been examining "the books" (which speak of ordinary years, 2 Chronicles, chapter 36). He was therefore thinking in terms of years. In answer to his petition the angel Gabriel came and informed him that there were "seventy weeks." Seventy weeks of what? In view of the context there is but one answer: *weeks of years*. One must therefore bear in mind that Gabriel was talking about years—literal years—made up of the four seasons such as are indicated in the Scriptures. Since these weeks are not sevens of literal days, but of solar years, and since there are seventy of them, we know that this expression indicates 490 ordinary years. These seventy weeks of years were decreed upon the Jewish people and Jerusalem for the bringing in of the Millennium, which is expressed in terms of six things which we know will only be accomplished when the Lord Jesus returns and introduces the Golden Age of the future. As proof of this position the reader should analyze the six expressions appearing in Dan. 9:24: "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation

for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy."

When these phrases are taken at their literal meaning, one sees that they can refer to only one thing—namely, the Millennial Age.\*

The initial date of these 490 years is the year of the issuing of the decree by Cyrus for the Jews, returning from their Babylonian exile, to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and their Temple. That Cyrus the Great, the Persian, did issue the decree referred to in Dan. 9:25 is evident from the prophecy of Isaiah, which he spoke about two hundred or more years prior to the time of this monarch. For proof of this position read Isa. 44:25-45:13.

But note especially verse 28 of chapter 44, which reads as follows: "that saith of Cyrus, *He is* my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."

Some have concluded that Cyrus did not make the proclamation foretold in Dan. 9:25 since the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem is not mentioned in the decree given in Ezra 1:1-4, which speaks about the reconstruction of the Temple alone. God through Isaiah foretold that Cyrus would order the rebuilding of the city along with his decree to erect the Temple. The Word of God is always fulfilled exactly as spoken and written. We must therefore believe that Cyrus did what God said he would. Since the initial date of the four hundred and ninety years was the one during which this monarch issued his decree, the first year of this prophecy was his first year—when he made the proclamation.

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\* For a full discussion of Daniel, chapter 9, see *The Seventy Weeks of Daniel* by Dr. David L. Cooper, Ph.D., Litt.D.

Historically, this occurred in the year 536 B.C., which is the year 3589 A.H. The *anno hominis* system of computing time is Biblical; hence it is correct. It is counted from Adam forward.<sup>1</sup> For full particulars read the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The major portion of this four-hundred-and-ninety-year period is expressed in the term "three-score and two weeks" which is preceded by one of seven weeks or forty-nine years. As already seen, a week in the sense of this passage, is a period of seven years. Hence, seven sevens plus three-score and two sevens make sixty-nine sevens or 483 years. According to Gabriel there were to be 483 years from the time when Cyrus issued the command for the Jews to return and restore Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Anointed One. But what point in the career of the Messiah is indicated as the terminal date of the 483 years? Was it His birth? His baptism? or His crucifixion? This question is answered in verse 26 of this passage: "And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing." This statement settles the question. The terminal date, therefore, is the cutting off of the Messiah, or His crucifixion. This occurred, as we know, in the year 30 A.D. of the common system of reckoning, but in the year 4071 A.H. (Biblical dating). We can be certain therefore that there were 483 years from the issuance of the decree by Cyrus for the Jews to restore Jerusalem to the crucifixion of Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. We have to reject all systems of reckoning and accept the Biblical prophecy if we are to have the truth on the matter.

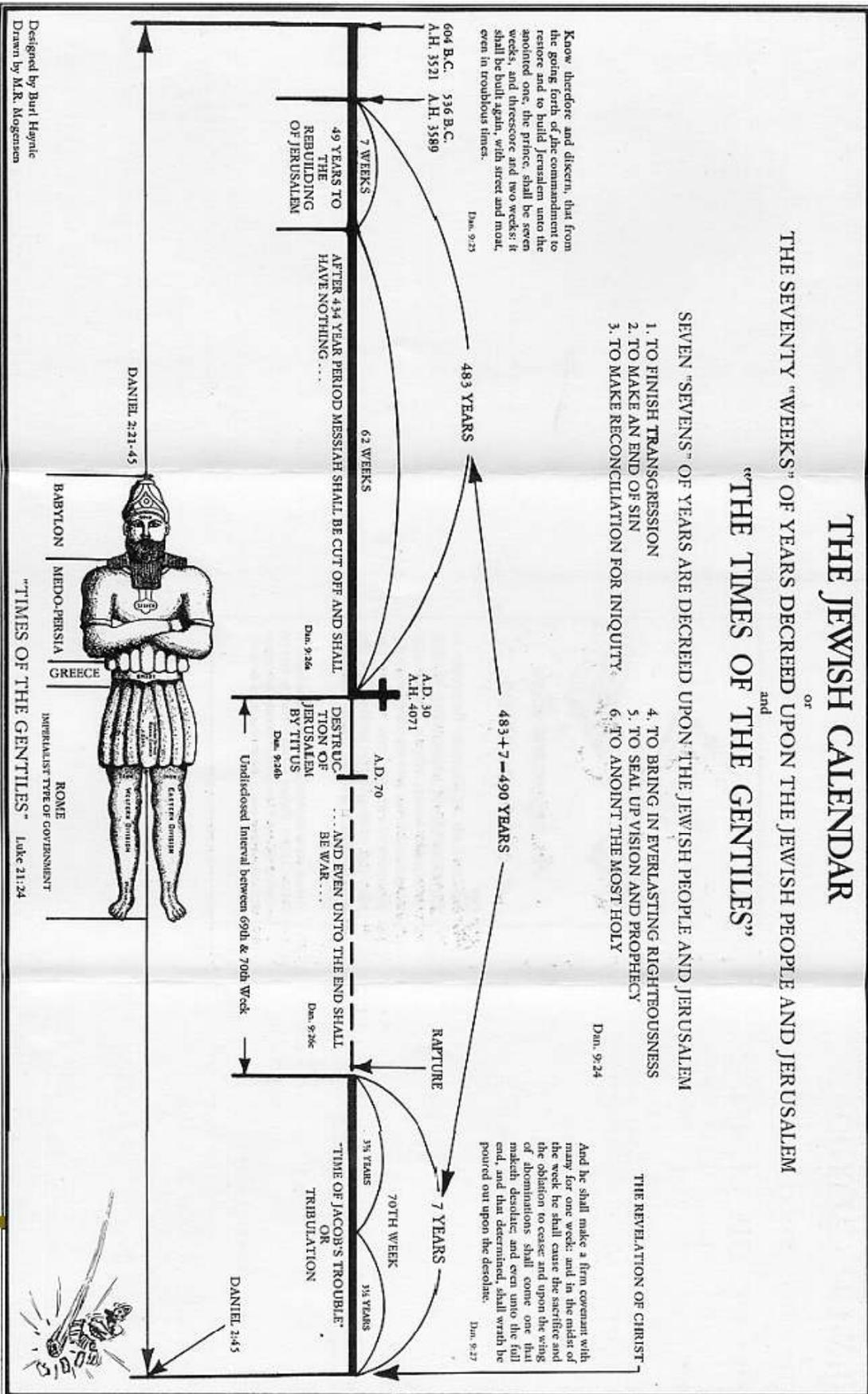
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<sup>1</sup> See *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled* by Dr. David L. Cooper, Ph.D., Litt.D.

We have been told that God's clock stops when Israel is out of fellowship with Him. We see that this statement is correct when we think about His "stop-clock" already mentioned. Israel said, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him! We have no king but Caesar!"

Proof that God's clock stopped at that time is found in the fact that, if the seventieth week of Daniel, chapter 9, or the last seven years of the period under discussion, had followed the sixty-ninth week, the Millennial Age would have been introduced seven years after the crucifixion. There is no escape from this position because at the end of this seventieth week, Millennial conditions, according to verse 24 of this prophecy, are introduced into the world. We therefore know that the seventieth week did not follow the sixty-ninth because the Millennium did not start then; nor has it begun since. On the contrary, Gabriel informed Daniel that "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood." In these words is couched the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D. when the Romans, under Titus, destroyed the Holy City. We therefore see that the angel Gabriel, figuratively speaking, jumps from the year 30 A.D. (the time of the crucifixion) to 70 A.D., because it was in that year that Jerusalem fell and the Jews were dispersed throughout the world.

From this point he leaps forward to the end of the 490-year period in the statement "even unto the end shall be war." This is a prediction that there would be wars for the Jews and for Jerusalem from the year 70 A.D. unto the end of something; but of what? There is but one answer which is: The end of the 490 years.



Designed by Paul Haynie  
Drawn by M.R. Mogensen

THE JEWISH CALENDAR OR THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF YEARS—The chart is a diagram showing pictorially the time set forth in Daniel chapter nine.

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When one takes these facts into consideration one sees that Daniel clearly foretold the Christian Dispensation, or the Church Age, intervening between the execution of King Messiah and the seventieth week of this prophecy.

Daniel therefore was informed that this period of time separating the sixty-ninth week from the seventieth would intervene, but the length of it was not revealed to him.

This conclusion is confirmed by a number of predictions found in the Old Testament. This age of grace is called "the year of Jehovah's favor" in Isa. 61:2 and is to be followed by the day of vengeance of our God—the Tribulation. The prophets frequently referred to this age as one of grace, but did not inform their hearers and readers with regard to the turn which affairs would take at this time. Jesus, however, gave light upon this phase of the subject in His Kingdom parables (Matthew, chapter 13). Finally, the apostles, by the Spirit, elucidated the subject and gave us the detailed information in the Epistles.

When we compare the Jewish Calendar and the facts revealed in this prophecy with other plain statements of Scripture we know that the Church Age will be brought to a conclusion by the Rapture of the Church. When the body of Christ has been completed (read 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11) the Lord Jesus will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, the dead in Christ will be raised first and the living saints will be caught up to

meet Him in the clouds in the air. This glorious event will bring the Christian Era to a conclusion.

This Christian Age, or Dispensation of Grace, is to be followed by the seventieth week of Daniel, which is the Tribulation consisting of the last seven of the 490 years of this prophecy. During this time God will rain down His judgments upon the world. The Jews, however, will bear the brunt of His mighty strokes, for this period is called "the time of Jacob's trouble" but he will be saved out of it (Jer. 30:7). Of course, these judgments will purge out all of the wicked from this earth preparatory to the Lord's glorious appearance at the end of this seventieth week to establish a reign of righteousness and peace upon the earth.

The Millennial Age is repeatedly referred to or described by the prophets. It is a period of a thousand years' duration when the curse will be lifted and when the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. Satan is bound, together with all demons, and cast into the pit during this time. The earth will bring forth its increase. There will be no more sickness of any kind. The animals will be restored to their original condition. Joy and happiness will reign supreme. O Lord Jesus, hasten that day!

### The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come. And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown; and he came forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:1, 2). The language in chapter 6 is clearly a dramatic presentation of literal facts that are presented under the form of striking imagery. The entire program is

put under the imagery of Christ's breaking, or opening, the seven seals.

### The First Horseman

When Christ breaks the first seal, the first living creature, or seraph, gives an order in a loud voice saying, "Come." Immediately there comes forth a rider on a white horse, who has a bow in his hand. Then there is given to him a crown, a victor's crown. This is given to him by way of anticipation. He goes forth to conquer and accomplishes his purpose.

What is meant by this dramatic presentation? Is this a literal horse and a literal man riding the horse? We should take it this way if the facts of the context permit; but, when we read of the rider on the fourth horse in verses 7 and 8, we see that Death is the rider and Hades follows him. Death is a stern reality that comes to every home. It comes to everyone that lives upon the earth with the exception of Enoch and Elijah and those who will be caught up from the earth by the Lord. Since this rider is Death we know this is not a literal horse nor a literal horseman but that this is symbolic. There is no such person as Death nor is there any such individual as Hades. Death and Hades are personified and are represented as going forth as is described. If this is true of the fourth horseman it certainly is true of all of them since clearly they belong to the same category.

With these facts before us we come to the conclusion that the rider on the white horse in verse 2 is a movement that is headed by some great personage. The object of the movement is to seize world dominion. Those promoting it come forth for that purpose and they reach their goal. This position is confirmed by the further fact that the color of this first horse is white. Conquerors in Roman times rode on white horses. Back in the early days of Israel, kings and conquerors in

Palestine and the Near East rode on donkeys. In Roman times they introduced the horse from Central Asia and they rode on white horses. Moreover, the triumphant Christ, of whose second advent we read in Rev. 19: 11-21, comes on a white horse. He will be victorious over all His enemies at that time. He will have diadems on His head. The rider on the white horse in Rev. 6: 2 has a little victor's crown, a garland of ivy, or something of that nature—according to the customs of the day. This rider on the white horse comes at the very beginning of the Tribulation whereas the rider in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation comes at the conclusion of the Tribulation. For this reason we must conclude that the rider on this first horse is symbolic of the false messiah, the Antichrist. He will be the world dictator in the end time. The world government is going to develop and embrace all nations and this is going to come to pass before the Tribulation begins. There will be a world empire and it will be thrown into collapse about as rapidly as it will come into existence. It will fall into ten divisions. There will arise ten dictators or kings who will seize power in each of these sections of the world empire. But they will have problems on their hands that will take superhuman wisdom to solve. There will appear out of obscurity, out of oblivion, a man, a polished gentleman, but he will be everything but a gentleman as we shall see later on. He will come to the assistance of these ten kings and will advise them so that they will be able to iron out most of their difficulties. He will gradually, in an underhanded manner, seize power from each one of them and the balance of power will finally gravitate into his hands. Then he will make a covenant with the Jews for seven years—with the apostate remnant of Israel (Dan. 9:27). When he puts his name to that document, that very moment the Tribulation will begin. The rider on the white horse is this world dictator, the Antichrist—coming into prominence, he comes forth conquering and he does conquer.

## The Second Horseman

"And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come. And another *horse* came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (vss. 3, 4). This second rider is mounted on a red horse, a blood-red horse. This one takes peace from the earth and introduces a reign of terror. To this rider is given a great sword.

Suppose a cartoonist should put in some of our daily papers a picture of the world and of a man mounted on a blood-red horse, with a sword in his hand, galloping through the earth. And suppose there is also seen a dove flying directly away from the earth. Should you see such a cartoon as this in the secular papers, how would you interpret it? Instantly every intelligent person would say that the cartoonist intended to convey to the reader's mind that there is a world war, with bloodshed and carnage in evidence on every hand. We see such a cartoon in the form of the rider on the red horse of this passage. There are going to be three world wars during the Tribulation. This is World War I of the Tribulation. It is possible but not probable that we may have another world war before the Tribulation. The scientists warn us of the complete devastation possible with the weapons of modern warfare such as the hydrogen bomb, the atomic bomb, chemical and biological warfare. Ezekiel tells us that Russia and the nations aligned with her invade Palestine before the Tribulation Period.<sup>2</sup> If there were to be a World War III it seems improbable that the Western Democracies and Russia could recover and be able to fulfill Ezek. 38:1-39:16 as presented in this passage.

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<sup>2</sup> See *When God's Armies Meet the Almighty in the Land of Israel* by Dr. David L. Cooper, Ph.D., Litt.D.

No sooner does the Antichrist come to power until there is World War I of the Tribulation that affects every nation, tribe, tongue and language. At this time peace is taken from the earth. It is a revolt against the Antichrist.

### The Third Horseman

"And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold, a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not" (vss. 5, 6). The rider on the third horse is mounted upon a black steed. He carries in his hands a set of scales weighing and selling grain. As the rider goes forth from one place to another, John heard the voice speaking of the grain's being sold at famine prices. That those will be dark days indeed is symbolized by the further fact that the color of the horse is black. The oil and the wine at that time will not be hurt because they will have medicinal properties.

The rider on the black horse follows the rider on the red one and since the latter is symbolic of war and bloodshed, we conclude that the rider on the black horse symbolizes famine of the direst kind, the aftermath of World War I of the Tribulation Period.

### The Fourth Horseman

"And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with

death, and by the wild beasts of the earth" (vss. 7, 8). When this fourth living creature shouts "Come" there appears upon the arena a rider mounted on a pale horse. The name of this rider is Death, who goes forth reaping his terrible toll of people. Death is a reality. It is a power! It is a force that is executed by Satan. He is a minister of death (Heb. 2:14): "him that had [hath] the power of death, that is, the devil." Here death is thought and spoken of as if it were a person. Hades is in the center part of the earth and the place to which all people from Adam to Christ went upon death, both the righteous and the unrighteous. Death and Hades are personifications of the power of death and of the place to which the wicked dead go. They await the judgment of the Great White Throne which comes after the Millennial Age (Rev 20:11-15).

When this stage of the Tribulation is reached a second war will burst forth upon the world. This time the war will affect only a fourth part of the earth. In that section of the world men will be killed with the sword, with famine, with some pestilence or plague from the Lord and by wild beasts of the earth. What part of the globe will be affected by this rider on the fourth horse is not revealed. The toll of life in this part of the earth will be terrific. All of these things represented by these four horsemen of the apocalypse are all natural phenomena. First, there is a political movement that brings the Antichrist into power. There have been political movements on innumerable occasions that have brought men out of obscurity into power. So this is interpreted by the people who do not know the Bible as a natural occurrence. People will not see the hand of God although His hand is in it. There will be a world-wide shortage of food. People will be starving to death. Those living then will say that these things have occurred before and history repeats itself. They will be able to explain away these occurrences in the first part of the Tribulation.

## The Return of the Days of the Martyrs

"And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled *their course*" (vss. 9-11). In our investigation of the seal judgments we have come to the opening of the fifth seal. With the breaking of this seal the horrible days of persecution break forth upon all who turn to God in the first part of the Tribulation.

As we have seen in the discussion of chapters 4 and 5, the Rapture of the saints constituting the Church of God occurs before the Tribulation begins. Every born-again believer is snatched away out of the earth by the Lord when He descends from Heaven to the air to raise the dead and to catch up the living saints. After the Church has been raptured there are a host of believers who suffer martyrdom because of their faith in the Word of God and of their testimony which they held concerning Jesus Christ.

Who are these saints? There is but one answer to this question: They are the Tribulation saints; those who turn to the Lord after the Church is raptured and after the judgments of the Tribulation begin. The events of verses 9-11 anticipate the information which is given in chapter 7 concerning the great worldwide revival.

John sees the souls of the Tribulation martyrs in Heaven underneath the altar after they are martyred. Since Christ won the victory of the cross, the believer upon death goes immediately into

the presence of Christ. The lost go to Sheol, or Hades and remain there awaiting the judgment of the Great White Throne.

Christ left this earth at the time of His ascension and went to the Temple of God in Heaven. There is a Temple in Heaven. The Tabernacle and later the Temple built by Solomon were little replicas, little models, of that eternal reality. There were two compartments of the Tabernacle and of the Temple—the Most Holy Place and the Holy Place. Just as there is an altar of incense in the heavenly Temple, so there was an altar of incense that symbolized that heavenly altar in the Temple and Tabernacle here on earth. These who lived in the first part of the Tribulation, who have gone into the presence of Christ, are said to be under the altar. There are those who turn to the Lord. Many of them will go home by way of the chopping block—they will be beheaded for the Word of God and the testimony which they hold. There will be many martyrs in the second quarter of the Tribulation; but these spirits are the souls of the martyrs of the first quarter of the Tribulation, Rev. 20:4. They are conscious and know that those who executed them are still alive and on the earth and that they have not been punished for their crime. The souls of the saved are represented as being conscious and the souls of the unsaved are also conscious. My reason for saying that is found in Matt. 26:63-64a. This is the language of the Lord Jesus Christ to the high priest, the president of the Jewish Sanhedrin, that tried and condemned Christ. "But Jesus held his peace, And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth [from now on] ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." (I tell you the truth, I am the Christ, the Messiah of Israel, you are going to kill me, I am going to be buried, raised from the dead and ascend

from this earth and go back to Heaven and sit at the right hand of the throne of God. You are going to die, go down into Sheol and be thoroughly conscious. You will look up from Sheol, from Hades, across vast expanses of space and you will see me seated at the right hand of the throne of God.) Caiaphas and those who said "Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him!" have cast their eyes heavenward many times and they have seen Jesus Christ seated there at the right hand of God. They will see Him when He arises from His position at the right hand of God and when He rends the heavens and comes back in glory and power. In the sixteenth chapter of Luke, Jesus gives us a recital of the facts concerning the rich man and Lazarus. This passage also shows that the dead, or the lost dead ones in Sheol, are conscious and they know certain things that are taking place upon this earth.

From Rev. 6:11 we see that those who are saved and who are in the presence of God eagerly desire their resurrection bodies but they are told to wait until the rest of the brethren, the Tribulation saints, shall have run their course and met their fate. Heb. 12:1-3 is another passage which teaches that the saints are conscious and that they know about things transpiring upon the earth. The Tribulation saints will receive their resurrection bodies at the end of the Tribulation.

### General Convulsions Throughout all Nature

"And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and

the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" (vss. 12-17).

From this description it appears that there will be convulsions, mighty cosmic upheavals throughout our solar system and possibly extending throughout the universe. At that time there will be a universal blackout lasting for a short time. The light from the sun, moon and stars will not reach this earth. This will be the second blackout that occurs in connection with the Tribulation. The first one occurs before the Tribulation begins, as we see in Joel 2:28-32. But when this blackout occurs it will clear up and normal conditions of light and darkness will be restored. There will be the second blackout at the opening of the sixth seal. There will be another one—though of a different nature—when the fifth angel sounds his trumpet (Rev. 9:2). Another blackout will occur in the middle of the second half of the Tribulation (Rev. 16:10). The final black—out will occur at the end of the Tribulation immediately preceding our Lord's glorious return to this earth (Matt. 24:29-31).

At the breaking of each of the first four seals, there appears upon the earth a rider upon a certain colored horse. These horsemen are symbols of movements and events of that period. This movement brings the Antichrist into power; World War I of the Tribulation; universal shortage of food supplies; and a local war which affects one-fourth of the earth's surface. A martyrdom of Tribulation saints occurs at the breaking of the fifth seal. All of the things which occur under the first five seals are brought about and engineered by men

who instigate and carry forward these events as indicated in Rev. 6:1-11.

But in Rev. 6:12-17, at the breaking of the sixth seal, God begins to do "his work, his strange work" and to bring to pass "his act, his strange act" (Isa. 28:21) apart from all human effort and activity. That the language is to be interpreted as a general upheaval throughout the world and possibly the entire material universe is evident from the statements which are made in verses 12-14. People of every class will recognize that all of these phenomena are the work of God whose wrath, blended with His eternal love, is stirred to its depths. They will seek to hide themselves in the caves and the rocks of the mountains. At that time God certainly will begin performing His strange work and strange act in fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction (Isa. 28:20-29).

Since the upheaval described in Rev. 6:12-17 is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction, it is the event which the prophet designated as God's plowing, harrowing and leveling the earth, preparing the soil for the sowing of the seed. Then we are logical in thinking that the sowing of the seed naturally follows the preparation of the ground. Is there a universal seed-sowing following the preparation of the soil? This question is answered in the affirmative by the message of Rev. 7:1-17.

## Chapter 7

### **144,000 Jewish Evangelists and the Worldwide Revival (Rev. 7:1-17)**

Let us always bear in mind that the chronological order of events as they will occur in the Tribulation is found in Revelation, chapters 6, 8, 9 and 16. The chapters intervening give sidelights on the situation as it will exist during the Tribulation.

We saw that the seal judgments found in chapter 6 cover a period of approximately a year and nine months, the first quarter of the Tribulation. At the breaking of each of the six seals something definite takes place upon the earth. At the conclusion of the sixth seal there is, so to speak, a lull in the storm. Then there is given a vision of the 144,000 Jewish people who will conduct the worldwide revival in the Tribulation. After the giving of this vision the seventh Seal is broken, which develops into the seven trumpet judgments of chapters 8 and 9.

Though the prediction of the worldwide revival occurs in chapter 7, let us not think that it begins only after the first six seals have spent their force. As we saw in the last chapter, the martyrdom of the saints under the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11) presupposes the breaking forth and the continuance of this worldwide revival. There is nothing to indicate the exact time in the first part of the Tribulation when the revival begins. Someone, however, has beautifully expressed the thought in this way: The 144,000 Jewish servants of God will grasp the banner dropped by the ascending Church as it goes to meet the Lord in the air. These evangelists will carry forward the banner of Prince Immanuel to the ends of the earth and will bring about the worldwide revival.

When we study Revelation, chapter 7, and related passages, we are led to the conclusion that the revival will reach its greatest intensity during the first half of the Tribulation. It will likely go underground during the second half. That it will be considerably slowed down is set forth in Hab. 3:2, "O Jehovah, revive thy work in the midst of the years." After three and a half years the work of God, the great revival, will be brought to a sudden standstill. But it will be revived, not to blaze forth as a bright and shining light as in the first part of the Tribulation, however; but it will go underground and operate as the early church did during the days of the Roman persecutions.

### The Ministry of Angels

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). On account of the abuse of the doctrine of angels and their ministrations by certain groups, many Protestants shy away from anything that pertains to the ministry of angels. In the quotation just given, however, we see that they are the ones whom God dispatches to render various types of service to those who shall inherit salvation. One of the great services which they will render to the true worshiper is that they will camp round about those who fear God and deliver them (Ps. 34:7).

In Rev. 7:1 we see that there are four angels at the four corners of the earth holding back, or controlling, the four winds of the earth. In Rev. 10:1 we see a strong angel coming down from Heaven. According to Rev. 12:7, Michael and his angels will go forth and war against Satan and his cohorts, driving them out of the presence of God. In Rev. 14:6 we see an angel proclaiming the everlasting Gospel to all people which, when properly interpreted, is an announcement made by the angels that the everlasting Gospel will be preached

throughout the Tribulation. In Rev. 16:5 we read of the angel of the waters. These references are sufficient to show that the angels will play a very vital part during the Tribulation; they are at the present time rendering service to the Lord in various capacities (Ps. 103:20).

### The Treasuries of the Wind

In our present chapter we learn that four angels, mentioned in Rev. 7:1 are stationed at the four comers of the earth and that they hold back the four winds of the earth so that they shall not at that time blow upon the earth, sea or any tree. Men have learned much about meteorology and there is still much to learn. Scientists can predict to a certain extent and in a general way the type of weather that will exist in a given area for a certain time. God gave Job a questionnaire, none of the questions of which Job could answer fully and satisfactorily. Among these the Lord asked him: "By what way is the light parted, Or the east wind scattered upon the earth?" (Job 38:24). This implies that there is some place from which the east wind comes forth and then is scattered over the earth. This type of language reminds one of such passages as Ps. 135:6,7: "Whatsoever Jehovah pleased, that hath he done, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps; Who causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; Who maketh lightnings for the rain; Who bringeth forth the wind out of his treasuries." According to this passage there is a place which is designated as the "treasury of the wind." Where is this place and who is in control of it? How are the winds brought out of it, and how are they directed into various directions? On this point one should study carefully Jer. 10:13: "When he uttereth his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasuries."

The angelic hosts that remain faithful and true to God constitute a well-organized host. As John looked at the vision which was before him he saw another angel, a fifth one, that ascended from the sunrising with the seal of the living God. Then he cried with a great voice to the four angels commanding them not to hurt the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, nor anything—until the sealing of the 144,000 servants of God is accomplished.

We read accounts of tornadoes on land and hurricanes on the sea and of the mighty power and damage wrought by them. From the passage under consideration it appears that the angels have control of at least some of these tornadoes and hurricanes. It is hard for us to see this truth, but we must accept it by faith, especially so when we see such a passage as the following: "Jehovah is a jealous God and avengeth; Jehovah avengeth and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies. Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power, and will by no means clear *the guilty*: Jehovah hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth; and Carmel; and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken asunder by him. Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that take refuge in him. But with an over-running flood he will make a full end of her place, and will pursue his enemies into darkness" (Nahum 1:2-8).

When our Lord was asleep in the boat in which He was crossing the Sea of Galilee, there arose a mighty tempest which was about to destroy the boat in which the Saviour and the Apostles were sailing. The Apostles awakened Jesus. He then rebuked the wind and the waves. There was a mighty calm (Luke 8:22-25). Though the elements may seem to go on a rampage, all the forces of nature are under the mighty hand of God who does many things that are hard for us to understand. He does all things well!

### The 144,000 Jewish Servants of God

That these 144,000 servants are Jews is clearly stated in the context. There are 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. There is not a single Gentile in this group. The term Israel is used synonymously with Jews throughout the Bible and is inferred in this passage. THERE IS NO DOCTRINE MORE VITAL FOR THE GOING FORWARD OR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD THAN THE DOCTRINE OF ISRAEL'S PLACE IN GOD'S PRESENT PLAN. These will be sealed by the angel in order to protect them from the dangers of the time. They will be immune from all dangers. The sealing of these brings to mind the sealing in the vision of the people of Jerusalem who were to be exempt from injury during a crisis that was coming upon the doomed city. Read carefully Ezek. 9:3-8.

The 144,000 Jewish servants of Revelation, chapter 7, must be clearly differentiated from the 144,000 mentioned in Rev. 14:1-5. This latter group consists of people of all races, for we are told that "These were purchased from among men, *to be* the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 14:4). Concerning them, in verse 3, it is said that "they that had been purchased out of the earth." Of this group it is said: "These are they that were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These *are* they that follow the Lamb whithersoever

he goeth. These were purchased from among men, *to be* the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish" (Rev. 14:4, 5). These words mean exactly what they say. This statement being true, we say that the 144,000 of Revelation, chapter 14, is an entirely different group from the 144,000 Jewish servants of God given in Revelation, chapter 7.

There is one tribe that is not mentioned here—the tribe of Dan. We have twelve tribes listed. How do you get twelve if one is omitted? Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. But why is it that Dan is not mentioned here? There is a little hint of that back in Gen. 49:16, 17: "Dan shall judge his people, As one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, An adder in the path. That biteth the horse's heels, So that his rider falleth backward." The father of Dan predicted that he would be like a snake lying in the grass and waiting to strike. There will not be a single Danite of those 144,000, but of the others there will be 12,000 of each of the twelve tribes. What a tragedy! Through disobedience they lost their privilege of service. Since these servants of God will be located among the nations of the world, they will not need to learn other languages to share the Gospel. They will already have a knowledge of them—the message will go forth swiftly.

### The Worldwide Revival

There are three significant purposes of the Tribulation:

1. The Worldwide Revival
2. The Destruction of the Wicked
3. The Conversion of Israel.

What is meant by "the worldwide revival"? It is that movement back to God of the majority of humanity in their inner thirst for the salvation of their souls. The Psalmist cried out to God, saying: "As

the hart panteth after the water brooks, So panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. 42:1,2).

I am using the word "revival" here, not in the sense of the *Christian's* being renewed, but in the sense of the initial stage of the *sinner's* turning from his sins, coming to the Saviour and being born again, according to John 3:5, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

That there is to be such a revival is clearly seen in such a passage as Isa. 24:14-16: "These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout; for the majesty of Jehovah they cry aloud from the sea. Wherefore glorify ye Jehovah in the east, even the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea. From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs: Glory to the righteous." A study of this passage in the light of its context reveals the fact that this mighty turning to God will occur during the time of the Great Tribulation. When everything is moving along nicely, man feels his independence of God. Not until some calamity strikes does man generally feel his need of the help of the Almighty. Men are prone to take things for granted, not allowing God to lead in their lives.

God's primary objective in bringing men to their senses and causing them to turn to Him is the first purpose of the Tribulation. This is seen in Isa. 26:9,10: "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee earnestly: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal wrongfully, and will not behold the majesty of Jehovah." In these verses we see that the prophet is speaking for men who have been touched and influenced by the judgments of the Tribulation. It is

obvious that these judgments upon the world cause the inhabitants of the earth to learn righteousness through the merits of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Immediately after the vision of the 144,000 John saw an innumerable host of people from every nation, tribe, tongue and language who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Naturally John became very much interested in this vast throng of people. One of the celestial elders whom we see in Revelation, chapter 4, asked John if he knew who this host of people were. John replied, "My Lord, thou knowest." Then the elder informed him that this great company of people are those who come out of the Tribulation, the great one, and who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. This statement shows that these people are not saved *before* the Tribulation but are saved *during* that period of wrath. All who are saved before the Tribulation, who are alive immediately before that period of great judgment, will be raptured by the Lord, as we see in 1 Thess. 4:13-18. It is clear that this vast innumerable host of people referred to in Rev. 7:9-17 come out of the Great Tribulation. Let us note that the language does not state merely that they come "out of tribulation" for *all who live godly in Christ Jesus suffer tribulation and persecutions*. John is not talking about the same thing of which Paul spoke when he was "confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). On the contrary, John is speaking of the Tribulation, *the great one*. The idiom used by John lays emphasis upon the Tribulation and its being a great one. Thus equal emphasis is laid upon each word by the employment of this special idiom. There can be but *one* "Great Tribulation," the period of seven years with which this age of grace closes. We may conclude from the statement,

"when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness," that the major portion of the inhabitants of the world truly are evangelized and brought to a saving knowledge of Christ during the Tribulation. It is therefore no wonder that John was amazed by the vast company of those who will be saved by the preaching of the Jewish evangelists. The Almighty God knows what He is doing in sending the Great Tribulation. Instead of its being simply an expression of His wrath and indignation against sin, it is rather the manifestation of His overwhelming, yearning, passionate love for the souls of men.

### The Destruction of the Wicked

There are those who spurn truth and who prefer to engage in works of unrighteousness. Such people center their minds upon things of a low nature and love that which is immoral and degrading. They, by a deliberate choice, prefer these things. At the same time they spurn every thought and idea of God's love and of His marvelous, matchless, saving grace. The Lord never forces anyone's will nor does He coerce anyone. Since these people refuse to accept the Lord Jesus Christ, preferring to hold on to their evil ways, naturally they are not fit to enter into the great Millennial Kingdom of our Lord. There is, therefore, but one thing that a wise, loving, just, righteous, omnipotent, omniscient God can do, which is to destroy them out of the land of the living. David in his swan song declared: "But the ungodly shall be all of them as thorns to be thrust away, Because they cannot be taken with the hand; But the man that toucheth them must be armed with iron and the staff of a spear: And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their* place" (2 Sam. 23:6,7).

The ungodly, those who spurn truth, who delight in unrighteousness are compared to thorns that cannot be handled by the hand. Hence men must handle them with metal tools. These are to be "utterly burned with fire in *their* place." In this vivid comparison David meant to tell us that God must deal drastically with these wicked reprobate sinners and remove them out of the world.

In Ps. 92:6,7 we have the following statement: "A brutish man knoweth not; Neither doth a fool understand this: When the wicked spring as the grass, And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; It is that they shall be destroyed for ever."

These wicked ones shall be destroyed from the earth forever. In a similar statement we learn that the godless civilization of the end time will sink under the judgments of God, never to rise again: "The earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall sway to and fro like a hammock; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall, and not rise again" (Isa. 24:20). The writer of Psalm 37 was carried forward to the end time and saw evildoers flourishing; but he urged the faithful not to be envious of them for, said he, "For they shall soon be cut down like the grass." This is a graphic, vivid picture of the destruction of the wicked at the end of the Tribulation.

### Conversion of Israel

When the Messiah is rejected by His people, according to prophecy, the Lord God invites Him to ascend to Heaven and to take His seat at the right hand of the Almighty. He is to remain there until God puts His enemies under His feet: "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies" (Ps. 110:1,2).

In fulfillment of this passage, when our Lord was rejected, executed, buried and raised again from the dead, He was invited by God to return to Heaven and to remain at His right hand until the Almighty puts Messiah's enemies under His feet. God's working providentially and putting the Jewish people under Messiah's feet will be accomplished by the terrific judgments of the Tribulation Period.

This position is confirmed by a very striking and arresting statement found in Dan. 12:6, 7: "And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth forever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." The wonders concerning the query are the wonders of the latter half of the Tribulation. How long are they to continue? The answer is: "for a time, times, and a half; and when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people [the Jewish people], all these things shall be finished." According to this prediction the power of the Jewish people will be broken completely. They have built up, unfortunately, a resistance to the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ, their longed-for Messiah. Of course, they are mistaken in this; in rejecting Him they are honest and conscientious about the matter. Nevertheless, they have done it. Their opposition to Him has been growing in intensity and rigidity throughout the centuries. It will take the sledgehammer blows of God's judgments to break the power of "the holy people" and to shatter this built-up resistance against the Messiah. When, however, this result becomes a reality, the whole nation of Israel living at that time will repudiate the action of their leaders in rejecting their

Messiah and will plead for Him to return. When they do that, He will come back and fulfill all the predictions of the reign of Messiah upon the earth that are found throughout the Prophets. His coming back will be in response to the heart-cry of suffering Israel: "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly. Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him. And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth" (Hosea 5:15-6:3).

Thus the third purpose in God's sending the Tribulation is a blessing in disguise, especially to the Hebrew people and also the entire world.

Let us pray that the will of God be done! "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: They shall prosper that love thee" (Ps. 122:6). Let us do all that we can, in every way possible, for God's ancient people, Israel—through whom He will bring the greatest blessing that the world has ever known, blessings known and foretold by the prophets of God.

### World Blessing Through Israel

God announced in Gen. 12:1-3 that it was His intention to bless all nations in and through Abraham and his seed. This promise was reaffirmed to Isaac and to Jacob. All the spiritual blessings that we enjoy today have come from God through Israel to us. In this seventh chapter of Revelation we see people of all nations coming to God and being blessed by Him. This is a partial fulfillment of the promise that was made to Abraham. The full and complete fulfillment will materialize when the remnant of Israel are led by the 144,000 Jewish

evangelists at the conclusion of the Tribulation to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Then in answer to their pleading for Christ's return, He will do so and take the governments of the world in His hands, lift the curse and establish His reign of righteousness. Then converted Israel will lead all men to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. When this is done, the promise made to Abraham will become a reality. Throughout the Millennium, the age of our Lord's reign upon earth, the people of Israel will be the priests and the ministers of our God. No Gentiles will then officiate in spiritual matters. The blessing of God, in the fullest sense of the term, will be flowing out to all the world—to all nations—through Israel, Abraham's literal descendants.

Israel at the present time does not have the truth of the Gospel. We, who know Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, and who know the plan of God, should bend every effort to get the truth out to all Israel in this generation in order that they may see the mistake of nineteen hundred years' standing and repudiate the national sin, in fulfillment of Isa. 53:1-9 and 63:7-64:12.

When the Church is raptured out of the world, before the Tribulation, its voice will cease. We can leave behind a testimony in the form of properly written and edited books and literature, given to the Jews at the present time. Not only will men be won from among Israel to the Lord Jesus Christ, but our message will also be in a permanent form in their hands. They will read these books as soon as the Judgments of the Tribulation begin to come upon them. Then there will arise this army of 144,000 Jews who will conduct this revival.

What are you doing to give the truth to Israel now? There is no greater investment that you can make than to proclaim the truth to God's Chosen People!

## Chapter 8

### The Trumpet Judgments (Rev. 8 and 9)

According to Rev. 8:2 there are seven angels "that stand before God." One of these is Gabriel. We know this because of information that he gave to Zacharias in the following words: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19). This same Gabriel was dispatched to bring a message to the prophet Daniel (Dan. 9:21). We have no information as to the identity of the other six that stand in the Almighty's presence.

These seven angels are given seven trumpets to blow which call forth the seven trumpet judgments upon the earth. What is the significance of the trumpets? Though the trumpets are symbolic, they have a literal significance as is manifest from the entire atmosphere of the passage. Numbers 10:1-10 suggests the meaning. Moses ordered the manufacture of two silver trumpets which were to be blown on different occasions and for various purposes. One of the purposes of the trumpets was to call together at the door of the tent of meeting an assembly of the leaders of Israel. At times the sounding of the trumpets was for the reason of announcing the marching of the camp forward to another location. Sometimes they were blown at the time of burnt offerings and sacrifices of peace offerings. At other times they were sounded as a call to war (Num. 10:9, cf. Ezek. 33:1-6). Of the various purposes of the trumpets there is but one meaning that they can have in the book of Revelation. They sound an alarm of war—the war of Heaven against earth. These trumpets are sounded as the declaration of the hurling of one judgment after another upon the earth. This will be accomplished by the angelic hosts in their use of material sources and resources.

## Worship in Heaven

"And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake" (Rev. 8:3-5). In this passage we see an angel officiating at the altar of incense in the heavenly sanctuary. That there is a Temple in Heaven is evident from different passages. In Ps. 11:4 we see this Temple of God in Heaven. The Tabernacle built by Moses and the Temple built later by Solomon were little replicas of the spiritual reality in Heaven. In the Temple in Heaven there is a Most Holy Place and the Holy Place. In the Most Holy Place is the throne of God and the mercy seat, where atonement is made. In the Holy Place was the altar of incense, the candlestick and the shewbread, all of which had symbolic significance. There is always worship going on in the Temple in Heaven. It corresponds to the worship by the children of God here upon the earth. Our worship sends up prayers and adoration to the throne of God. This is taken into the Holy Place and our prayers are mixed with the incense on the golden altar. Our prayers are presented to God, and there is not a prayer of a single individual who is regenerated but that his prayer is answered at the proper time.

We can see from Rev. 8:3-5 that there is a service conducted in Heaven. The one taking the leading part in it is called "an angel," and it is this angel who is officiating at the altar in the Holy Place. Who is this angel? Different answers are given. Some believe that he is one of the high, powerful and authoritative angels. Others say, "No; this

can be none other than our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ." Though we cannot be dogmatic on this point, it appears most reasonable to believe that this one is an angel because he is called an angel. The Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament was called "the angel of Jehovah," "the angel of God" and was distinguished from angels in general. This one is not distinguished from the angels; therefore it seems most probable that this is an angel and not the Son of God.

This angel offers the incense before God, and to it he adds the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne. In the Tabernacle and Temple service the high priest offered the incense in the worship. This had a symbolic significance. Though the incense was literal, yet it had a spiritual meaning. This symbolized the worship and the prayers of the saints. An intimation along this line is recorded in Ps. 141:2: "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee; The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." When the statement is made that the prayers of all saints are added to the incense, we know that the incense is connected with and symbolizes the presentation of the petitions of the saints of all ages to God the Father who is on the throne.

Every prayer of every born-again person is answered (Matt. 7:7, 8). Many of them still await their answer at this future time of which we are studying. These are the prayers that pertain to God's punishment of the wicked and the purging of the world of unrighteousness in order to establish a reign of righteousness upon the earth. In this manner the prayers of the people of God throughout the centuries regarding God's promises just mentioned will be answered. Jesus assured us that the one who seeks, finds; the one who asks, receives and the one who knocks, to him shall the door be opened.

That is in perfect accord with the statement that the prayers of all the saints are added to the offering of incense on this occasion.

### The Casting of Fire Upon the Earth

At the conclusion of this scene of worship, the angel (in the vision) takes fire from off the altar and casts it upon the earth. When this is done, there follows "thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake" (cf. Rev. 4:5 and 11:19 with 8:5). As the Tribulation advances these outward demonstrations increase in intensity and severity.

Though there is a symbolic act of casting fire upon the earth, it signified the actual causing of "thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake" upon the earth. The thunders will be literal; the voices will be literal; the lightning will be real and the earthquake will be actual and very destructive. One of the best ways of studying the book of Revelation, especially these judgments, is to examine carefully the ten plagues which Moses brought upon the land of Egypt, read Exodus 1-11. Moses and Aaron took their rod and waved it over the waters of Egypt. This was a symbolic act which actually turned the waters into blood. Again, Moses stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and as a result there came up frogs that covered the countryside. A symbolic act caused the coming of actual, literal frogs that were a plague and a menace to the entire land. Once again, note that Aaron stretched out his rod and smote the dust of the earth, and as a result lice appeared throughout the entire land of Egypt. Thus these various symbolic acts were performed, but they brought about real, actual judgments. In a manner analogous to this, John saw these angels, actual celestial beings, blowing their trumpets, performing a symbolic act which brought about literal results upon the earth.

## The First Four Trumpet Judgments

Some scholars try to identify these seven trumpets with the trumpet that is mentioned in 1 Thess. 4:13 to 5:11, and the one that is set forth in 1 Cor. 15:50-58. Paul, in speaking of the Rapture of the Church, says that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). There is some effort to identify the trumpet that will sound at the time of the Rapture with these trumpets found in the book of Revelation. Again the Apostle Paul, speaking about the same event, the matter of the Rapture, in 1 Cor. 15:51, 52 says: "We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Trying to identify these trumpets in the Thessalonian and in the Corinthian letters with the trumpets of Revelation, chapter 8, has its difficulty in harmonizing all of the data. The Apostle Paul wrote the Thessalonian letter about 52 A.D. and the Corinthian letter about 56 or 57 A.D., but the book of Revelation was never made known to man until God gave it to John on the island of Patmos about 96 A.D.

When the time arrived, the seven angels that were to blow their trumpets stood at attention and were ready to perform their duties: "And the first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up" (Rev. 8:7). When this angel sounded his trumpet John saw in vision, hail and fire mingled with blood which were cast upon the earth. There is no reason that militates against our

interpreting the hail literally and likewise the fire. We know that God has treasured up snow and hail for the time of battle and war in His treasure house (Job 38:22-24). Moreover, we know that God rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis, chapter 19). In the Tribulation, when God is destroying the wicked from the face of the earth, He will rain fire and brimstone upon the earth (Ps. 11:6). We have every reason to believe that the hail and the fire are literal. They will be mingled with blood, blood such as was the result of the miracle of turning the waters of Egypt into blood by Moses and Aaron.

The first trumpet judgment will affect one-third of the earth's surface, which will be scorched and burned. Likewise it will destroy the timber in the regions where the "hail and fire, mingled with blood" fall.

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and a third part of the sea became blood; and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed" (Rev. 8:8,9). When this second angel sounded his trumpet, there was, as it were, a great mountain burning with fire and it was cast into the sea. What John saw reminded him of a great mountain which was burning with fire and it fell into the sea and affected one-third of the waters. This possibly is a great meteorite which will plunge into the sea and with its deadly gases will affect the water of one-third of the sea and make it turn into blood. As a result of this, one-third of the creatures in the waters will be killed and one-third of the ships will be destroyed.

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; and the name of the star is

called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (Rev. 8:10, 11). At the sounding of the third trumpet a great star burning like a torch will fall and bury itself in the crust of the earth. It will crash through the strata of the earth down into the subterranean canals of waters and will poison them. Many men will die of these poisoned waters.

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner" (Rev. 8:12). The heavenly bodies are going to be affected. At the equinoxes, when the night is equal to the day, there are twelve hours of darkness and twelve hours of light. After this event takes place there will be sixteen hours of darkness and only eight hours in the daytime. This will affect climatic conditions upon the earth. It will also affect vegetation. When the fourth angel sounds his trumpet, forces will be set in operation that affect the heavens and the heavenly bodies for one-third part of the day. Everything will be abnormal in the heavens above and upon the earth beneath at this time.

From what we have seen of the trumpet judgments they are an advance over the seal judgments, except the sixth one, which had convulsions of all nature. As the Tribulation advances the judgments will continue to increase in intensity and destruction.

"And I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound" (Rev. 8:13). It is evident that the eagle John saw "flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth" was referring to the last three trumpet

judgments which are here called "woes." The reason for this is that the latter three judgments are far more intense and destructive than the first four. These almost seem to reach the limit of the endurance of men in the areas where they take place.

The fifth angel that sounds with his trumpet calls forth the first woe and the sixth with his blast causes the second woe to come forth with all its might. These are described in chapter 9. But the seventh trumpet, the third woe, does not call forth any specific thing that transpires upon the earth. Rather, it develops into the seven bowl judgments described in chapter 16.

In chapter 9 it becomes necessary for us to understand something about the origin and activities of the spirit world.

### The Origin of Evil Spirits

The first glimpse that we have of the spirit world is to be found in Genesis, chapter 3. The serpent who beguiled Eve and caused her to eat of the forbidden fruit gives evidence of an intellect and power far superior to that of an animal or any human being. The results that followed that tragic incident have been so very far-reaching—affecting the entire earth and the greater portion of the human family for time and eternity. We are confident that a gigantic intellect and mighty power were behind the scenes on that fatal occasion, engineering the situation and causing the fall. The suspicions that are aroused by the narration of what actually occurred and the results thereof are lifted from the plane of hypothesis and theory by the information which is given to us in Ezek. 28:11-19. Here we read of one to whom it was said: "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God ... the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee; in the day that thou wast created they were prepared. Thou wast the anointed

cherub that covereth: and I set thee, *so that* thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee. By the abundance of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore have I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I have destroyed thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I have cast thee to the ground; I have laid thee before kings, that they may behold thee" (Ezek. 28:12b-17).

When we understand the full import of this passage and compare the facts with the descriptions of the Devil in other portions of Scripture, we come to the conclusion that this is an inspired pen picture of the anointed cherub. He was perfect in his being and in all his attributes and was the generalissimo of the Lord's armies. He was created perfect but he conceived unrighteousness in his heart and instituted a revolt against the Lord God Almighty. In this rebellion he led astray one-third of the angels (Rev. 12:4). Those who followed his seductive ways in rebellion against the Lord were cast down from their high position in the service of God. They accepted the leadership of Satan, this fallen spirit, and are under him. At the present time he is the prince of the powers of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:1ff). These evil, rebellious, fallen spirits inhabit the air and attack the human family. In many instances they cause what is known as demon possession. This was prevalent in Palestine during the days of our Lord and is quite common throughout the world today and will become more prevalent as we advance toward the end of the age.

In the days of Noah, however, there were other angels who had remained faithful and true to God up to that time, but who saw the daughters of men, that they were fair. They lusted after these, assumed the form of men, came and married these women, cohabiting with them. The result of these unholy unions was a race of supernatural beings. Those who left their former estate and came and thus assumed the form of men are called the Nephilim, the fallen ones. Their progeny are called the giants, men of renown, who were in the earth in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:1-4). Jude refers to these in verses 6 and 7 of his Epistle: "And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." Note that angels which kept not their principality but left their proper habitation are said to have acted as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah did, who gave themselves over to fornication and went after strange flesh. The angels did this in like manner as the Sodomites which kept not their principality but left their proper habitation, came, and cohabited with these women of Noah's day. Those spirits that were evil in the days of Noah were incarcerated in the pit of the abyss and have been there ever since, as is set forth in 2 Peter 2:1-10. There appears to be a mighty host of them.

### The Fifth Trumpet (The First Woe)

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss" (Rev. 9:1). Was this a literal star that John saw fallen from

heaven to earth or is the term used in a figurative sense? It is used in the latter manner for a literal star could not take a key and open the pit of the abyss or perform the act indicated by this language. The word "star" is used in the figurative sense as we use it today when we speak of a motion-picture "star" or a "star" boarder. The star which John saw is an intelligent being who has great power, to whom the key of the pit of the abyss is given.

When this being opens the "pit of the abyss" there goes up a smoke, "as the smoke of a great furnace" and in the midst of this smoke there swarms forth a mighty army of beings whom John calls *locusts*. The smoke is so very thick that it darkens the sun.

Hades is down in the center of the earth. "Hades" is the Greek word whereas "Sheol" is the Hebrew Old Testament word and it is the place where all of the departed went from Adam to Christ. There were two compartments of Hades or Sheol, separated by a great gulf. The saved went to one part and the lost went to the other. Since Christ won the victory, the saved no longer go to Hades, but the wicked lost still go there. There is the well (here translated pit) of the abyss, where there are certain infernal spirits. These are not the angels who rebelled originally. The one-third of the angels who rebelled originally when Satan tried to match swords with God and to overthrow His throne are still in the air. They constitute Satan's host. In the days of Noah there were the sons of God—angels—who saw the daughters of men that they were fair. They left the high plane on which they were created; they came to earth; assumed the form of men; formed marriages with these women and there sprang from those unions a hybrid creature. They were known as the men of renown. That is the incident that precipitated the flood. According to 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6, God bound them and put them in Tartarus. "Tartarus" is the Greek word *tartaroo* transliterated. He tartarized

them, that is, he incarcerated them in Tartarus, down in that well or the pit of the abyss. Those infernal spirits have been bound in chains of darkness and they have been there ever since. When this pit or well of the abyss is opened up there will issue forth sulphuric fumes and smoke and it will envelop the whole earth. The world will be in absolute, literal darkness when this occurs. As to how long it will continue, no one can say. Then there will come out of that well or the pit of the abyss evil spirits, those spirits that were incarcerated in the days of Noah. These beings, the locusts, coming out of the pit have power as the scorpions of the earth have power. They are not allowed, by divine decree, to injure any green or growing thing upon the earth. They are, however, permitted to strike all men who do not have the seal of God on their forehead (see Rev. 7:3).

For five full months, 150 days, these demon locusts sting and torment men. The human family will be in such misery that many of them will attempt to take their lives but it will be utterly impossible. They will have to "grit their teeth" and endure untold misery for five long months (Rev. 9:5, 6). The description of these locusts found in verses 9 and 10 shows that they are not literal insects but that they are spirit beings who have nothing but vengeance and hatred in their souls against mankind.

"They have over them as king the angel [or messenger] of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek *tongue* he hath the name Apollyon [Destroyer]" (Rev. 9:11). True to the name of their leader, these evil spirits when let loose upon earth, will wreak havoc from one end of it to the other.

At the expiration of the five months the first "woe" will have run its course. Evidently these demon spirits will be corralled back into the pit of the abyss where they will be incarcerated again.

### The Sixth Trumpet (The Second Woe)

In Rev. 9:12-21 we have a description of the sixth trumpet, the second woe. When this angel sounded his trumpet, John said that he "heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God." This voice said to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, "Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates." This is the first reference to these particular angels that is found in the Bible. The river Euphrates simply means the literal river that has been recognized by this name from times immemorial.

According to this passage there are four angels that have been bound and have been prepared "for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men" (Rev. 9:15). Obviously, these are evil angels; otherwise, they would not be chained or bound at that one place and kept there through the centuries.

The language concerning the time that the Almighty had in view when He bound them is very significant. They have been placed there for "the hour and day and month and year." God has a plan and a purpose which runs through the ages. While He lets man exercise his own freedom of choice and determine what his present and future shall be, the Almighty overrules all things and makes everything fit into a plan that will bring ultimate glory to Himself and benefit and blessing to the greatest number involved.

These four angels are to be used of God in destroying one-third of the human family; that is, one-third of those that will be in existence at the time that these angels are loosed. One of the three purposes that the Lord has in sending the Tribulation upon the world is to destroy all the wicked out of it in order that He might establish a reign of righteousness. If the Lord would allow the wicked to continue to live

as they are now it would be impossible to have a reign of righteousness such as that which is set forth in the Prophetic Word.

These four angels will have a mighty host of evil, wicked angels under them. According to verse 16, "And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them." In this army there will be two hundred million evil spirits and they will kill one-third of the people upon the earth.

These are said to be horsemen. Are they literal horsemen, riding actual horses? This question is answered in verse 17: "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates as of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone." These cannot be literal for horses and horsemen could not wear breastplates as of fire and hyacinth and brimstone. The heads of these horses are like the heads of lions. Out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. Those constituting this army have the appearance of an army of horsemen. Since they have as their leaders these four evil spirits, it is quite evident that they are another army of evil spirits that have superhuman power.

Where are they now? Are they in the pit of the abyss as those of whom we studied and who came out of the pit at the blowing of the fifth trumpet? It is impossible for us to say. There is no intimation in the text as to where they are now or how they are gathered together by these four angels that are loosed.

The destruction this army of two hundred million horsemen brings is beyond the wildest imagination of any of us today. They inflict injury and torment upon the people of the earth, even upon those whom they do not slay.

The two-thirds of mankind that are not killed by this plague do not repent of the works of their hands, "that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood ... and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev. 9:20, 21). Instead, they continue on as they have been going. Nothing but punishment and the final slaying of wicked men and the incarceration of these evil spirits in the pit of the abyss can solve the world problem. This will be done at the end of the Tribulation.

## Chapter 9

### **The Little Book Eaten by John (Rev. 10:1-11)**

#### **The Small Parenthesis (Rev. 10:1-11:14)**

By way of review, the seal judgments are described in chapter 6. The trumpet judgments, which cover the second quarter of the Tribulation are described in chapters 8 and 9. We must modify this statement, for there is a parenthesis that is inserted in the narrative which consists of Rev. 10:1-11:13. Rev. 11:14 constitutes the last of the trumpet judgments. This verse follows chronologically Rev. 9:21. In our study we have come to the consideration of this first minor or "little" parenthesis.

#### The Ministry of the Strong Angel

As we have seen, angels play a very prominent part in the book of Revelation. John chapter 10 we see a strong angel that comes down from Heaven to the earth and stands with one foot upon the sea and the other upon the earth: "And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices" (Rev. 10:1-3).

There is some discussion among expositors as to who this angel is. Some have come to the conclusion that he is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. There are some elements that favor this position; but, when we consider this passage, this interpretation is quite doubtful. Notice, the Lord Jesus is introduced in the first chapter as the judge

and the executor of vengeance against wrongdoers. He deals in mercy and yet in righteousness with His people. In the Tribulation He deals with the world in absolute righteousness and justice. We do well to accept the plain significance of the word "angel" and understand that this is a mighty and powerful one, who is dispatched of God for a definite, specific purpose. As he stood there in his majesty and glory, he held a little book in his hand which was open. He cried with a great voice which was "as a lion roareth." As to what he said, we have no information.

When he thus spoke, "the seven thunders uttered their voices." Who these thunders were, no one can tell because there is no information given. It is possible that these thunders were angels who spoke with thundering voices. In view of the fact that we do not have information as to their identity, we do well to pass by without comment.

When these thunders uttered their voices, John was about to write what he heard. This fact shows that the thunders spoke in language that was understandable by the Apostle. Hence he wanted to preserve what he heard. But a voice spoke to him saying, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not" (Rev. 10:4b).

"And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets" (Rev. 10:5-7).

According to these verses this strong angel lifted his hand to Heaven as he stood upon the land and the sea and swore by the Almighty who lives for ever and ever—the Creator of the universe—“that there shall be delay no longer.” The Greek word translated “delay” has two different meanings: *time* and *delay*. Whenever a word has two or more meanings, that one should be accepted which accords with the facts of the context. To say that time shall be no longer is contrary to all the facts. We know that this statement is made in the middle of the Tribulation. Moreover, we know that the Tribulation continues for three and a half years after that date. Furthermore, we know that when our Lord comes at the end of the Tribulation, He will reign upon this earth for a thousand years. Following the thousand years, there will be a little season when Satan shall be unloosed out of the pit of the abyss and will deceive the nations. Then will come the judgment of the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15). At that point the material heavens and the earth will pass away and time, as we know it, will cease to be. There will be *time*, therefore, after the event mentioned in our passage; hence, the meaning of time as a translation of the word is a mistake. On the other hand, the word *delay* is also another meaning of this word. When we look at it in the light of all the facts, we see that it fits in perfectly with the context. The translators of the American Standard Version (published 1901) are therefore correct.

The reason the angel says that there will be *delay* no longer is that “in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets” (Rev. 10:7). As we have already seen in chapter 6, the seals will at this time have been broken and will have spent their force. The six trumpeters will have sounded their notes of judgment and will have brought down the

catastrophic manifestations of God's wrath upon the world. There will be one more trumpeter to sound and to call forth the completion of the wrath of God. But, oh! the devastation and the wreckage that will result from the blowing of that seventh trumpet is beyond human power to conceive. Events will move forward in rapid succession and culminate in the almost total extinction of all civilization that is built up by man—by the time the end of the Tribulation is reached.

In Rev. 10:8-11 we have a description of a symbolic act, which John was commanded to perform. This strong angel handed the little book which he had in his hand to John, instructing him to eat it, which he did. In John's mouth it was as sweet as honey. In his belly it was as bitter as gall. The angel had told him that such would be the case. This turned out exactly as foretold. Such symbolism is not strange to the one who knows his Old Testament. For instance, in Ezek. 2:8-3:3 we have an account of Ezekiel's being commanded to take a roll of a book which was handed to him and to eat it. This scroll was written with lamentations and mournings and woes on both sides. Compare also Jer. 15:16-18. When the contents of the book were in John's mouth, it was sweet to him; but when it reached his stomach, it was bitter.

What was the significance of this symbolic act? The clue to this thought is found in Rev. 10:11: "And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." A person eats food; he first chews it and swallows it, digests it and finally assimilates it. Some of it is built into the tissues of his body. Thus life is sustained. We speak of devouring books. We, of course, are thinking of our studying and receiving mental food and nourishment from them as if it were actual food. Sometimes that which is eaten physically proves to be very bitter and harmful to us. Sometimes we learn some new truths from a book, and we are

delighted with it at first thought. But, when we really digest and assimilate the thought, it becomes very sad to us when we realize the import of its message. This seems to be the significance of John's eating the book which was handed to him. This book had written messages that pertained to the world and God's bringing His judgments upon the people. This being true, it is seen that the little book contains the rest of the descriptions that are found in the book of Revelation, chapters 11-19.

## Chapter 10

### **The Jewish Temple of the Tribulation, The Holy City and the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-14) The Small Parenthesis (Rev. 10:1-11:14)**

#### The City of Jerusalem During the Tribulation

Chapter 11 begins as follows: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." The Temple and the altar of God suggests that in this part of the vision John was given a glimpse of the city of Jerusalem where the Temple stood. This supposition is confirmed by verse 8, "And their dead bodies *lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified." This city where the Temple of God is, is the very city in which our Lord was crucified, and which is called, according to this verse, Sodom and Egypt. We therefore know that in chapter 11 we have the scenes laid in Jerusalem in the middle of the Tribulation Period.

Our Lord in the Olivet discourse foretold the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jews would be dispersed among all nations during the time of Israel's rejection. Jesus foretold the destruction of the Temple (Matthew, chapter 24; Mark, chapter 13; Luke, chapter 21). As Jesus and the disciples were seated on the Mount of Olives after He made that prediction, four of them came and asked Him: "Teacher, when therefore shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when these things are about to come to pass?" (Luke 21:7). In reply our Lord said, "But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand ... Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress

upon the land, and wrath unto this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:20-24). Titus, the Roman general, drew up his armies around Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70. For some unknown reason, according to Eusebius, the father of church history, Titus withdrew his armies. Then the Christians that were in Jerusalem, following the instructions of our Lord, fled immediately to Trans-Jordan and went northward up to the city of Pella. After they left the city, Titus drew up his armies around the city again and continued the siege until it fell. Those who survived that most horrible ordeal were led captive into the slave markets of the Greco-Roman world.

[Editor's Note: As a result of the Six-Day War, Israel now possesses all of the city of Jerusalem except the ancient Temple area which is controlled by the Moslems. Therefore, contrary to the teaching of some Bible teachers, the times of the Gentiles mentioned in Luke 21:24 have *not* been completely fulfilled. When they do possess all of the city and Jerusalem has been returned to its rightful owners, the Jews, the Temple area will be rebuilt.

[According to Daniel, chapter 2, Dr. Cooper taught that the times of the Gentiles do not culminate until the stone cut out of the mountain without hands (Christ) crushes the feet of the image. Israel is *not* now in the land to stay. She will yet be scattered among the nations, see Joel 3:1-3 and Dan. 11:39. The times of the Gentiles are not concluded until the end of the Tribulation Period.]

Everyone who has visited the State of Israel, which came into being in 1948, knows that the Jews are doing a marvelous piece of work in the upbuilding of Jerusalem and that part of the country which is now known as the State of Israel. John's prophecy in Rev.

11:1-14 presupposes the existence of the State of Israel and Jerusalem's being in the hands of its rightful owners.

There is a vital prophecy concerning the Jewish nation which will be fulfilled in the end time. It is Ezekiel, chapter 20. In verses 33-39 God declares "with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, will I be king over you." Then He will gather the Jewish people from the peoples and the countries where they have been scattered throughout the Christian Dispensation. He will gather them "into the wilderness of the peoples" where He will enter into judgment with them face to face. What is meant by the expression "the wilderness of the peoples"? There is no country by that name, but this is a play on words. God in the days of Moses brought Israel out of the land of Egypt into the wilderness of Sinai. During their forty-year sojourn in that desolate wilderness God entered into judgment with the people and punished them for their wickedness and their sin. Out of 600,000 warriors who left Egypt only two of them entered into the Promised Land—Caleb and Joshua. Having spoken of those historical facts, God told Ezekiel that He would gather Israel from among the nations where they have resided through the centuries and will gather them into "the wilderness of the peoples." He will there enter into judgment with them and cause certain ones to pass under the rod and enter into the land of their fathers. This prophecy has never been fulfilled. It certainly will be when the time arrives.

Where will God gather the Jews? In wrath He takes them out from among the peoples where they have resided during the age of grace. The prophecy in Isa. 27:12, 13 shows where Israel will be in the very end of this age: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will beat off *his fruit* from the flood of the River unto the brook of Egypt; and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great trumpet shall be

blown; and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and they that were outcasts in the land of Egypt; and they shall worship Jehovah in the holy mountain at Jerusalem." Here God declares that He will beat off his fruit "from the flood of the River unto the brook of Egypt"—from the Euphrates to the river Nile in Egypt. When He beats off the fruit, He will gather the children of Israel, one by one, and place them in their own land. In this language God is comparing the Jewish people to an olive grove that will be planted in what is termed the "fertile crescent" consisting of Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Iraq, or old Babylonia. Olives are gathered by beating the trees; then the berries are picked from the ground. With this imagery in mind, there is but one conclusion to which we can come, and that is that God will, by His overruling providence, spew Israel out from among the nations where they have resided. He will gather them back into this fertile crescent where they will flourish in the very end time. Then God will gather them, the remnant, from the midst of the fertile crescent and cause them, figuratively speaking, to pass under the rod and enter into the land of their fathers (Ezek. 20:37).

God will not gather *every* Jew into the fertile crescent. Some few will be left scattered among the nations as we see from a prophecy in Isa. 66:18-21.

### The Jewish Tribulation Temple

After Israel became settled in the Land of Promise and the kingdom had become well established under the leadership of King David, the Lord chose Jerusalem as the place where He would establish His name (Ps. 78:65-72; Ps. 87:1-3; Ps. 132:13-15). From these passages we see that the Lord has chosen Jerusalem as the city where He would place His name and where His people could come

and worship Him. Thus Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem: Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it; Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest, at the time of the restoration from Babylonian captivity rebuilt it. Herod the Great tore it down piecemeal, rebuilt and enlarged it. Titus, the Roman general, finally destroyed it in A.D. 70. An attempt in the days of Julian, the apostate, a Roman Caesar, was made to rebuild it but failed.

That this Temple will be rebuilt by the Jews and will be standing in the Tribulation is certain from several passages of Scripture. Isaiah the prophet in vision saw the Jews rebuilding it and re-inaugurating their ritualism and sacrifices.

#### Isaiah's Reference to the Tribulation Temple

“Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what manner of house will ye build unto me? And what place shall be my rest? For all these things hath my hand made, and *so* all these things came to be, saith Jehovah: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word. He that killeth an ox is as he that slayeth a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as he that breaketh a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, *as he that offereth* swine's blood; he that burneth frankincense, as he that blesseth an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations: I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I delighted not" (Isa. 66:1-4).

In this passage the prophet saw the Jews feverishly rebuilding this Temple. At its completion he saw the re-organization of the Temple service. He declared that those who come and sacrifice will be

unacceptable to God as the man who would offer swine's flesh upon the altar as a sacrifice to God. The man who sacrifices an ox will be just the same as the man who slays another man. None of these sacrifices will be acceptable in God's sight. Nevertheless, they will do this because they have chosen their own ways; God will choose their delusions.

### The Psalmist's Reference to the Tribulation Temple

The sacred writer in Ps. 74:1-11 saw the Temple at Jerusalem being defaced and finally burned, together with all the synagogues of God throughout the land of Palestine. Some have interpreted this passage as referring to the destruction of the Temple under Nebuchadnezzar, but this is impossible for there were no synagogues in the land at that time. The synagogue arose during the Babylonian captivity when Israel had no central sanctuary at which to worship. Then these local synagogues were brought into existence. Since this passage contemplates the burning of the Temple and of the synagogues in the land, the destruction of the Temple under Nebuchadnezzar could not be the event which was before the prophet's mind. Other interpreters have thought that the Psalmist saw Antiochus Epihanes, the Greco-Syrian ruler in Antioch, who committed all sorts of depredations against the Jews in their land and who defiled the Temple at Jerusalem. Antiochus, with his atrocities against the Jewish people could not be the fulfillment of this prediction because he did not destroy the Temple but only defiled it. Others see the destruction of the Temple by Titus, the Roman general, in A.D. 70, as the fulfillment of this prediction. But this interpretation does not coincide with the facts. Titus tried to preserve the Temple and gave special orders to his men to do nothing to violate its sanctity. Contrary to his orders it was burned in the last desperate attempt of the Jews to resist

Roman aggression. So we may be certain that the Psalmist was not talking about the Roman overthrow of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple and the occupation of the land. The correct interpretation of this passage is that the Psalmist saw the Jewish Temple, rebuilt by them, standing in the time of the Tribulation. The forces of the Antichrist and his lieutenants deface that sacred structure and will destroy it together with all the synagogues in the land. Thus Ps. 74:1-11 presupposed the standing of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in the time of the end.

#### Matthew's Reference to the Tribulation Temple

Our Lord spoke with a consciousness of the fact that the Jews will rebuild their Temple and that it will be standing in the middle of the Tribulation. This is seen in Matt. 24:15ff. Jesus was talking about the Tribulation, the period of seven years of judgment with which the age closes. In the middle of it the "abomination of desolation" will be set up (see Dan. 9:27). Thus our Lord assumed the existence of the Temple in the end time.

#### Paul's Reference to the Tribulation Temple

The Apostle Paul, 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, spoke of the Antichrist and what he will do in the middle of the Tribulation when he defies God. He will go to Jerusalem and will sit in the Temple of God. He opposes God and all that is worshipped as God, setting himself forth as God (2 Thess. 2:1-13).

#### Measuring the Tribulation Temple

John was given a reed and was instructed to measure the Temple of God, the altar and them that worship therein. The court which was without the Temple he was to leave unmeasured for it was given to the nations (Rev. 11:1, 2). The question that arises in this connection

is, Why measure the Temple? We may begin an investigation on this point by looking to Ezekiel, chapters 40-48. In Ezek. 40:3 there is a man with a line measuring the Temple and Jerusalem which were being shown to Ezekiel in vision. The measuring in this vision was to make known to the prophet the exact dimensions of that glorious structure, the most glorious Temple that will ever grace this earth. It will be called "the house of prayer" for all the nations. The measuring was to impart information concerning its glory. In Zechariah, chapter 2, is recorded a vision of Jerusalem as it will be in the Millennium. He saw a man with a measuring line who was going to measure that city. From the context we see that the measuring was to make known to Zechariah the dimensions and the glory of Jerusalem as it will be in the Millennial Age. There are plans, specifications and blueprints from which a building is constructed.

In Revelation, chapter 11, we see that John was given a measuring reed "like unto a rod" by which he could ascertain the dimensions of the house and facts concerning those that worship therein. As we study this chapter we see that Jerusalem will be destroyed during the Tribulation. Moreover, as we have already seen, the Temple that will be standing in the Tribulation will be destroyed. We conclude therefore that the measuring is to make known the fact that the Temple and all its service and worshipers are not coming up to the standard to be acceptable to God. The measuring reveals the deficiency and the failure of the worshipers. This will be done to justify God's destroying the Temple. This usage is in perfect accord with that which is found in 2 Kings 21:10-15. God had used the line and the plummet on Samaria because of the wickedness of the house of Ahab, and destroyed it. In this passage He threatens to use the same line and plummet of destruction on Jerusalem that He had already employed on Samaria. This passage gives absolute proof that

the measuring here is to show the failures and the things lacking in connection with the Temple service. These failures make it necessary for God to destroy the Temple and to cause the wicked to cease.

### The Holy City

In Rev. 11:2 we read the prediction that the Holy City shall be trodden under foot for forty-two months. But in verse 3 we see two witnesses who prophesy for 1,260 days in sackcloth. The question arises as to what time, or periods, are in view here. We are to understand that these figures literally refer to forty-two months and to 1,260 days.

We must take everything at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless there are facts in the context to indicate a departure from the literal meaning. Since there is no such negative evidence, we will accept the statements at their face value. In Rev. 13:5 we read of forty-two months, the period in which the Antichrist holds high carnival. In Rev. 12:6 we see a period of 1,260 days during which the woman, who is none other than Israel, flees into the wilderness. In verse 14 of the same chapter, we see that she is in a place prepared for her "a time, and times, and half a time." The forty-two months mentioned in Rev. 11:2, the 1,260 days appearing in Rev. 12:6, the time, times and half a time of Rev. 12:14 and the forty-two months of Rev. 13:5 all refer to the latter half of the Tribulation. Thus the 1,260 days equal forty-two months or three and a half years. By simple division we see that the months of those years —will be thirty days. Evidently the calendar will be changed between now and then. We know that it will be changed for Dan. 7:25 reveals that the Antichrist will change the calendar in the middle of that last week of years of Daniel's prophecy.

The 1,260 days of the witnessing of God's two servants of Rev. 11:1-14 is in the first half of the Tribulation. After these witnesses have finished their course they are killed in the middle of the Tribulation. Therefore their period of service is the first half of the Tribulation.

### The Two Witnesses

John tells us of the two witnesses whose ministry falls in the first half of the Tribulation. Who are these witnesses? Are we to take the language literally—at what it says? Or, are we to read into it some symbolic significance? There is no justification for our interpreting this passage other than literally. These witnesses have every earmark of personality, therefore we believe that there will be two witnesses who will engage in a special ministry during the first half of the Tribulation. But who are they? Some excellent Bible students believe that they will be Moses and Elijah; others, Enoch and Elijah. The reason for believing that they may be Moses and Elijah, returned to life, is that they do the very things that only Moses and Elijah did. Moses turned water into blood and Elijah shut up the heavens so that it did not rain during his special ministry of three and a half years.

Scriptural support that one of these may be Elijah is to be found in the last two verses of the Old Testament: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5, 6). God in this passage promised that He would send Elijah the prophet to Israel before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes, the Great Tribulation, to turn the hearts of the parents to the children and the children to the parents. The Jews rightly believe that God will send Elijah the prophet before Messiah appears. When

Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James and John, Matt. 17:1-13, the Apostles asked Him why the Pharisees believed that Elijah must first come. "Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things." When Jesus made that statement, they understood that He was talking of John the Baptist, calling him Elijah. John the Baptist was *an* Elijah, Luke 1:17. But he was not Elijah the prophet. The angel Gabriel expressed this idea to Zacharias when he announced the birth of John saying that John would go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah. He would be *an* Elijah but not Elijah the prophet. When John began his ministry he was asked by a delegation from Jerusalem if he were Messiah. He immediately denied that he was the Messiah. Then he was asked if he were Elijah the prophet. To this question he also gave a most emphatic denial (John 1:21). Elijah is to return before the great and terrible day of the Lord. John the Baptist was simply *an* Elijah and not *the* Elijah. These two witnesses engage in a ministry similar to that which Elijah performed so we may conclude that one of these witnesses is Elijah the prophet. Whether or not the other one is Moses or Enoch, no one can be positive. It is not necessary for us to understand that point in order to appreciate and evaluate the prophecy.

In Rev. 11:4 John tells us that these two witnesses are "the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth." This language is an echo of Zechariah, chapter 4. In vision Zechariah saw a candlestick standing between two olive trees. There were pipes from the trees to a bowl suspended over the candlestick. From the bowl to each of the seven lamps there were seven pipes through which the oil that came from the trees into the bowl flowed into the lamps. The symbolism was so very clear that it was not necessary to explain it. The candlestick represented Israel who held

aloft the torch of God's revelation to the world during the Old Testament Dispensation. Olive oil, when used symbolically, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The oil flowed constantly from the olive trees into the bowl and then into the lamps. The interpreting angel said that the olive trees were "the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech. 4:14). In Zechariah's day the two anointed ones referred to were Zerubbabel the governor of the restored community and Joshua the high priest. They were filled with the Spirit of God and He, the Spirit of God, flowed out through them to the community of Israel and caused it to be the lampstand of truth to the heathen world around them. The same symbolism is referred to in Rev. 11:4. These two witnesses stand in relation to the rest of Israel as Zerubbabel and Joshua did in Zechariah's day.

According to Malachi's prophecy, Elijah comes and engages in a special ministry in Israel before the Tribulation begins. These two witnesses likewise engage in a special ministry during the first half of the Tribulation. The things that they do are expressed in the following words: "These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire" (Rev. 11:6).

In verses 7-10 of this chapter we read of the beast mentioned also in chapters 13 and 17, who slays these two men. There will be great jubilation throughout the world over their death. They will send presents one to another in their rejoicing over their death. We are told that "from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do *men* look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb" (Rev. 11:9). These two witnesses are killed and their bodies lie for three and one-half days (vs. 11). Where do they lie? In what city? These dead bodies lie in the

street of the great city, "which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt," where also their Lord was crucified. Jerusalem is going to be a veritable Sodom and Egypt in the Tribulation Period. It was not a Sodom and Egypt when John was writing this nor when Jesus was there. They had a lot of religion, camouflage, sham and hypocrisy but it was not spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. It is called Sodom because there will be increased immorality. It is going to be called Egypt, because Egypt has been known throughout the centuries for its witchcraft, magic and the occult. These two witnesses are killed in Jerusalem, yet people from all nations will look upon their dead bodies. In all probability this refers to television. "And after, the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them" (Rev. 11:11). After they are restored to life, the tables are turned and the people who have made merry and laughed and joked about them will be terrified. Great fear will fall upon them.

At the end of the three and a half days these men will be restored to life and will then ascend into Heaven. "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither" (Rev. 11:12). This is the glorification of their bodies. God in Heaven speaks to them and they ascend just as Christ ascended. Their enemies will see them as they leave the earth on their way to Heaven and a cloud will receive them out of their sight.

"And in that hour [when they ascend to Heaven] there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city [Jerusalem] fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven" (Rev. 11:13). At that time there will be a terrific earthquake that will destroy seven thousand persons in Jerusalem. People will be shaken with dread and

fear by the disastrous earthquake and will give glory to God. As to whether their turning to God is genuine, the text does not say.

## Chapter 11

### The Stage Setting for the Latter Part of the Tribulation

(Rev. 11:15-19)

#### The Great Parenthesis (Rev. 11:15-15:8)

A person must understand the cardinal points of the compass if he is to work properly and efficiently. When he loses his sense of direction, a man cannot know the path to take in order to reach his objective. The same thing is true with reference to study or thought regarding any subject. In our study of the book of Revelation we have come to the consideration of Rev. 11:15-19. This portion of Scripture has generally been misunderstood. This has led to endless confusion and to the manufacture of various theories which affect the entire interpretation of the book of Revelation. These statements being true we must stop and get our bearings as we go through the maze of the intricacies of this portion of the book. Let it be remembered that chapters 6-19 (the second main subdivision of the third section of the book) deal with the Tribulation Period. The chronological order of events, as they will occur during the Tribulation, is set forth in chapters 6, 8, 9 and 16. A cursory reading of these chapters shows that there are three series of judgments set forth: The seals, appearing in chapter 6, covering what we might term the *first quarter* of the Tribulation. The trumpet judgments, found in chapters 8 and 9, covering what we might call the *second quarter* of the Tribulation. The bowl judgments, found in chapter 16, occurring during the *latter half* of the Tribulation. When the first seal is broken, something definite takes place upon the earth. The same thing is true with reference to the breaking of the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth seals. But when the seventh one is broken, nothing definite takes

place upon the earth; on the contrary, the seven angels who are going to blow the seven trumpets prepare to do so. The trumpet judgments are recorded in chapters 8 and 9. The last three of the seven are called *woes*, because of the far-reaching and devastating effects that they will have upon the people of the earth. When the first trumpet is blown something definite takes place upon the earth. The same thing is true with reference to the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth. But when the seventh trumpet is blown nothing definite takes place. On the contrary, when this occurs, the seven angels that will pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath prepare to enact their part in this closing drama of human history. When the seven angels who have the seven bowl judgments pour them out something definite and specific occurs on the earth. When the seventh bowl is poured out the wrath of God is completed. Thus the seven bowl judgments come out of the seventh trumpet and the seven trumpets develop out of the seventh seal.

When we arrive at the tenth chapter we come to what is known as the minor, or small parenthesis of the book, which consists of Rev. 10:1-11:14. In chapter 10 appears the prophecy of John's eating the little book and in Rev. 11:1-14 is the information concerning the Temple at Jerusalem. The Jews will build it in the end of this age and it will be standing during the Tribulation. Also we read of the two witnesses that will appear in Israel for the purpose of restoring the family relations of the Chosen People. All of this material, Rev. 10:1-11:14 is the small parenthesis at the very close of the account of the sixth trumpet. Chronologically speaking. Rev. 11:14 follows Rev. 9:21.

#### The Relation of Rev. 11:15-19 to 15:5-16:21

The sixth trumpet brings us to the middle of the Tribulation Period. With Rev. 11:15 we begin the study of the second half of the

Tribulation. Here we read: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and *the time* to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth. And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail" (Rev. 11:15-19).

A careful study of these verses shows that they constitute an announcement, a summary, of what will result by the judgments of the latter half of the Tribulation. This paragraph is closely connected with Rev. 15:5-8, which verses constitute an introduction to chapter 16.

One can see that we have in Rev. 11:15-15:8 what is termed the major, or great, parenthesis of the book of Revelation. In this section we have three symbols presented: That of the woman (Rev. 12:1); that of the red dragon (Rev. 12:3); and that of the seven angels who have the seven bowls of the wrath of God (Rev. 15:1). When we realize the parenthetical nature of Rev. 11:15-15:8 and when we read Rev. 11:15-19 and follow this section immediately by Rev. 15:5-8 we can see the connection of the chronological order of events. In other words, Rev. 15:5 takes up the thought that is dropped in Rev. 11:19. Rev. 11:15-15:8 gives us the stage setting of the middle and the latter

half of the Tribulation. It is essential that we understand these things in order to comprehend the development of the judgments of the latter half of the Tribulation as set forth in chapter 16.

### Announcement by the First Choir

#### *John's Prophecy Regarding the World Kingdom*

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, there are two choruses making special announcements regarding the outcome of the judgments that develop out of the seventh trumpet. When this seventh trumpet is sounded, John sees the Temple of God in Heaven opened (Rev. 11:19). When it is opened, there comes out of it a terrible storm indicative of God's wrath and indignation against the world. After this great storm with thunders and lightnings the Temple is closed, and there is flashed before his startled vision on the prophetic screen the data that is found in Rev. 12:1-15:4. Then the Temple of God in Heaven is opened the second time. Out of this Temple come forth the seven angels who bear in their arms the seven bowls of the wrath of God (Rev. 15:5-8). These angels stand at attention, ready to obey any commands. The order goes forth to them: "Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth" (Rev. 16:1).

After this necessary digression from our main theme, let us return to Rev. 11:15 and the announcement that is being made regarding the kingdom of the world and its becoming the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. The Authorized Version of the Scriptures has the word "kingdom" in the plural number: "The kingdoms of this world are become the *kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ." The American

Standard Edition of 1901 follows the Greek text accurately and states, "The kingdom of the world is become ..." At the time of which John is here speaking, there will be but one kingdom. All the kingdoms of the world will be united under one ruthless sovereign dictator, the Antichrist. It is of the utmost importance that we recognize this fact.

### Daniel's Prophecy Regarding the World Kingdom

"Thus he [the interpreting angel] said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings. And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time" (Dan. 7:23-25).

The four beasts of Daniel, chapter 7, are symbolic of four kings that arise out of the earth (Dan. 7:17). These beasts symbolize not only the kings, the sovereigns of these kingdoms, but the kingdoms themselves. Figuratively speaking, when the spotlight is turned on in this prophecy of Daniel, chapter 7, we see that king; but when the floodlight is turned on, we view the realm over which he reigns. According to Dan. 7:23, the fourth beast will devour the whole earth, tread it down, and break it in pieces. The expression, "the whole earth" means exactly what it says—the entire world, all nations. Next, according to Dan. 7:24, that mighty empire will collapse, falling into ten separate divisions, over each of which a dictator will arise and usurp the authority. After this takes place, there will arise a little horn, the Antichrist, who will worm his way into favor with the ten

dictators and gradually gain power until he becomes master of the situation. By the middle of the Tribulation he will be supreme—after having put down three of the dictators, he will become the absolute sovereign.

The seven kings that remain become simply "rubber stamps" or "yes men." This same situation we see in Rev. 13:7: "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation." The reader should note the fact that "there was given to him [the Antichrist] authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation." From these and other passages of Scripture we know positively that the world will be headed up under one great sovereign in the end time. Hence, there will be the kingdom of the world in the end time, of which John spoke. At the end of the Tribulation this kingdom will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

That the kingdom does not become the kingdom of Christ until the end of the Tribulation is evident from many passages of Scripture in the Old Testament and in the New. In view of this fact we know that John, in making this prophecy, is looking forward to the end of the Tribulation.

### Second Announcement by the Twenty-Four Elders

After the first choir had made its glorious announcement that the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ "the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to

be judged, and *the time* to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:16-18).

The second choir begins by thanking the Lord God, the Almighty, who inhabits eternity (Isa. 57:15), because of several things which He does. They acknowledge His absolute authority. God's throne is exalted above all and His authority is over the entire universe (Ps. 103:19-22). All power belongs to God (Ps. 62:11). No one can question the rights, the prerogatives and the sovereignty of the Almighty. Knowing these great basic and fundamental facts, the twenty-four elders, celestial beings first seen in chapter 4, return thanks to God for the stability of the universe in which they live and for the absolute sovereignty of their Lord.

#### Gratitude for God's Assuming Absolute Control

These elders praise God because He takes His great power and reigns. This statement harmonizes with the thought of verse 15 which says that the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. The kingdom of the world does not become the kingdom of Christ until the end of the Tribulation. These twenty-four living creatures give praise and thanks to Almighty God "the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign" (Rev. 11:17). It is quite difficult to express the thought "and didst reign" in the English. Here it looks as if it is already past. From the Greek point of view it is not. This word that is translated "didst reign" is in the aorist tense, it is timeless, there is no time element whatsoever. Hence, the taking of His power as indicated in verse 18 is a reference to His taking over the kingdom at the end of

the Tribulation. This fact must be clearly grasped if we are to understand the rest of this passage.

### The Nations Become Wrathful

"And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and *the time* to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great" (Rev. 11:18). The celestial beings in verse 16 are grateful to God that the nations become wrathful and God then is justified in administrating His authority over all human affairs. They are not gloating over the fact that the nations become wrathful. The nations being wrathful gives God occasion to take the world situation in hand and to establish a righteous and just order. This is looking forward to the end of the Tribulation. Here in the middle of the Tribulation, when the nations become wrathful, then God becomes wrathful. I believe that Ps. 2:1-3 is fulfilled at this time. This prophecy is a prediction that the nations will tumultuously assemble in one great, mighty international congress. The delegates in that conference will be the kings and rulers of the earth. They will take counsel together against God and Christ, and say, "Let us break their bonds asunder, And cast away their cords from us." The nations become wrothful and they say, away with God and away with Christ. We will appoint our own king. We are not going to tolerate the preaching of the Gospel nor the worship of God.

### God's Wrath Stirred

According to verse 18, when the nations become wrathful, then that fact stirs up the wrath of God to its very depth. He therefore acts according to the principles of righteousness, justice and holiness. At the very end of Ps. 2 it says, "Now therefore be wise, O ye kings: Be

instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, For his wrath will soon be kindled" and it will be a consuming fire! "The nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and *the time* to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints" (Rev. 11:18). All of the Tribulation is a period of wrath but the act of counting God out of His universe, of making the Antichrist the one supreme ruler is the thing that precipitates these severe judgments in the latter part of the Tribulation.

### The Time to Judge the Dead

In verse 18 the statement is made that when God takes over the kingdom of the world—which is at the end of the Tribulation—the time arrives for God to reward His "servants the prophets" and "the saints" and "them that fear thy name." When is the time that God rewards his servants the prophets, the saints and those who fear His name? There can be but one answer: at the end of the Tribulation when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Some have supposed that the dead are raised and the saints are rewarded in the middle of Daniel's seventieth week. They come to this conclusion from the study of Daniel, chapter 11, which reveals some events that occur in the middle of the Tribulation. Rev. 11:15-19 constitutes an announcement that the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ at the end of the Tribulation. In connection with that development we see that the dead are raised and the saints are rewarded at the end of this seven-year period of judgment.

That the dead, both the saints of the Old Testament and those of the New, will be judged and rewarded at the end of the Tribulation is evident from a study of Ps. 50:1-5:

1 "The Mighty One, God, Jehovah, hath spoken,  
And called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,  
God hath shined forth.

3 Our God cometh, and doth not keep silence:  
A fire devoureth before him,  
And it is very tempestuous round about him.

4 He calleth to the heavens above,  
And to the earth, that he may Judge his people:

5 Gather my saints together unto me,  
Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

In verses 1 and 2 of this Psalm we see Christ after He has come to the earth and has built up Zion which becomes the beauty spot of the world. In verse 3 we see Christ coming at the end of the Tribulation (2 Thess. 1: 3-10). In verse 4 we see Christ giving a call to the heavens above and to the earth for His messengers—the angelic host—to gather His people together—“Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice” in order that they might be judged. This is not the judgment of the Great White Throne which occurs at the end of the Millennium. It is the Judgment Seat of Christ before which all of God's saints will appear and where they will be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body. In view of this fact, then, we know that the things mentioned in Rev. 11:18 will occur at the end of

the Tribulation when Christ comes to take over the kingdom of the world into His own strong, powerful hands.

### Christ to Destroy Them that Destroy the Earth

When Christ comes at the end of the Tribulation, He will destroy those who are destroying the earth. This statement is to be taken at its face value. Not until after the discovery of the atomic and hydrogen bombs and such other powerful weapons of war as we now have, did we see the full force of what is meant by the statement that Christ will "destroy them that destroy the earth." The scientists have learned how to avail themselves of the mighty power of the atom. They know that by the development of still more powerful means of destruction, a chain reaction could develop that would destroy the earth. Man is discovering the secret of power and the real nature of the material from which the earth is made. If the Lord should allow them to continue their research and discoveries, they would destroy the earth physically. But God will not allow them to do that. He will intervene and will destroy them and stop their diabolic work.

### The Opening of the Temple of God in Heaven

"And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail" (Rev. 11:19). That there is a Temple of God in Heaven is seen in such passages as Ps. 11:5. This is called, in theological language "the very presence of God." This place is seen in Heb. 9:11 and is spoken of as the true Sanctuary of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

At this point in John's vision in the middle of the Tribulation, he sees the Temple of God in Heaven opened. In it he sees the Ark of the Covenant, a spiritual reality. A little replica of it was built by Moses and placed in the Tabernacle, a miniature model of the heavenly Temple. Thus the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, were models of the reality that exists in the heavens from all eternity.

In the latter part of verse 19 there appears a terrific storm: "and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail." As we have already seen in Rev. 4:5, there proceeded out of the throne "lightnings and voices and thunders." In Rev. 8:5, there followed the actions of the angel, "thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake." The third place where this storm is seen is in Rev. 11:19. The final verse where this terrific storm appears is Rev. 16:18: "and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty." A glance at each of these passages reveals the fact that this storm is gathering force, momentum and destructive power.

Realizing the forces that will be set in operation during the Tribulation and the sorrows and the distress that the judgments will entail, no one would want to enter that period of God's judgments. There is but one thing for the intelligent, honest truth-seeker to do today and that is to flee to the Lord Jesus from the wrath that is to come. When the Lord Jesus Christ descends from Heaven to the air before the Tribulation, He will raise the dead in Christ and catch up all the living saints, those who are born again and who are ready for His coming. The rest will be left behind to enter into and to endure the terrific judgments of the Tribulation.

## Chapter 12

### **The Woman, Child, and the Dragon (Rev. 12:1-17)**

#### **The Great Parenthesis (Rev. 11:15-15:8)**

"And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered. And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child. And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev. 12:1-6).

Again we must get our bearings before proceeding with the exposition of the book of Revelation. The chronological order of events as they will occur during the Tribulation is set forth in chapters 6, 8, 9 and 16. Chapter 7 is a vision of the great revival that will sweep the world during the first half of the Tribulation. Rev. 10:1-11:14 constitutes the small parenthesis of the book and is inserted in the narrative which describes the second woe, or sixth trumpet. Rev. 11:15-19 is a short, yet vital, summary of the outcome of the judgments of the latter half of the Tribulation which prepares one for the proper estimation of the judgments of the latter half of this period. We might compare these verses to the large headlines which are

placed at the head of an article in a daily paper and which summarize all that appears in the write-up. What appears in Rev. 12:1-15:8 gives us the stage setting. This portion informs us of the political situation that will exist during the latter part of the Tribulation. It likewise tells of the terrible plight of Israel. She will have to flee from her land to a place prepared for her by the Lord during the greatest persecution that the nation has ever endured. The Antichrist is proclaimed the dictator of the world (chapter 13). In chapter 14 there is given a vision of the millennial Jerusalem. There are several announcements concerning the events as they will develop during the latter half of the Tribulation. Finally, at the close of chapter 14 is a prediction of the great struggle that takes place at the end of the Tribulation and a vivid description of the overthrow of the forces of evil. In Rev. 15:1-4 appears a vision of those who will come off victorious over the beast, the Antichrist.

### The Symbolic Woman

John is very specific. He tells us that he saw a "great sign" or symbol, in Heaven. He then proceeds to describe this symbol, which was "a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

Let us note carefully that this woman is called a "sign," a symbol. Unfortunately some commentators have explained that Revelation is a book of symbols. If this were true, there would be no necessity and no occasion of the Lord's speaking of this woman as a sign, or of His designating the red dragon also as a sign. Everything in the book of Revelation should be taken at its face value unless the facts of the context and related passages indicate that it is used in a figurative, or symbolic, sense. When the facts indicate a departure from the literal

meaning, the interpretation that accords with the passage should be adopted.

Who is this symbolic woman? Some tell us that she is not a symbol, although the statement is made that she is a "sign." These commentators tell us that this is the virgin Mary. If it referred to her there would be no occasion for John's calling her a symbol. The fact that she is called a "sign" shows that a literal woman is not intended. There are others who say that the woman is the Church. As evidence that this position is correct, they call our attention to the fact that the Church is spoken of as a bride. Yes, it is true that the Church is spoken of as a woman, the bride of Christ. But this woman cannot symbolize the Church, because she gives birth to the man child "who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron." The Church does not give birth to this future Ruler. It may be asked, "Who is this man child that is to rule the nations?" The answer is Christ, the Son of God, who enters the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. He will break the nations to pieces and rule over them with a rod of iron justice (Ps. 2).

The correct interpretation which is demanded by all the facts is that this woman signifies Israel. It was the Hebrew race that produced the Christ, the man child. Isaiah sang "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isa. 9:6). We therefore conclude that this man child who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron is the Christ, the Messiah of Israel.

When a person reads this passage in the light of related facts he concludes that this symbolic woman gives birth to the symbolic man child who is to reign over the nations. If this man child is the Christ, how can this symbolize Him as a person? The New Testament speaks of the mystical Christ, consisting of Christ the head and the Church the body. Christ sprang forth from the loins of Israel. The Church

likewise came out of Israel. The Church at first was purely a Jewish institution. So it is quite in keeping with all the facts to think of this man child, here symbolized, as the mystical Christ—Christ the head and the Church the body.

### The Sunclad Woman

John states that the woman "was arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." This is a symbolic picture and we conclude that the sun, the moon and the stars have the natural significance of those celestial bodies. They give light. The Lord intended for us to understand that Israel is the torchbearer of the truth at this future time. There radiates from her a glorious spiritual light, like that of the sun, which shines forth unto every nook and comer of the world at that time. The moon, the lesser light, is under her feet and gives forth the light of truth. The crown of twelve stars are also functioning in the same manner.

### The Birth of the Man Child

This woman was with child and the labor pains were coming upon her in order that she might be delivered (vs. 2). In verse 5 she is delivered of a son "a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne."

Christ is the man child-without a doubt! Christ, the head, was born into the world nineteen hundred years ago. As soon as He was born, Herod, inspired by Satan, made an attempt to destroy Him. But by the overruling providence of God all of Herod's machinations for evil were thwarted. The Christ child was preserved and grew up to manhood and engaged in His public ministry. After He had completed His life's work, Christ allowed Himself to be crucified in

order that He might offer Himself up as a sacrifice well pleasing to God to make atonement for the sins of the world. On the first Pentecost, after the resurrection of Christ, the Holy Spirit came and inspired the Apostles to give the message of redemption through the shed blood of Christ. On that day there were approximately three thousand souls who accepted the Gospel message, were regenerated and saved, and were added together into the body of Christ. On this day of Pentecost the mystical Christ was formed, Christ the head, the Church the body. The Church had only been brought into existence a little while when the persecution of Satan was launched against it. For the first three centuries of its existence Satan launched one attack after another in order to destroy the body of Christ. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the kingdom! Satan's seeming triumph against the body of Christ proved to be the means whereby the new faith was propagated and sent out to the ends of the earth.

In the prediction in Rev. 12:1-6 we see that the man child "was caught up unto God, and unto his throne" away from the attempts of the dragon, the Devil, to destroy it. Christ, the head, was caught up into Heaven at the time of His ascension; the body, the Church of Christ, will be caught up at the time of the Rapture, which occurs before the Tribulation. That this is true is seen from such a passage as 1 Thess. 1: 9,10: "For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come." We, the Church, are waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ who will deliver us from the wrath to come, from the Tribulation judgments.

## The Symbol of the Dragon.

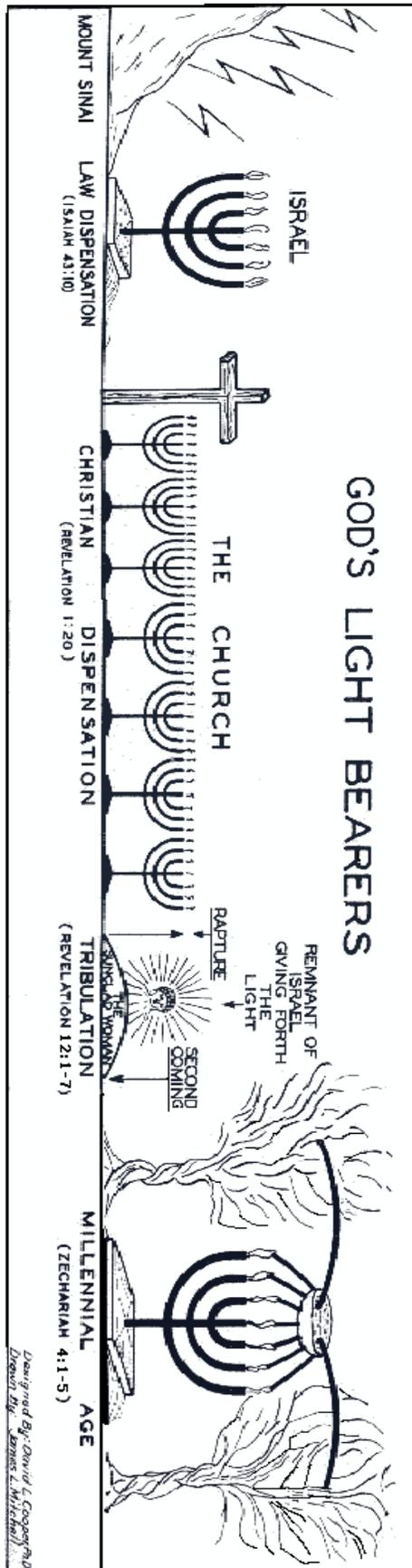
In verse 3 John declares that he saw another sign, another symbol, and then he describes it: "and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems."

## The Significance of the Dragon

Since the dragon is a symbol it signifies something, or someone. Who? The answer is found in Rev. 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him."

## The Seven Heads and the Ten Horns

What is the significance of the heads and the horns of the dragon in Rev. 12:3? We are told that like begets like. All life springs from antecedent life. In Rev. 13:1, 2 we see that the beast had seven heads and ten horns—a duplicate of the red dragon that had seven heads and ten horns. When we study the beast we see that the heads signify various types of governments that control the beast during its entire career (Rev. 17:7-18). This beast is a symbol of the Roman Empire, the fourth of the series in Daniel, chapter 7. The head is the governing part of the body. This beast had seven heads—one at a time. Five of these had already come and passed away. One was in existence when John wrote the book of Revelation and there is a seventh head to come.



GOD'S LIGHT BEARERS—The chart of “God’s Light Bearers” reveals Israel as the torchbearer of truth of the future under the “sunclad woman”.

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This beast represents Rome from her rise in 753 B.C. to the time that she became a world empire. Before it took on such proportions it was a local affair, though growing all the time, thus we see it at the beginning with its first head. Following this, we see it with its second head, etc. When the sixth head appeared it had grown to the point that it rose to the level of a world empire. It maintained this sixth head from that time forward and will continue to do so until the seventh one comes up at the end of the age.

Imperialism was the sixth head of Rome, for that was the type of government which was in existence in John's day and which has persisted through the centuries.

It is quite likely that the seven heads on the old red dragon signify seven different types of administration of Satan's kingdom. The ten horns signify ten different individual spirits under Satan, whom he uses to carry out his plans of the end time.

### The Fall of One-third of the Angels

In verse 4 we are told that the dragon draws one-third part of the stars of Heaven and casts them down to the earth. Let us bear in mind that the dragon is the symbol of Satan. The stars are not literal in this connection but are used symbolically. When used symbolically, as in Dan. 8:10, stars signify intelligent beings. In Daniel, the stars are the prominent Jews of the time of Antiochus Ehiphanes. These stars of Heaven that are mentioned in Rev. 12:4 are intelligent heavenly beings. Satan led a rebellion in Heaven in the past as is indicated in

Ezek. 28:11-19. This passage refers to his leading one-third of the celestial beings in that revolt against God.

### Satan up to His Old Tricks

In the passage which we have under consideration we are given to understand that Satan is fighting against God, as he has always done and is up to his old tricks. He made an attack against God when he led the revolt which resulted in the downfall of one-third of the angels. When the Christ child was born, Satan delivered another stroke at God by trying to have the baby Jesus killed. When the early Church came into existence he began his persecutions against it. He has never ceased his animosity against God nor his effort to thwart or hinder the purposes and plans of the Almighty. There is little doubt that Satan will strike at the Church, but the Church will be snatched out of the world by the mighty power of Christ at the Rapture, before the Tribulation.

In Ps. 58 the Psalmist takes us back behind the closed doors of the Antichrist, who is sitting at the council chamber with all of his lieutenants in the middle of the Tribulation. They purpose to exterminate the Jewish nation from the face of the globe. Here is an effort by the Antichrist and by the Devil to get rid of the woman, Israel.

At that future time Satan makes a determined stand against God and against Israel. He has had access to the throne of God throughout the ages—since his rebellion. For various reasons at different times he goes into the presence of the Almighty (Job, chapters 1, 2). Even one of his fallen spirits appears in the presence of God, as we see in 1 Kings 22:19-23. How often, or how many, or under what conditions Satan and his servile spirits enter into the presence of God, the

Scriptures do not tell us. In Rev. 12:7-17 we see that both Satan and his emissaries are in Heaven in the middle of the Tribulation.



SATAN'S FIVE ABODES AND HIS ACTIVITIES—The history of the “Dragon” is revealed in the chart of “Satan’s Five Abodes and His Activities”.

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### War in Heaven

It is amazing to us that Satan and his hosts would be permitted to enter Heaven. Moreover, it surprises us that there should be war in Heaven. That there has been war in Heaven before is quite evident from the statement of Bildad in Job 25:2: "Dominion and fear are with him; He maketh peace in his high places." Bildad's statement implies that there was war and rebellion in the highest places of the universe. According to this statement God put this revolt down.

Isaiah the prophet seems to allude to this in 51:9: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah; awake, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Is it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the monster?" In the context of this verse we see that the prophet was looking forward to the time of the Tribulation and that he called upon the "arm of Jehovah" none other than the Lord Jesus Christ to act decisively. In urging Him, by the Spirit of God to do this, he asked this unusual question: "Is it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the monster?" This rhetorical question demands an answer in the affirmative. Yes, it was Christ the "arm of Jehovah" who pierced Rahab and cut him in pieces. This refers to the conflict at the original rebellion of Satan against God. Christ took the field of battle and fought against Satan, who is here called Rahab, and his hosts. In Ps. 74:12-14 there is another reference to the same conflict between Christ, the Son of God, and Satan and his hosts. In this Psalm our author is discussing what will

occur in the Tribulation. Thus he addressed Christ and says: "Yet God is my King of old. Working salvation in the midst of the earth. Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: Thou brakest the heads of the sea-monsters in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces; Thou gavest him to be food to the people inhabiting the wilderness."

An additional reference to this conflict is set, forth by Jude in verses 6 and 7: "And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." These rebellious angels were cast down and have been kept in bonds under darkness awaiting the judgment of the great day.

When we read Rev. 12:7-9, we see that Satan and his rebellious emissaries will be in Heaven itself. Then Michael and his angels will go forth to war and will drive them out. As to whether or not the Lord Jesus Christ enters the fray, we cannot say; but His power and might evidently energize Michael and his angels enabling them to drive out these wicked, servile spirits.

In verse 9 we have a clear description of Satan. Here he is represented under the symbolism of the "great red dragon" and is called "the old serpent." This latter name evidently is an echo of that which we read in Genesis, chapter 3. Either the Devil assumed the form of a serpent on that occasion or he used the serpent as a cat's-paw and thus brought about man's downfall. Moreover, this sinister enemy of God and man is called "the Devil and Satan." This latter term, "Satan," is of Hebrew origin and means *adversary*.

Satan is the deceiver of the whole world, a fact that is little known. The world lies in the evil one and is deceived and blinded by this sinister being who is determined on man's downfall. Though the human heart is evil and desperately wicked, men would not resort to the many things which they do if it were not for the blinding influence of Satan.

John saw the result of this conflict in Heaven. Satan "was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him" (Rev. 12:9). Thus they are expelled from the presence of God, never to return there again.

### A Voice from Heaven

When Satan and his hosts are hurled out of the courts of Heaven, John heard a voice coming forth from the presence of God saying: "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:10-12).

We know that the kingdom does not become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ until the end of the Tribulation which comes three and a half years later. We must understand this language to be an announcement concerning the beginning of the end. When we look at the entire scope of the book of Revelation, we see that the bowl judgments begin right after this and continue through the latter half of

the Tribulation, culminating in the turning over of the kingdom of the world to God and to His Christ.

In the latter part of verse 10 we have the statement: "For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night." Satan is a blasphemer and is a liar, for he was that from the beginning of his downward career when he rebelled against God. He misrepresents and falsely accuses the brethren. He never speaks the truth unless it is for his advantage. He warps, twists and modifies and changes things. He constantly accuses the people of God before the Almighty.

The saints who are accused by Satan before God during the Tribulation overcome and are victorious "because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life unto death." There is power in the blood of the Lamb! There is power and strength in a Christian's testimony—concerning their relationship to God and to Christ and His living His life in them. No false testimony or exaggerated statement will honor and glorify God. When believers are truthful in giving their testimony and are willing to lay down their lives, if necessary, then they are energized by the Spirit of God and live for Him. There is such a thing as victory in Christ! The Apostle Paul said: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37), and who lives His life in us.

In Rev. 12:12 the voice that comes forth from Heaven speaks to the intelligent beings in Heaven saying: "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." This one, making the announcement, urges those in Heaven to rejoice because the final

drama is about ready to be enacted and the deliverance of the world is at hand.

During the last act of this drama—the last three and a half years of the Tribulation—Satan is upon earth. He no longer has access to the throne of God. He is indignant because he has been defeated and driven out of Heaven. He knows that his time is short. He makes good use of every split second of time that remains because he knows that his defeat is certain and his overthrow is sure.

### The Dragon Persecutes the Woman

In verses 13-17 we have Satan's activity against Israel represented by the woman, that is, the faithful remnant of Israel. Satan has, throughout the past, persecuted the Jewish people as he has no other nation upon the face of the globe. What he has done in the past is insignificant in comparison to what he will do to Israel in the future—in the latter half of the Tribulation. According to Zech. 13:8, 9 two-thirds of the Jews will be slain; one of the saddest, most pathetic pictures that is to be found in the entire revelation of God.

According to Rev. 12:14 "there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." The dragon and the woman are symbolic. The woman being given two wings of the great eagle is also symbolic. The woman, Israel, flees from Palestine into a place that is prepared for her, where she remains for "a time, and times, and half a time" three and one-half years, the period spoken of in terms of days in Rev. 12:6. Where is this place to which the woman flees? Some have suggested Petra. That is a plausible explanation, but it will not satisfy all the conditions. When we recognize that World War II of the Tribulation in Dan. 11:36ff occurs in the middle of the

Tribulation, breaks out and spreads all over the entire world involving every nation except three: namely, Ammon, Moab and Edom; we conclude that the place to which she flees is Transjordan which consists of these three countries. The woman flees to a place for protection against the old serpent.

While the woman is in this place she will be fed miraculously. We are given that information in Isa. 33:16. The remnant will be protected and will be given food and water: "he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; his bread shall be given *him*; his waters shall be sure."

When the woman flees from the serpent into the wilderness, the serpent sends out a river that is designed to destroy her. Since this is a symbolic picture, the river also is symbolic. When a river is used in a figurative sense, it signifies an army that invades a country as illustrated in Isa. 8:5-8. The stream which the serpent is represented as casting out of his mouth is an army that the Devil will cause to be sent against the woman (Israel) to exterminate her.

In this symbolic picture we are told in verse 16 by John that "the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth." This signifies the overthrow by Divine intervention of the forces that are sent against Israel at this crucial moment.

Seeing and realizing that he is thwarted in his evil purpose of exterminating Israel from the face of the globe "the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17). The rest of the seed of the woman mentioned are other Jews than those that are in Palestine against whom he sends his armies. But these against whom he directs his final attack are the seed of the woman, Israel, "that keep the

commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus." These are Hebrew believers against whom Satan at that time will direct His severe blows. They will be protected and will be cared for. God knows how to take care of His own!

## Chapter 13

### **The Two Beasts and the World Kingdom of the End Time (Rev. 13:1-10) The Great Parenthesis (Rev. 11:15-15:8)**

We must bear in mind that in Rev. 11:15 to 15:8 we are studying the "great parenthesis" of the book. In this section we have a description of conditions as they will exist in the middle of the Tribulation. These are given in order that we may understand the events as they unfold during the latter half of this period.

We have already seen that Jerusalem will be very prominent in the end time. The Temple will be rebuilt. The Antichrist makes a covenant with the Jews for seven years—then he breaks it. At that time the faithful Israelites in the land of Palestine will flee to a place in the wilderness. Satan will use the Antichrist and vast armies of the nations in order to wipe out every vestige of Jewry from the face of the globe but will be unsuccessful. God providentially will intervene and will prevent the extermination of His Chosen People whom He will yet use in the future.

#### The Significance of the Symbolic Beast

In Rev. 13:1, 2 we have the following language: "And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority." This is not a natural beast, it is a composite one. It had seven heads and ten horns. Its body was like a leopard and its feet were as the feet of a

bear. Its mouth was as the mouth of a lion. There is no such monstrosity. The significance of this passage is found in Daniel, chapter 7.

When we study this passage we learn Daniel saw a sea, the waters of which were being lashed into a fury by the four winds of the earth. Under these conditions he saw coming forth from the troubled waters a lion-like beast that came out upon the land and that was master of all he surveyed for a certain time. Then again the waters were troubled by the winds. At this time a second beast emerged from the disturbed waters. This time the beast coming up out of the waters was like a bear, which came upon the land, took the place of the lion-like beast, became master of all it surveyed and continued for a while. For a third time the waters were whipped into a raging fury. At this time there came forth a leopard-like beast with four heads and the wings of an eagle. This third beast took the place of the second one and became master of all it surveyed, pushing its boundaries farther than those of its predecessors. For a fourth time the winds lashed the waters of the troubled sea. On this occasion a nondescript beast came forth out of the water upon the land and took the place of the third animal. This beast was entirely different from all the others and had ten horns upon its head. The literal meaning of the Aramaic phrase rendered "after this" (Dan. 7:6) means *in the place of this*. An examination of this expression in the various Aramaic sections of the Old Testament shows that it is to be taken literally. We see that the third beast takes the place of the second; the same situation obtains with reference to the fourth, which, in turn, takes the place of the third. When these facts are recognized we understand that these beasts cannot be on the world-stage at the same time.

Daniel was quite excited over what he saw. Then an angel came and interpreted the significance of these beasts. His words were: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, that shall arise out of the earth" (Dan. 7:17). We learn that these symbols signified kings—four beasts, four kings. Then again, in verse 23 of this same chapter, we read: "The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces." From this verse we see that a beast symbolizes not only the king of a realm but the kingdom over which he reigns. Thus there is a twofold interpretation to the symbolic significance of a beast. In the first instance, figuratively speaking, the spotlight is used and is thrown upon the sovereign of the realm. We see him but not the realm over which he reigns. In the second verse the floodlight is turned on and the light is diffused upon the entire realm over which the king reigns. This twofold signification is of the utmost importance if we are to understand and comprehend the significance of this passage.

Who were the kings and what were the kingdoms symbolized by the four beasts that emerged from the waters in Daniel's vision? Prophetic students correctly interpret them as signifying the four world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. The last kingdom inherits the qualities of the preceding kingdoms.

There passed before Daniel's vision the history of these four different empires from their rise until their consummation. Then the Ancient of Days enters the courtroom of Heaven, pronounces judgment of condemnation upon the last emperor of the final empire, and by a stroke of judgment he is cast into the lake of fire.

Daniel foresaw the rise and the course of this fourth empire, the one that had the ten horns. He declares that he "beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit: his raiment was

white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, *and* the wheels thereof burning fire" (Dan. 7:9). When, in this vision the fourth beast appeared it remained in view until the Ancient of Days, the Judge of the universe, pronounced its doom. The fourth empire, Rome, succeeds the third empire, Greece, and will remain upon the historic scene until it is overthrown by the Ancient of Days and by the Lord Jesus Christ when He returns at the end of the Tribulation.

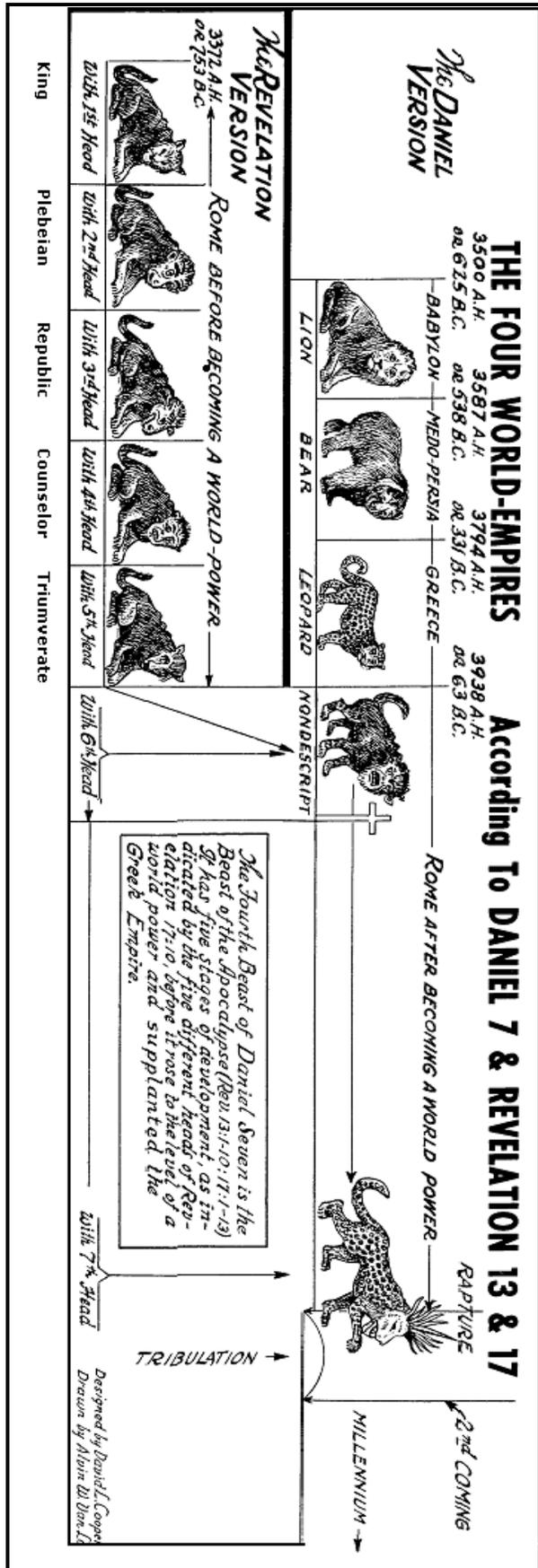
### The First Beast of Revelation, chapters 13 and 17

A careful study of Daniel, chapter 7, along with Rev. 13:1-10 reveals that the beast which John saw is the fourth beast of Daniel's vision. Daniel tells us that this beast had ten horns. But John in Rev. 13:1,2 informs us that the fourth beast had seven heads and ten horns. From Revelation, chapter 17, we see that these seven heads are not contemporaneous. They came up in succession throughout the entire life of the beast or the career of the kingdom which it symbolizes. Five heads, however, had already come and gone by John's day and time. One was then in existence. He informs us in Rev. 17:9,10 that there will yet come another one, a seventh. That one will be smitten but will be brought back to life again and it will have ten horns. The ten horns will be upon the seventh head, not scattered over the seven heads as some have supposed. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: and they are seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while" (Rev. 17:9,10). Each of these heads is a mountain, but not a literal one, for John hastens to tell us that they are seven kings. The word "mountain" therefore is used symbolically as we see in Jer. 51:25 where it signifies the Babylonian kingdom.

The significance of a horn, when used symbolically, is that it indicates a king or regal power. Thus the ten horns represent ten kings who will reign along with the beast during the time of the Tribulation.

When we carefully study Dan. 7:23 we see that the world is to be headed up in the end time into one great, colossal, universal kingdom. Then, according to verses 24 and 25 that kingdom will collapse and fall into ten different segments. Over each fragment there will arise a dictator who will seize the power and reign in that section of the world. Then there will arise out of obscurity a man, unknown to the world, who will be able to help and advise each of these dictators how to solve their problems. He will assist in such a marvelous manner that power, will gravitate into his hands. Finally, he will gain ascendancy among these ten kings and will eventually make a covenant with the apostate Jews for seven years. When he does that, the Tribulation begins. He and these ten kings will reign contemporaneously for the first half of the Tribulation. The little horn, the Antichrist, will have the ascendancy among the ten. In the middle of the Tribulation, World War II will sweep away three of these ten kings. The little horn of Daniel, chapter 7, the Antichrist, will gain such preponderance of power that he will reign as an absolute monarch. The rest of the kings will simply be rubber stamps.

In the middle of the Tribulation the Antichrist will receive the death stroke which means that he will be murdered. According to Revelation, chapter 17, his spirit will descend into the abyss but he will be brought up out of the abyss and restored to life by satanic power. When he thus comes back to life he seizes the imperial purple and reigns with a ruthlessness and a severity such as no one has ever exercised before in the history of the world.



THE FOUR WORLD EMPIRES SET FORTH ACCORDING TO DANIEL 7 AND REVELATION 13 AND 17—These three chapters studied together reveal the Grand March of the Empires from Babylon to Rome.

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### The Supremacy of the Antichrist

When the Antichrist is brought back to life, he will show great signs, satanic powers and wonders. Then approximately the whole world will wonder after him because of the unprecedented display of supernatural power which the Devil will grant to the Antichrist. "And *I saw* one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast" (Rev. 13:3).

### The Worship of Satan and the Beast

"And the whole earth wondered after the beast; and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him?" (Rev. 13:3c, 4). There will be no man or combination of men able to match swords with the Antichrist, who will be backed up by all the power of the Devil. But, praise God, there is One who will be able to make war against him! That One is the Son of God when He comes in power and glory and wins the war of the Great Day of God the Almighty.

### The Blasphemies of the Beast

Daniel, chapter 7, informs us that this fourth beast, the Antichrist, will utter blasphemies and speak great swelling words. John informs us that "there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and

blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, *even* them that dwell in the heaven" (Rev. 13:5, 6). It is beyond our comprehension to take in the blasphemies which the Antichrist, under the inspiration of the Devil, will utter at this future time. He will continue pouring out his hatred and vengeance against God, Christ and holy men of God for the latter half of the Tribulation. The coming up of this beast out of the sea, after he has received his death stroke, occurs in the middle of the seventieth week of Daniel (the middle of the Tribulation). This is seen by the fact that after his resurrection from his death-stroke he is to have authority over "every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation" for forty-two months. Thus coming back to life and appearing as the eighth ruler he will be given the power of Satan and will tread the world down, making all men bow to him and to his dictates.

### The World Kingdom of the Antichrist

The world will be headed up under one great government. This is seen in Rev. 11:15 in the announcement that is made from Heaven which says: "The kingdom of the world is become *the Kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever." The world kingdom, at the end of the Tribulation, according to this announcement, is turned over to the Lord and to His Christ. In Rev. 13:7 we see that "it was given unto him [the beast] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation." This statement is in perfect accord with Rev. 11:15. There will be but one universal kingdom in the end time over which the Antichrist will reign with his subordinate kings. When the Lord returns to earth He will reign as King of kings over this kingdom.

Many people of the world will, through fear, ignorance and intimidation, worship the Antichrist. Much is said in the Prophetic Word about Antichrist forcing people to worship him. He will sit in the Temple of God at Jerusalem and set himself forth as God. He will also oppose everything that is called God or that is worshiped as God (2 Thess. 2:4). Moreover he will demand absolute worship from the inhabitants of the world.

Though he demands universal worship there will be certain ones who will not bow the knee to him, just as seven thousand men refused to bow the knee to Baal in the days of Elijah. They had convictions and would not compromise or sell their spiritual heritage for a mess of pottage of popular favor. So there will be godly people in the Tribulation who will rather give up their lives than to bow and worship this man who will be energized by Satan.

#### Those Whose Names are Written in the Lamb's Book of Life

God foreknows the end from the beginning. He knows those who will be true to Him and those who will not. He knows those who will have convictions and those who will court the favor of the ruling classes. The Lord said to Paul in Acts 18:10 to be of good courage for He had much people in the city of Corinth. They were not His people in reality but they were of such character that they would accept the truth when it was presented to them. God wanted Paul to remain there and to preach the Gospel to them. This would be their call and election to eternal life. So there will be those in the Tribulation who will want truth. They will accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ as soon as it is presented to them. Hence, their names have, by anticipation, been written in the Lamb's book of life. There will be no erasures from that divine, holy record.

Have you had your name written in the Lamb's book of life by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as the atonement for your sins? If you have not, may you do so at this time.

"If any man *is* for captivity, into captivity he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed" (Rev. 13:10). God knows the deserts and the merits of everyone. He has a blueprint of everyone's life. God never forces anyone's will, never coerces. He lets each one make his own choices. He overrules everything that they do and makes every act contribute to His glory and to the general good of all concerned. He also deals with each one according to the merits of his case. I am persuaded of this: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). God gives to us, sooner or later, that which we mete out to others. David used the sword in getting rid of Uriah. What did the Lord say? "The sword shall never depart from thy house" (2 Sam. 12:10). We are going to be paid back in our own coin! David was forgiven but that did not render inoperative this principle. This is one of the most sobering thoughts that a person can have. "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

#### The Second Beast of Revelation, Rev. 13:11-18

The first beast of Rev. 13:1-10 can be none other than the political power of the end time. The fourth beast of Daniel's vision (Daniel, chapter 7) is identical with the beast of Rev. 13:1-10. According to Daniel, the world kingdom of the end time collapses into ten different parts. Immediately a dictator in each one of these sections springs forth and seizes power and control. There will then come out of obscurity a man with such powers as were never before known to man. He becomes associated with the ten kings and unifies them into a world dictatorship. He rules in conjunction with them during the

first half of the Tribulation. In the middle of the Tribulation he receives a death stroke with the sword. He dies and by the power of Satan is brought back to life. At that time World War II of the Tribulation will burst forth upon an unsuspecting world.

The net outcome of this mighty and titanic struggle will be the fall of three of the ten dictators. This outstanding leader, who is known in the New Testament as the Antichrist, will seize absolute power. The seven remaining dictators will simply be "rubber stamps" so to speak. The Antichrist will hold high carnival from that time on to the end of the Tribulation.

As we shall learn when we reach Revelation, chapter 17, there will be a religious octopus that will be supported by the Antichrist. This ecclesiasticism is represented by a harlot who rides upon the beast, the civil government of the end time, during the first half of the Tribulation. But when the middle of the Tribulation is reached, this religious system that is known as "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth" will be destroyed. Since man is incurably religious he must have a system of worship. This demand will be supplied by a new ecclesiastical system which will be semi-political and which will be under the absolute control of the false prophet of Rev. 19:20.

Concerning the second beast John said, "And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb" (Rev. 13:11). What is meant by this beast, the one that comes up out of the earth? Verse 1 said, "And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea." That is the political power of the end time. This one in verse 11 comes up out of the earth. Why did he come up out of the earth? Waters, when used symbolically as the sea is in verse 1 always indicates people and nations and tribes in a state of unrest when there is agitation. This one comes up out of the earth. Since water, used

symbolically, signifies unsettled, unrest, disquietude; earth naturally symbolizes a more solid, peaceful condition—that which is not in a state of unrest. The Antichrist comes back, raised from the dead, gets his hand on the situation and the world condition is more stable and settled than it had been up to this time. John saw this sign and he is continuing the symbolism into this part of the chapter. He saw a beast which had horns like a lamb. The fact that he resembles a lamb leads us to adopt the following theory: Christ, "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), is represented in Revelation as a Lamb that is slain from the foundation of the world. Since this second beast has the horns of a lamb it may be that this one is trying to imitate Christ.

### He Speaks as a Dragon

Although he does try to emulate Christ, he "spake as a dragon." There can be little doubt that the inspiration by which he speaks as a dragon is traceable to the fact that he is backed by satanic power. Doubtless this one will blaspheme the name of God and will hurl anathemas at the people of God.

There are those who believe that the second beast is the personal Antichrist, whereas the first beast is the world dictator, or head of the Roman Empire in its last form. There are those who say that the first beast is the personal Antichrist whereas the second one is the false prophet who is thus designated in the nineteenth chapter. When everything is taken into consideration it appears that this latter position is correct. The world dictator, or ruler, is the false messiah who offers to the world deliverance from its ills and a glorious future. The second beast is but his aide, or his "yes" man, who does his bidding implicitly. Everything which he does is with a view to the

honoring of the first beast and the promoting of his plans and schemes.

### He Exercises all the Authority of the First Beast

In verse 12 we are told "And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight." Since the first beast, the political head of the world empire will be energized by the power of Satan, it is quite evident that the second beast will likewise be motivated and energized by satanic power. From the language of verse 12 it is clear that there will be perfect and full cooperation between the two beasts.

In exercising all the authority of the first beast, the second one will make the decree that all the people of the world shall worship and render divine service to the first beast, whose death stroke will have been healed. "And he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed" (vs. 12). This Antichrist, this world dictator will be assassinated in the middle of the Tribulation. He is raised from the dead and restored to perfect health by the power of Satan. This will give him leverage upon the masses of the world, who will acclaim that he must be God, otherwise he could not have come back from the dead with such powers as he will demonstrate at that time. The second beast will point to the fact that the first beast was killed and that by his own power, came back to life. Since he does this, the second beast will argue it is evident that he is God and can therefore demand the worship of all men.

Though the second beast will attempt to enforce his decree that all men shall worship the first beast there will be those who will oppose such blasphemy and sacrilege. Doubtless there will be many who will by various methods evade the issue and refuse to worship the first beast.

### He Performs Satanic Signs and Wonders

In verse 13 we are told that the second beast will perform all sorts of signs and wonders: "And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men" (Rev. 13:13). Our Lord, in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:24-28) likewise foretold that false messiahs should come and that they would perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, the very elect. He doubtless was referring to this second beast and others in association with the Antichrist who will perform these superhuman wonders and signs to back up the lie that the Antichrist is God. The Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, likewise spoke of these lying signs and wonders that will be performed, to establish in the minds of the ignorant the thought that the Antichrist is God.

### He Gives Breath to the Image of the Antichrist

Of all the wonders and signs which will be wrought by both the Antichrist and by the false prophet, that of making the image of the first beast become a living person will be considered the greatest one. Concerning this mighty event, John tells us that the second beast will say "to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived. And it was given *unto him* to give breath to it, *even* to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Rev. 13:14, 15). As to what material will be used for the making of this image we are not told. But we may be certain an image of the world dictator will be made.

That this demonstration will be given at Jerusalem in the Jewish Temple, which at that time will have been rebuilt by the Chosen People, is evident from Isa. 66:1-5; Matt. 24:15ff; 2 Thess. 2:4. From

Dan. 9:27 we know that this great manifestation of satanic presence and power will be enacted in the middle of the Tribulation. When the Antichrist has been restored to life and is energized by Satan, who gives him his power, he will cast off the false ecclesiasticism that is symbolized by the harlot of Revelation, chapter 17. During the first half of the Tribulation the government will support this false religious system. It will be a conglomeration of the various cults and false religions. After the resurrection of the Antichrist he will put all religions under the ban and demand that all men worship him, "so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God" (2 Thess. 2:4). Verses 5, 6 and 7 of 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, constitute a parenthesis because they are a reminiscence of the Apostle's teaching when he was in Thessalonica. A glance at verse 5 shows that Paul had taught the brethren on these points when he was with them. Since verse 7 begins with the conjunction "for" it is explanatory of verse 6, and since 6 is the outgrowth of verse 5, and verse 5 is a reminiscence, it becomes evident that verses 5 to 7 are parenthetical. Verse 8: "And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth" takes up the thought which is dropped in verse 4, namely, the account of that which transpires in the seventieth week of Daniel at Jerusalem in the Temple. The Antichrist's appearing in Jerusalem at that time is "according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:9-12). This grand demonstration by satanic power and control mentioned by Paul is the same that is spoken of by John in Revelation, chapter 13.

The Antichrist will go to the Temple and will proclaim that he is God, taking a determined stand against everything that is called God or that is worshiped as God. The image will be used in the ceremony. There will likely be the unveiling of this image at the proper time. Then the second beast by the power of Satan will speak to the image, and he, the false prophet, will give life and breath to the image. Then it will be able to speak and cause those who will not worship the image of the beast to be killed. From this passage it appears that the second beast, the false prophet, will have the power of Satan to convert the image into a living, thinking, active man. We should not be surprised at this when we remember that after Moses threw his rod upon the ground and it became a serpent, the magicians of Egypt who opposed him, threw their rods down and by the power of Satan turned them into living snakes. God at times permits Satan to perform miracles in order that there might be a margin for the exercise of faith on the part of those who long for truth and righteousness.

As to how long the image will continue as a living person, the Scriptures do not tell us. This miracle of converting the image into a living person seems to be the highest expression of satanic power which God will allow him to exercise.

### He Declares That All Must Take the Mark of the Beast

When the image is made alive, the second beast, working in conjunction with the image converted into a man, will issue a decree that all peoples must take the name of the Antichrist, or the number of his name upon their right hand or forehead. If anyone refuses to do so, he will be denied the privilege of buying or selling. In fact, he will be denied all opportunities of making a living. Doubtless many of the true-hearted will retire into places of obscurity and will trust God to work out their problems and to supply their needs. God will not fail

them (Isa. 33:13-16). But those who are not of faith and who do not desire truth will readily fall in line with the demands of the government and will take the name of the beast and the number of his name, which is "the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six" (Rev. 13:18). The number 666 is to be taken literally. Before the Arabic invasion of the Mediterranean world the peoples of those lands used the letters of their alphabet as numerals. After the Arabic numbers were accepted the letters still retained their former significance. The numerical value of the name of the Antichrist will be 666.

All who take the mark of the beast will suffer punishment and will be banished from the presence of God and the glory of His might forever and ever (read Rev. 14:9-12).

## Chapter 14

### **The Vision of the Second 144,000 on Mount Zion Eternal Punishment and Some Highlights on the Day of Jehovah (Rev. 14:1-20) The Great Parenthesis (Rev 11:15-15:8)**

Let us remember that in Rev. 11:15-15:8 we have the "great parenthesis" in the book which is placed between the blowing of the sixth trumpet and that of the seventh. We have already seen that the middle of the Tribulation is reached with the blowing of the sixth trumpet. The seventh, however, brings in the events of the latter half of the Tribulation which are set forth in symbolical form in chapter 16. Now we are ready to study the vision of the 144,000 who appear on Mount Zion in association with the Lamb.

Is this company of 144,000 the same as the group set forth in Revelation, chapter 7? There are some who say they are the same. The sole reason for such identification is that the number 144,000 occurs in both passages. But other marks prohibit an identification of the two groups as being the same. Those in chapter 7 are all Jews—12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel—and they are serving the Lord, especially in conducting the revival in the first half of the Tribulation.

Those constituting the 144,000 seen on Mount Zion in Revelation, chapter 14, are the ones who "had been purchased out of the earth." These were purchased from among men to be the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb. It is clear that they are taken from among all nations. These facts are sufficient to establish the position that these are two different groups.

In Revelation, chapter 13, the Antichrist goes to Jerusalem and puts on the greatest demonstration of superhuman satanic power ever staged in all the history of the world. He does this in the middle of the Tribulation and convinces the wicked world, by the satanic miracles that he performs, that he is God. They then begin to worship him as God.

In contrast with the Antichrist and his cohorts who go to Jerusalem and stage an unbelievable demonstration of superhuman power, we see a vision of the Son of God and the 144,000 who are purchased from every nation and who have lived spotless lives without blemish.

### The Lamb of God and the 144,000 Without Blemish

There are seven announcements in this chapter; the first in verses 1-5; the second in verses 6, 7; the third in verse 8; the fourth in verses 9-12; the fifth in verse 13; the sixth in verses 14-16; and the seventh in verses 17-20.

"And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard *was as the voice* of harpers harping with their harps; and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, *even* they that had been purchased out of the earth. These are they that were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These *are* they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish" (Rev 14:1-5).

The Lamb appearing here is the same One who is seen in Rev. 5:6 and who is likewise presented in the same passage as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the Root of David (Rev. 5:5).

When the vision of the 144,000 upon Mount Zion was presented to John, suddenly there was heard a voice from Heaven which reminded him of the noise made by many waters and the noise of thunder. Then John explained that this voice was as the voice of harpers "harping with their harps." And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the living creatures and the elders. When this scene is viewed in the light of other passages, it becomes evident that it is the heavenly choir, consisting of seraphim, cherubim and all ranks and orders of angels. They sing the praises of the Lamb and of those who have triumphed through the power and blood of Christ and have lived exemplary lives.

No one is able to understand this song except the 144,000 on Mount Zion. These 144,000 taken from among men have lived pure, clean, holy, spotless lives. They are said not to have been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These words mean exactly what they say. They have never told a lie. They are without blemish. The Apostle Paul could declare in the Thessalonian Epistle that he and others associated with him were living blameless, spotless lives without blemish. Thus he declared, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:10). This does not mean that they had an experience which rendered it impossible for them to sin. No, far from that. But they were living so close to Christ, and Christ was living His life in them so that they could live without spot and blemish. When our Lord was here on earth, he had twelve disciples. They constituted an inner circle. From that inner circle there was one that was smaller—Peter, James and John. The Church is going to be

associated with Christ most intimately, Israel next. She is going to be the head of the nations instead of the tail as she is now. But, while the Church is going to be very intimately and most closely associated with Christ, there is going to be that most sacred inner circle consisting of 144,000 men.

Wherever Christ goes after the fulfillment of this vision, these 144,000 will go and be in attendance upon Him.

### The Message of the Angel Flying in Mid-Heaven

"And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:6, 7).

An examination of Hab. 3:2 shows that the work of God will thrive during the first half of the Tribulation when He is pouring out His wrath upon the world. In the middle of those seven years of wrath, the work of God suddenly comes to a standstill. The prophet sees this situation and prays for God to revive His work in the middle of the Tribulation. When we compare the information gathered from Habakkuk with Revelation, chapter 7, we see that the work of God referred to in the Habakkuk passage is the world's greatest revival that sweeps the globe and brings countless myriads to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Those conducting this revival are the 144,000 Jewish people to whom the Biblical Research Society is now giving the truth of God. They do not accept the Gospel now. When the judgments of the Tribulation are in the world, then the 144,000 Jewish evangelists will learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9). These 144,000 Jewish converts will then take up the banner of Prince Immanuel, which is laid down

by the ascending Church at the time of the Rapture. These will go into every nook and corner of the world proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ and will bring about the world revival. The Antichrist stops this mighty back-to-God movement in the middle of the Tribulation. The prophet Habakkuk prays that God will revive His work. Rev. 14:6 shows that this work of preaching the Gospel is revived and is carried on underground during the latter half of the Tribulation.

### The Overthrow of Babylon the Harlot

"And another, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. 14:8). Let us remember that this great parenthesis in the book of Revelation is the *middle* of the Tribulation. At this time the announcement is made that "Babylon the great" is fallen.

What is meant by Babylon? There are two Babylons that are mentioned in the book of Revelation: First, Babylon the harlot, appearing in chapter 17; and secondly, Babylon the city, which is described minutely in chapter 18. That the city of Babylon will actually be rebuilt and will be the capital of the world empire of the end time is seen by a careful study of Isaiah, chapters 13 and 14. Also, Jeremiah, chapters 50 and 51, foretell Babylon as being in existence in the end of the age. If we are to allow these passages to give their messages without distortion, we must take them at what they say. When we do that, we cannot avoid the conclusion that Babylon the city will be rebuilt in the end time.

There is another Babylon upon whose forehead there is "a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev.

17:5). This Babylon is an ecclesiasticism, a politico-religious octopus that will send forth its tentacles throughout the whole world and will have control of all nations from a religious standpoint. Reference is made to this Babylon in Isa. 57:3ff; Nahum 3:4 and as stated above, in Revelation, chapter 17. When the true Church of God is removed by the Rapture before the Tribulation, the professing church will be headed up into one great ecclesiastical octopus which will control the religious life, or attempt to do so, of all peoples. It will be supported by the civil government—by the Antichrist and his regime—during the first half of the Tribulation.

By the time the middle of the Tribulation is reached, however, the Antichrist will have become so egotistical and will have so yielded himself to the deceptive powers of Satan that he will come to the conclusion that he is God. Then, according to 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, he will go to Jerusalem and present himself as God and demand that men no longer worship God or Christ but that they worship him, the Antichrist. It is to Babylon the Harlot that our text refers.

But Babylon the city, rebuilt and standing in the end time, will fall at the end of the Tribulation, as we see from Rev. 16:19.

### Eternal Punishment and Some Highlights of the Day of Jehovah (Rev. 14:9-20)

In this passage we have brought before us the eternal punishment of the wicked, the blessedness of those who die in the Lord during the latter half of the Tribulation and the war of the Great Day of God the Almighty.

## The Eternal Punishment of the Wicked

"And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice, If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:9-12).

The teaching of the Word of God concerning the eternal punishment of the wicked is a very unpopular subject. Upon rationalistic grounds and for other considerations this doctrine is discredited by modernists.

In speaking of the wicked of the end time, the Psalmist declared: "As for the head of those that compass me about, Let the mischief of their own lips cover them. Let burning coals fall upon them: Let them be cast into the fire, Into deep pits, whence they shall not rise" (Ps. 140:9, 10).

The prophet Daniel spoke of two resurrections. Hear him: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). The Hebrew text is constructed in such a way that we can see Daniel, as it were, pointing to a certain group of those that sleep in the earth and saying, these shall awake unto everlasting life, but those (pointing to the second group) shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt. Such language can mean only one thing: that latter group will awake in resurrection and go into shame and everlasting

contempt, into a place from which they will never return but where they will have to abide through all eternity. This teaching is confirmed by our Lord in the following language: "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28, 29). We see these two resurrections in Rev. 20:1-15. The first one occurs *before* the thousand years' reign of our Lord. This is the resurrection to life and immortality. The second one occurs *after* the reign of Christ and is the resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt.

According to Rev. 14:9-12 the angel said with a great voice, "If any man ... receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand," he would have to suffer throughout all eternity in the lake of fire. The Antichrist will decree that no man can buy or sell or have any kind of business transaction unless he takes the mark of the beast or the number of his name. Doubtless many will sell their birthright to eternal life for a mess of pottage, but God gives them fair warning in this passage. He tells what the consequences will be. It is an awful thing to be lost eternally! It is a wonderful thing to be saved eternally by the grace of God!

### Blessed are Those who Die in the Lord in the Latter Half of the Tribulation

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them" (Rev. 14:13).

People are blessed who come to the Lord and who are "in Him." This is true at all stages of Christianity. It will also be true in the Tribulation. It is very unfortunate that people will not wake up and accept Christ before the Tribulation begins. We do praise God that "for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9), that is, the greater portion of them do accept the Lord.

The question is often asked, "Will there be people who will be saved in the Tribulation?" Most assuredly! More people will come to the Lord in the Tribulation than have come for centuries. In fact, more than half the people of the Tribulation will accept the Lord during that time of wrath. "In that day shall men look unto their Maker, and their eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 17:7). Even in the latter half of the Tribulation myriads of people will come to the Lord. In Rev. 14:13 we see that there is a promise that those are blessed who die in the Lord from henceforth, that is from the middle of the Tribulation on to the very end of it. Many of those who accept the Lord at that time will go home by way of martyrdom. They are not to fear what man can do to them, but are to trust the Lord who has saved and accepted them.

They will leave a testimony which will cause others to take courage and to stand boldly for the Lord. Truly "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church!"

### The Harvest and Vintage of the World

"And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud *I saw* one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest

of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped.

"And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great *winepress*, of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs" (Rev. 14:14-20).

There has been much misunderstanding and conjecture about these two scenes. Some tell us that the harvest scene is one thing and that the vintage is another. These interpreters usually place them at different times. The proper understanding of these two visions is to be found in Joel 3:9-15 where he is describing the preparation that is necessary for the war of the Great Day of God the Almighty, the final struggle of the world when the Antichrist rises up against Christ. In verses 12 and 13 we have this language: "Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread ye; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great."

The prophet saw the armies of the world gathered against Palestine and against the Jewish nation at Jerusalem. In verse 13 he compared these vast hosts of armies to the ripened grain that is ready to be harvested. Rev. 14:14: "And I *saw*, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud I saw one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head

a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle." Who is this that is like unto the son of man? He is like the "son of man" because the Son entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth and became the God-man. He had the appearance of a man. We see that same thing in Dan. 7:13, 14.

Joel compares these vast hosts of armies in Joel 3:12 and 13 to grapes that are thrown into the winevat and that are to be trodden out. Thus it is clear that these two figures of speech refer to the same great, final conflict at the end of the Tribulation—the war of the Great Day of God the Almighty. When we look at Rev. 14:14-20, we see that this is but an expansion and an enlargement of Joel 3:13. The harvest and the vintage scenes are one and the same, represented by two different figures which depend upon the original passage of Joel.

This is in perfect accord with Isa. 63:1-6 which sets forth the second coming of Christ and of His treading the winepress of the wrath of God alone at His second coming.

When we see that Rev. 14:14-20 is talking about the War of the Great Day of God the Almighty we know that this passage is placed here by way of anticipation but is referring to the events of the final overthrow of the Antichrist and all the forces of evil.

These verses speak of the events that occur at the very end of the Tribulation. They come to a close at the time of the overthrow of Babylon the city as described in Rev. 16:17-21. It refers also to the same event described in Rev. 19:11-21.

## Chapter 15

### The Third Sign in Heaven (Rev. 15:1-8)

### The Great Parenthesis (Rev. 11:15-15:8)

In the great parenthesis of the book of Revelation are found three signs or symbols. The first is *the sign of the woman* (Rev. 12:1); the second, *the sign of the dragon* (Rev. 12:3); and the third is *the symbol of the seven angels*, who have the seven vials or bowls of the wrath of God (Rev. 15:1). These three signs are given in Heaven and they foreshadow, or signify, things upon the earth.

The chronological order of events is set forth in Revelation, chapters 6, 8 and 9, and 16. The truth is put in these chapters under the symbolism of seven seals (chapter 6); seven trumpets (chapters 8 and 9); and seven bowls (chapter 16). The chapters intervening give what might be called, figuratively speaking, the stage setting. This phase of the drama is so important that the Lord devoted chapters 12 through 15 to it, in order to give us the facts that must be understood if we are to comprehend the message of chapter 16.

#### The Sign of the Seven Angels with the Seven Bowls of God's Wrath.

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having seven, plagues, *"which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God"* (Rev. 15:1). The word "sign" here means a symbol, an emblem, something that stands for, or sets forth, some great truth or principle. God describes this sign in Heaven as "great and marvelous." It is *great* because of the far-reaching significance of what is symbolized. It is *marvelous* in that it produces wonder and

amazement in the hearts of those who learn the truth signified by this sign and see the far-reaching effects of it.

We are told that these seven angels have seven plagues and that in them is finished the wrath of God. Since this is the completion in the pouring out of these seven plagues, we are to assume that the wrath of God has been presented under some other symbolism. As we studied the seals and the trumpets in chapters 6, 8 and 9, we saw there evidence of the displeasure and the wrath of God as it is poured out upon the world. Thus we are of the profound conviction that the seals, the trumpets and the bowls are all symbols of the pouring out of God's final wrath during what the Old Testament prophets called "the day of Jehovah"—the time when God arises and deals with mankind because of their sins. At that time God has three objectives in view in sending these judgments upon the world. First, to bring about the worldwide revival, in which untold multitudes are brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Second, to destroy all the wicked who will not receive the love of God but who spurn it. Third, to break the power of the Jewish people so that they will confess their national sin of rejecting the Messiah and plead for Him to return. When God accomplishes these three purposes He will stop the judgments of the Great Tribulation.

In Rev. 4:5 we read "And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders." This scene is introductory to that of the vision of Heaven which prepares us for the breaking of the seal judgments in chapter 6. The introductory scene to the trumpet judgments is found in Rev. 8:5: "And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth; and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake." That which introduces the bowl judgments is found in Rev. 11:19 and reads as follows: "And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven;

and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail." A special introductory scene is given in Rev. 16:17, 18: "And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty." Without question in these scenes of stormy conditions we see a growth and a development in the gathering of this storm of God's wrath.

Let us remember that we have already covered one-half of the Tribulation. As we shall see in chapter 16 the latter half of this period of judgment is covered. We shall also see that at the conclusion of this latter half of the Tribulation the Lord Jesus Christ will come in glory and power to take over the government of the world and to reign from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

#### A Vision of Those Who are Victorious over the Antichrist

As we have seen there is an innumerable host of people who are led to the Lord by the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists. These countless multitudes wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. They are the Tribulation saints who are led to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ during the first half of the Tribulation. Concerning them, we have full and detailed information in Revelation, chapter 7. Many of them suffer martyrdom for their faith.

But those who appear in Rev. 15:2-4 are a different group entirely. They accept the Lord and come out of the latter half of the Tribulation when the Antichrist is in the plenitude of his power and when he tries to force the people of the world to take the number of

his name upon their forehead and upon their right hand. In view of these facts we see that the innumerable host of saved people mentioned in Revelation, chapter 7, are the ones who come out of the *first half* of the Tribulation, whereas this group in chapter 15 comes out of the *second part* of the Tribulation.

This latter group is victorious over the beast. It is generally assumed that these are all martyrs, even though it is not stated in so many words—but they are victorious. Yet can we be absolutely certain that all of them are martyrs? They can be victorious over the beast and at the same time not be martyred. However, it is likely that many of these are made to suffer for their faith.

John sees them on a sea of glass which is before the throne of God. The mention of this sea of glass reminds one of Rev. 4:6. Here we see this sea of glass mingled with fire. What is the significance of the phenomenon expressed by "mingled with fire"? No satisfactory answer can be given, hence it is mere speculation to guess.

These who are seen in this vision sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. Moses, of course, was the great lawgiver of Israel. Christ is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Though Moses was simply a man while Christ was the God-man, there are certain similarities that exist between them. For instance in Deut. 18:15ff, God promises Israel that He will raise up a prophet from among Moses' brethren like unto him. This promise is an evident reference to the Lord Jesus.

Here we are told that this great multitude will "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the lamb"—two different songs. The gist of these songs will be that God's works are marvelous; He is righteous in all of His ways and that He is the "King of the ages." Moreover, they have a vision that all people will fear the name of God and glorify Him, for God alone is holy. The prophets of the

Old Testament foretold that the time would come when all nations would be converted and would worship and serve God. Here these victorious saints express the same sentiments. The thing that will convince the people of the world will be God's demonstration that in His dealings He is absolutely righteous in all that He does.

### The Vision of the Temple in Heaven

In Ps. 11:4 we see the Temple of God in Heaven. In Rev. 11:19 we likewise see the same Temple. In the book of Hebrews we are told that there is a Sanctuary or a Temple of God in the Heaven of the heavens. The Tabernacle and later the Temple built by Solomon were little replicas or patterns of the heavenly Temple.

It should be noted that Rev. 15:2-4 constitutes a parenthesis following verse 1. Verses 5-8 develop the theme that is announced in verse 1.

John sees the Temple—"the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heavens"—open. He sees coming forth out of the Temple "the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed with *precious* stone, pure *and* bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles."

At this juncture one of the four living creatures (one of the seraphim of Revelation, chapters 4 and 5, and Isaiah, chapter 6) gives to the seven angels "seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever." God is forever and ever! He, as Isaiah the prophet affirms (Isa. 57:15) is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy."

When these bowls of wrath are given to the angels, John sees the heavenly Temple "filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple" (Rev. 15:8). No living creature can enter the Temple of God in Heaven at that

time. Not even an angelic being can enter it until the seven plagues of the seven angels are finished. Then they will enter and continue the service of God as usual.

Thus we see that chapter 15 constitutes the prologue, or introduction, to the seven bowl judgments of Revelation, chapter 16.

## Chapter 16

### The Pouring Out of the Bowls of God's Wrath (Rev. 16:1-21)

After the angels came forth from the Temple a voice from within issued the command "Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth" (Rev. 16:1). These last seven bowls comprise the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation.

#### The First Bowl of Wrath

In verse 2 we are told that the first angel pours his bowl upon the earth. Then he informs us of the literal effects upon the people of earth that this bowl of wrath has: "and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshipped his image." It became a noisome sore, something evil and grievous. The "Devil" is called by a similar name, in Greek—*evil*. It is very difficult to get the exact terms with which to translate "noisome" and "grievous." But they are indescribable—not only an itching sore but an eating sore—one that keeps on eating all over the body from head to foot. This statement gives the results from this stroke of God's judgment upon those men who, during the latter half of the Tribulation, take the name or the mark of the beast upon their bodies and worship his image.

#### The Second Bowl of Wrath

When this second bowl is poured out, its contents strike the sea, as we see in verse 3. The results of this stroke of judgment are seen in the following words: "and it [this second bowl of wrath] became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died, *even* the things that were in the sea." We are to take everything that God says literally

unless there is some evidence in the immediate context or in a passage which is related to it that shows a departure from the literal meaning. We, therefore, have every reason to believe that this statement means exactly what it says. When Moses waved his rod over the waters of Egypt "all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood" (Exod. 7:20). When this stroke of judgment referred to in Rev. 16:3 falls upon the sea, "it became blood as of a dead man."

### The Third Bowl of Wrath

In Rev. 16:4-7 we have the pouring out of the third bowl of God's wrath upon the rivers and the fountains of waters—the source of water supply for the nations. The result of this judgment is expressed in the following words: "And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it [the rivers and fountains] became blood."

At this point we are told that the angel of the waters proclaims "Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy" (Rev. 16:5, 6). The angels have special duties to perform in reference to various phenomena connected with the universe. Here we see "the angel of the waters," a celestial being that has charge of man's drinking water.

God is righteous and holy in everything that He does and says. He must punish sinners who are unrepentant. At this juncture a voice comes forth from the altar saying: "Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." Eventually all celestial beings together with men upon earth and the lost in Sheol will declare that God is righteous in all that He does. His righteousness and justice will become apparent.

### The Fourth Bowl of Wrath

We have in Rev. 16:8, 9 a description of what actually occurs upon earth when the fourth angel pours out his bowl of wrath: "And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory." This stroke of wrath strikes the sun from which the concentrated heat scorches the earth and men with fire. This should not be thought incredible when we remember that we can take a lens, put it in the sunlight, focus the rays of the sun and can actually burn wood or other combustible material.

When the heat becomes so intense at this stage of the second half of the Tribulation men here upon the earth will suffer so greatly under it that they will blaspheme the name of God. Their hearts will be so greatly hardened that they will not repent of their sins and give Him glory. Men who keep resisting God and sinning against Him frequently reach a point beyond which it is impossible for them to repent. Man, by impenitence and persistence in sin, destroys the delicate mechanism of his conscience. Men do reach that point beyond which there is no remedy as the writer of 2 Chron. 36:11-16 declared.

### The Fifth Bowl of God's Wrath

The fifth bowl of God's wrath is spoken of in the following words: "And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works" (Rev. 16:10, 11). Again let me say that we are to take this language literally at what it

says since there are no indications of a departure from the plain, simple meaning of the words. This fifth plague will affect the throne of the beast (Antichrist) and his kingdom. It will be directed against men.

We are told that the kingdom of the Antichrist will be darkened. There will be a complete, total blackout at this time. When Moses brought God's judgments upon Egypt there was a total blackout caused by the Lord. God, who did it once, can do it twice or as often as He wishes. God will bring judgments which are deserved upon the nations but all of these strokes will be designed for their good—to bring them to repentance, if at all possible.

We have every reason to believe that this fifth judgment will be in the last part of the latter half of the Tribulation. We note that men will still have the sores which occur from the pouring out of the first bowl of God's wrath. Medical science will be unable to cope with that dreadful affliction. Consequently, men will, from the beginning of the pouring out of these bowls on through the fifth bowl, suffer from the effects of the first bowl of God's wrath.

Again we see that they do not repent of their evil works. Men will become hardened in sin so that they cannot turn from evil to God.

### The Sixth Bowl of Wrath

In Rev. 16:12-16 we have the pouring out of the sixth bowl and the effects upon the earth. This bowl is poured out "upon the great river, the *river* Euphrates." The "river Euphrates" means exactly what it says. There will be the drying up of the Euphrates as the result of a great drought in order that the kings from the Orient may come for the War of the Great Day of God the Almighty. This is seen in verse 12.

In verses 13 and 14 there are three unclean spirits, like frogs, that are demons and go forth into all the world to stir up the kings of the earth. They gather them to the place in Palestine "which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon."

We frequently hear of "the battle of Armageddon." We understand what is meant but it would be far better to speak of Biblical things in Scriptural terms. The Bible speaks of this final conflict as "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." The battle line for the "war of the great day of God, the Almighty" will be in the Fertile Crescent. These are the countries beginning with Egypt, running on up through Palestine, all the Lebanese Republic, Syria and Iraq. The Jews will be scattered out of Palestine but at the end of the Tribulation they will return to the Fertile Crescent. Then Antichrist, moved by Satan and these evil spirits, will gather the armies of the world against the Jews in the War of the Great Day of God the Almighty.

Though men will be hardened by sin, there is a call given as we see in verse 15. A promise is made to those who have any desire to do the will of God, who turn to Him, who keep watching and who keep their garments clean. In Rev. 18:4 they are instructed to "come forth, my people, out of her ... that ye receive not of her plagues."

Finally, the kings of the world will gather together at Megiddo in Palestine for the laying of the strategy for "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty."

"And they [verse 16] gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon" that is, the demons mentioned above gathered the kings together into the place which is called Har-Magedon, or Armageddon. A battle is one single encounter, but a war is a series of encounters that are fought in trying to settle some question. War has never settled anything. The Lord is going to take the field of battle and there will go forth from His hand death rays

that will destroy all opposition (Hab. 3:4) and Christ will stand victorious on the final and last battlefield of the world. This last war is fought by the Lord Jesus Christ against the kings of the world to bring about a permanent, righteous and a just peace.

### The Pouring Out of the Seventh Bowl of the Wrath of God

In the final paragraph of chapter 16, verses 17-21, we have the account of the pouring out of the last bowl of the wrath of God which finishes His judgments against men. The strokes become more severe as we approach the end of the Tribulation.

At the conclusion of the Tribulation there occurs the greatest earthquake known in all history. At that time, Babylon the Great (Babylon rebuilt on its ancient site) together with all the cities of the world, is thrown down and becomes nothing but rubble. God must deal with people who defy Him according to the merits of their cases.

At that time, as we learn in verse 21, there will be great hail that will come down out of Heaven. God has His armory full of weapons. On this point let us remember what the Lord said in Job 38:22, 23. He has filled His armory full of hail and snow "against the time of trouble Against the day of battle and war."

In this connection we should study the great prophecy found in 2 Peter, chapter 3. This is a prediction that will be fulfilled at the end of the Tribulation. Many of the planets and bodies belonging to our solar system will explode with a great noise and intense heat. The heat waves will travel as far as the earth. Those parts of the earth that are struck by these terrific heat waves will be burned to a crisp.

As we shall learn in Revelation, chapter 19, Christ will come at the end of the Tribulation and will take over the government of the world. He will establish His reign of righteousness.

We have reached, chronologically, the end of the Tribulation and the second coming of Christ. This will become evident when we study chapters 17-19.

## Chapter 17

### The End of Babylon the Harlot (Rev. 17:1-8)

The Apostle John, as was true of many of the prophets, followed what is known as the *law of recurrence*. This is the principle that was followed by the prophets when, after they had given a summary or a survey of a certain situation, would go back and add the details. As an illustration let me call attention to the practice of the artist who, when he paints the portrait of someone, does what is usually called "blocking out" the portrait. At subsequent sittings he adds details that were not put in at the first and develops more and more the features of the person whose picture is being painted. With this illustration in mind we shall say that John had blocked out his portrait by the time he reached Revelation, chapter 16. Following the law of recurrence, in chapter 17, the Apostle gives us the reign and overthrow of Babylon the harlot. In chapter 18 he gives the data concerning the power and influence and final overthrow of Babylon the city. Then in chapter 19 he gives us more details about the second coming of Christ and all of the connecting events.

Babylon, the harlot—the great ecclesiastical system that is developing in our day—is destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation immediately before the pouring out of the bowls of God's wrath. On the other hand, Babylon the city—the literal rebuilt Babylon of the end time—is destroyed at the end of the Tribulation. Thus there are three and a half years that intervene between the overthrow of the ecclesiastical octopus and the destruction of the literal city of Babylon. The facts in chapters 17, 18 and 19 are absolutely essential for our filling out the picture concerning those momentous events that take place during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation.

## Prophetic Pictures of Babylon the Harlot

There is nothing new in the first twenty chapters of Revelation. Only chapters 21 and 22 give us new material not found in the Old Testament. We learn of Babylon the harlot in two places in the Old Testament, Isa. 57:3ff and Nahum 3:4.

In Isaiah, chapters 56 and 57, we have a vision of Israel of the end time. In Isa. 57:1, 2 appears a prediction concerning the Rapture of the saints before the Tribulation begins. Following in verse 3, we have this language: "But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the harlot." Study this verse and read through verse 8 in order to understand the prophet's message. This prophecy follows immediately that which foretells the catching away of merciful and good men out of the earth in order to take them "away from the evil [calamity] *to come*—that is, the judgments of the Tribulation.

There are certain ones who are called in verse 3, "sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the harlot." A reading of this passage shows that the prophet was not talking about literal children and their parents, but is talking about certain ones whom he designates as the sorceress and her consort "the adulterer." This sorceress is called "the harlot." Who is she and who is the adulterer, since they are not a literal man and his paramour? They are the well-favored harlot (the ecclesiastical octopus) and the kings of the world with whom she commits fornication.

Nahum 3:4 records these words: "because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts." When the book of Nahum is studied properly it becomes quite evident that the prophet is revealing the destruction of Nineveh in the end time. Nineveh will rise out of the dust of the past and

become a dominant factor in the end time—just as Babylon will likewise rise out of oblivion and become the capital of the world. There will at that time be the one who is called "the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts." It is apparent that this well-favored harlot is the sorceress who is mentioned by Isaiah.

### The Vision of Babylon the Harlot, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth

In Rev. 17:1-6 we read: "Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication. And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication, and upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder."

When this passage is read along with those in Isaiah, chapter 57, and Nahum, chapter 3, it becomes apparent that the three prophets of God were speaking about the same thing: an ecclesiastical system that is supported by the civil government of the end time.

We are told that man is incurably religious. When the true Church is raptured before the Tribulation, all of the cults, philosophies and off-color brands of religions, together with all of the idolatrous systems in the world, will be brought together into one great religious system or symbolic octopus. This great system is represented by the woman who is called MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. She will have control of the religious affairs over all the world under the Antichrist. This is evident from the name of the woman—"THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." The term "abominations" means *idols*. So she will be in control of all idols. Idolatry will, as we learn from many passages, sweep over the world at that time. This harlot, the symbol of the false church, as an impure bride (a pure bride is the symbol of the true Church of Christ) will be supported and carried forward by the political power of Antichrist. The woman rides the beast, the world empire of the Antichrist, during the first half of the Tribulation.

### Explanation Concerning the Beast

In our study of Revelation, chapter 13, we investigated the world empire of the end time. John saw, in vision, a great and horrible beast that had seven heads and ten horns. When this description is compared with the fourth beast described in Daniel, chapter 7, it is seen that they are identical. A beast, as we learned in Dan. 7:17 is a symbol of a world government. The beasts of Daniel's visions are kings. According to verse 23, however, a beast also symbolizes the realm over which the king reigns. The fourth beast, or kingdom, referred to in Dan. 7:23 devours the whole earth, and becomes a world kingdom. According to verse 24 it collapses into ten different

sections. Over each one of these a dictator rises. After this occurs there arises a little horn in the midst of the ten horns symbolizing the ten kings. This little horn becomes dominant over the ten and reigns along with them (Dan. 7:25). According to the prophetic outlook of Daniel, the world is to be headed up into one great colossal government which will collapse under its own terrific weight, falling into ten different kingdoms. Then there arises a dictator in each of these segments of the collapsed empire. After this there will arise a man out of obscurity who will gain ascendancy among the ten and will reign with an iron hand. Such is the representation of Daniel, chapter 7.

Revelation, chapter 13, gives a bit of added information to that found in Daniel, chapter 7. This fourth beast, the Roman Empire, which succeeded the Grecian, has seven heads as well as ten horns. In Rev. 17:10 we see that five of those heads (types of governments) had already come and gone. One was then in existence and one, according to John, is yet to come. An examination of the history of the Roman Empire from its founding in 753 B.C. and onward, shows that there were five distinctive types of administration that had come and passed on. At one time they had the king; at another time they had the Plebeian form of government; next the Republic; after that, the Consular form of government; followed by the Triumvirate. There was one, the Imperial form of government, in existence in John's day. There is yet one other form that will arise in the end time. When it comes, the world kingdom will include every nation, tribe, tongue and language. Then it will collapse, falling into ten divisions, as indicated by the ten horns on the beast. The ten horns are contemporaneous and are on the beast in its final form during the Tribulation. In Revelation, chapter 13, we see that the beast receives a death stroke from which it recovers. In chapter 17, the Antichrist in

the middle of the Tribulation will be slain, literally, and his spirit will descend to Sheol, or Hades. Then he will come back out of Hades, being raised by Satan. From that time on, during the latter half of the Tribulation, he will rule the world with an iron hand.

He is at the head of the empire when it has its seventh head—imperialism, dictatorship, Caesarism. But when he is slain and comes back to life, he will be of the seven and yet he will be an eighth one. Satan will deliver over to the Antichrist his throne and power. Then the Antichrist will hold high carnival but not so far as God is concerned!

### The Complete Destruction of Babylon the Harlot

The overthrow of Babylon the harlot is shown in Rev. 17:15-18. In Rev. 17:1-6 this harlot is seen riding on the beast. Here the figure is changed and she is represented as sitting upon many waters which symbolize peoples—multitudes, nations and tongues.

In Rev. 14:8 we have the announcement that "Babylon the great" is fallen. This is Babylon the harlot, the ecclesiastical system, which is destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation. Rev. 17:15 says: "And he [the angel] saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The Spirit's interpretation of the significance of waters when used symbolically is seen in Ps. 124:3, 4: "Then they had swallowed us up alive, When their wrath was kindled against us: Then the waters had overwhelmed us, The stream had gone over our soul." Why were they not swallowed up? Israel is the nation of destiny and God will not allow Satan and all of his hosts to overpower and to overcome the remnant of Israel. God still has a purpose and a plan for that nation. The waters are the symbolic representation of nations of people or races who are in a state of confusion and commotion. This woman is

represented not only as seated on these waters but she is seated upon the beast of the end time; this beast is the symbol of the world empire, an ecclesiasticism.

Baylon the harlot will be supported by the civil government and will have its headquarters at Babylon, the city, which will have been rebuilt. It will be so closely connected with the civil power and with the capital of the world that its downfall is mentioned in terms of the city of Babylon, which city is actually not destroyed until the end of the Tribulation, although the religious system is destroyed in the middle of it.

## Chapter 18

### **The Destruction of the City of Babylon Rebuilt and Standing in the End Time (Rev. 18)**

The end of the Tribulation is reached at the end of chapter 16. John, following the law of recurrence, filled in some details into the survey of the history of the Tribulation, in chapters 17, 18 and 19. *Babylon the harlot* is destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation as set forth in Revelation, chapter 17. Now we come to the consideration of *Babylon the city*, described in Revelation, chapter 18.

#### The Prophetic Background of Babylon the City

There are prophecies in the Old Testament which show that Babylon is to be destroyed in the Tribulation Period. For instance, in Isa. 13:1-14:27 we have a clear description of the fall of Babylon in the day of Jehovah (the Tribulation), when God is punishing the sinners of the world. Since Babylon has been destroyed it must be rebuilt in order for the prophecy to be fulfilled. Isaiah, chapters 46-48, also assumes the existence of Babylon in the end time. Moreover, Jeremiah, chapters 50 and 51, likewise speaks of the destruction of Babylon in the day of Jehovah. In order therefore for these prophecies to be fulfilled, Babylon, literal Babylon, must be rebuilt in the end time.

Someone may say that if this be true the coming of the Lord is in the very far distant future. Not necessarily so. We are living not even in the atomic age or the hydrogen bomb age but in the space age. Babylon can rise out of the dust of the past in a very few months and be the city that is described by the prophet. The Word of God is certain and absolutely sure.

### Announcement of the Fall of Babylon the City

In Rev. 18:2 we have the announcement: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird." As we have already seen, the announcement in Rev. 14:8 is concerning the fall of Babylon, the harlot. These two announcements are entirely different. The one in chapter 14 is the announcement of the overthrow of Babylon the harlot, the ecclesiastical system, whereas this one in chapter 18 is the announcement regarding Babylon the city at the end of the Tribulation.

### Destruction of Babylon the City

That the Babylon mentioned in chapter 18 is a literal city is quite evident. In Rev. 18:4-24 we have the prediction concerning the overthrow of Babylon the city which shall be the capital of the world, the royal city of the Antichrist.

### The Call of God's People in Babylon

In verses 4 and 5 we have a call to the people of God that will be living in Babylon at the time when it is about to be destroyed. Thus the Lord says: "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: for her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Someone may ask this question: Since the destruction of Babylon the city occurs at the end of the Tribulation, how is it that there will be children of God in it at that time, seeing that the Church is raptured *before* the Tribulation? After the Church is removed by the Rapture before the Tribulation, the Tribulation judgments come upon the world. The seed which we are now sowing in all Israel will be watered by the rains of the judgments of the Tribulation. They will

cause the seed to germinate and produce an army of 144,000 Jewish "Pauls"—servants of God—who will bring about the worldwide revival. An innumerable host of people will learn of the truth through the preaching of these 144,000 evangelists. These will wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Note the fact that they come out of the Tribulation, the Great One. God will have saints upon the earth during the Tribulation. Moreover, some of those constituting the people that are urged to come forth out of Babylon before its final collapse may be the Jewish people who will turn to the Lord at the very end of the Tribulation. There is a call for all of the people then living upon the earth who have any longing for God to come forth out of Babylon before its final collapse.

#### Babylon to Receive Double for all Her Sins

As we learn from Isa. 40:1,2, Israel will receive double punishment for all her sins. The reason is that she has had advantages and opportunities for advancement that no other nation as a people has enjoyed. But God is going to render double to Babylon for all of her sins, as we see in Rev. 18:6,7: "Render unto her even as she rendered, and double *unto her* the double according to her works: in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto her double. How much soever she glorifieth herself, and waxed wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning."

Babylon will have had unparalleled opportunities to receive the truth but will have sinned against all the light God grants to her; therefore, the punishment she is to receive is to be doubled unto her.

## Kings and Merchants of the World Weep Over the Destruction of the City of Babylon

This scene is set forth in Rev. 18:9-19. When Babylon is overthrown, the kings of the earth who will commit fornication wantonly with her, that is, with Babylon "shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke other burning" (vs. 9).

### The First Woe (vss. 1-14)

Merchants are seen to be expressing their woe and horror over the complete destruction of the materials constituting their merchandise. "Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgment come" (vs. 10). Things will be speeded up, spiritually speaking, into high gear. Jeremiah was told to go and throw a rock into the Euphrates River, and when he threw that rock into the river said, "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise again" (Jer. 51:63, 64). So it is literally in one hour's time.

Among the merchandise of her traffic there is a very sad note sounded in the latter part of verse 13: "and cattle, and sheep; and *merchandise* of horses and chariots and slaves; and souls of men." Men and women who traffic in the souls of others deal with spiritual realities that are to have their effect upon those thus treated throughout all eternity.

### The Second Woe (vss. 15-18)

Here the mariners express themselves as being overtaken by judgment saying: "Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearl! for in one hour so great riches is made desolate. And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and

mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off, and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying. What *city* is like the great city?"

One cannot avoid the conclusion that this is the destruction of a literal city. It will be the greatest city that is ever built, as we see in the song which constitutes Isa. 25:1-5.

### The Third Woe (vs. 19)

These merchants and traffickers cast dust on their heads, they weep and mourn, and say: "Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate." Thus in this passage Babylon rebuilt is represented as the commercial center of the entire world.

Notwithstanding its greatness and power and magnificence it is to be destroyed in one day as we see in verse 8. According to the statement in verse 10 it is to be destroyed "in one hour." The same thought is expressed again in verse 17 "for in one hour so great riches is made desolate." Finally, in the third woe the statement is repeated, "for in one hour is she made desolate."

### Saints in Heaven Rejoice over the Overthrow of Babylon

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her" (Rev. 18:20). Naturally the saints in Heaven will see things from God's standpoint and will rejoice over the execution of God's judgments against such sinners as those in charge of Babylon of the end time.

## The Suddenness and the Completeness of the Overthrow of Babylon

According to verse 21 a strong angel took up a stone "as it were a great millstone," cast it into the sea, and uttered this prophecy: "Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all." This is an echo of the prediction that the prophet made in Jer. 51:59-64.

In Rev. 18:21-24 we see the final, sudden and complete overthrow of Babylon. It will become the dwelling place during the Millennium of everything that is unclean, as we see in Isa. 13:19-22. It will be in the same category with Edom as expressed by Isa. 34:8ff. When the curse will have been lifted from the entire earth it will still remain upon old Babylon and Edom. Men cannot sin away their day of grace and condemn the Almighty and go unpunished. The Almighty is a God of righteousness and justice, who performs truth and justice and righteousness in the earth in dealing with men.

When Babylon is overthrown in fulfillment of these marvelous predictions, Christ will take over the governments of the world, will lift the curse and will establish His reign of righteousness from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. At that time the glory of God will encircle the earth as the waters cover the sea.

## Chapter 19

### The Marriage of the Lamb and the Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 19)

In chapter 19 we have the account of the marriage supper of the Lamb and the second coming of our Lord. This chapter naturally divides into two sections: (1) The Marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:1-10); (2) The Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 19:11-21).

#### The Marriage of the Lamb (The Four Hallelujahs)

In this section of the first ten verses of chapter 19 we have the word "Hallelujah" occurring four times. After the conclusion of the description of the fall of Babylon, John then heard a great voice as of a vast multitude in Heaven saying: "Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" (vss. 1, 2).

The word "hallelujah" is of Hebrew origin and means *O praise ye Jah*, that is, Jehovah. This great multitude in Heaven consists of men redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Whenever we see the word "multitude" it usually refers to vast numbers of mankind. I do not know of any occasion when it is ever used with reference to celestial beings—unless the facts of such usage is indicated by the context (see Luke 2:13). The assumption, therefore, is that these are redeemed men who will be praising God for His matchless salvation and for the righteousness of His judgments. In His bringing judgment upon Babylon the harlot, these vast numbers will rejoice with holy

boldness. "... shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25).

After the Rapture of the Church there is going to be a universal church. It will be one great, powerful organization and its head will dictate to the world what they shall do and what they shall believe. This will be spiritual tyranny. In the middle of the Tribulation God is going to have the Antichrist and the ten kings overthrow that order so they will do away with Babylon the harlot. Then they will set up the worship of Antichrist and require that all men of every race, tribe, tongue and language worship the Antichrist as God. Continuing to read, "for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that corrupted the earth with her fornication [spiritual fornication], and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." There are at least a thousand miles of catacombs in Italy equal to the length of the entire Italian Peninsula. Millions of martyrs were buried in these catacombs. But that is not the extent of martyrdom. There will be multitudes of people who will be martyred by Babylon the harlot. So when God overthrows Babylon He is righteous and just because she has corrupted the earth and launched a movement to slay everybody who does not do as she wishes.

A second time he hears the word "hallelujah." Following this second call to praise God, we see the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures—seraphim—falling down and worshiping God and saying "Amen; Hallelujah." These high celestial beings will be joining with the redeemed in calling upon others to praise God for His great salvation.

When these celestial hosts join with men in praising God there is a voice that comes from the throne saying: "Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great" (vs. 5).

A fourth time John hears, "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright *and* pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (vss. 6-8).

"The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth." In this fact we ought all to rejoice and to give praise to God. The host of redeemed ones rejoice and praise God because the time is at hand "for the marriage of the Lamb." The Lamb's wife has made herself ready. The wife of the Lamb is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. "And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright *and* pure" which sets forth pictorially and graphically the righteous lives and acts of the saints. We are clothed in the righteousness of Christ which is conferred upon those who accept and trust Him. Whereas we are saved by the grace of God through faith, we labor for the Master and will be rewarded according to our works. The fine linen is symbolic of the righteous acts which we, as redeemed people, perform. Men and women are to be rewarded from three different standpoints: from the quality of the service rendered, Matt. 25:14-30; from the quantity of the service rendered, Luke 19:11-27; and the spirit, the motive that is behind the act, found in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, Matt. 19:27-20:16.

After these mighty acts of worship and praise to God the angel who was talking to John urged him saying, "Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (vs. 9). Who are these invited guests? Some think that they are the Old Testament saints; others, that they are the Tribulation saints. In view of the fact

that we have so little information regarding them it is impossible to be dogmatic and assert that they consist of a certain group. In my opinion they will all be there! We do know that there are certain ones who will be invited to attend the marriage of the Lamb when He (the Lamb) and His bride (the body of Christ) are united in the holy bonds of spiritual matrimony—for all eternity.

When this revelation was made known to John he "fell down before his [the angel's] feet to worship him." But this celestial being stopped him, saying that he himself was a fellow-servant and that he, with the brethren, "hold the testimony of Jesus." Then he exhorted John to "worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Everything in the Old Testament in some way centers around the Lord Jesus Christ, the Hebrew Messiah and Redeemer of humanity.

### The Second Coming of Christ

In Rev. 19:11-21 we have a prophecy of our Lord's return at the end of the Tribulation. Ps. 50:1-5 tells of the second coming of our Lord. It sets forth the two different phases of the Rapture of the saints of God: (1) The Rapture of the Church before the Tribulation; and (2) The Rapture of the Tribulation saints at the end of that period of wrath.

In verses 1 and 2 of Psalm 50 we see a beautiful picture of our Lord and His reigning in Zion. These verses present a vision of the Millennial Jerusalem. The words "The Mighty One, God, Jehovah" are quite significant. That which is translated "The Mighty One" is in the plural number and is doubtless an echo of the doctrine of the Trinity. It was set forth by Moses and the prophets as well as by the writers of the New Testament. The word rendered "God" is in the singular. That which is rendered "Jehovah" is the sacred name of the

Eternal. But this memorial name has four significations in the Old Testament: In certain contexts it refers to the Holy Trinity; in other connections, to God the Father; in still other passages it refers to God the Son; and in yet other connections it designates the Holy Spirit. One must determine from the context its meaning in a given case.

When we take all the facts of this passage into consideration and read them in the light of related passages we come to the conclusion that the one referred to here by the term God is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity. The reason for my making that statement is this: Here is a picture of God's reigning in Zion. Other passages show that God in the person of the Messiah is the One who is scheduled to reign there in glory and in power. He is therefore spoken of by the word God in the singular number. At the same time He is Jehovah who caused all things to come into existence and who maintains all things by His omnipotence. But as we have seen the word rendered "Mighty God" is in the plural. This probably points to the significant fact that in Him, that is, in His flesh, dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9).

The Lord has called, through His ministers preaching His Word, all nations "from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof." Throughout the Christian centuries He has sent forth this call. He is sending it forth today and we trust that it will continue to go forth until He comes in fulfillment of this passage and reigns in Zion. In fact, according to the prophetic Word, there will arise a mighty army of 144,000 Hebrews who will bring about the mightiest revival of all the ages, see Revelation, chapter 7. Thus in a peculiar and effective manner the Messiah will have called the whole world by and through these future Jewish evangelists.

But this language goes far beyond the above calling. When He leaves glory, He will come with a shout and utter His voice so that it will be heard resounding throughout the entire world. This seems to be the significance of Jeremiah's statement: "Jehovah will roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation" (Jer. 25:30). When He comes to Mount Zion He again will utter His voice and the heavens above and the earth beneath will reverberate with its echoes (Joel 3:16). It is probably to those utterances that our Psalmist in Ps. 50:1 refers.

At that future time, Zion, Jerusalem in Palestine, will be the perfection of beauty. It will be the joy spot of the whole earth. From it Jehovah the Messiah will shine forth in glory and splendor.

Having seen the glorious picture of King Messiah as He will reign in Mount Zion in Ps. 50:1, 2, in verse 3 the prophet goes back and describes the actual *coming* of Messiah to Mount Zion. In doing this he is following what is recognized by Bible students as *the law of recurrence*. Having painted a beautiful word picture, the prophets frequently went back and enlarged or embellished the picture by further statements. In verse 3, therefore, the Psalmist adds new information concerning the manner in which Jehovah Messiah will come to Zion. Throughout the whole Christian Dispensation, during which He has been seated at the right hand of the throne of God in Heaven, He has kept silent. But when He leaves glory He will break that silence and will come in flaming fire. Thus a fire will devour before Him and there will be a great tempest round about Him.

When He thus comes at the end of the Tribulation to establish His reign of righteousness upon the earth, He issues a twofold call: one to those in the heavens above and the other to those in the earth beneath. "He calleth to the heavens above, And to the earth, that he may judge his people" (vs. 4). From this fact we conclude that some of His

people will be in the heavens above whereas others will be in the earth beneath. Who are those in the heavens above? Doubtless the Old Testament saints; all who have died in Christ and all of those saints who will be raptured when the Lord descends from Heaven to the air and raises the dead in Christ and catches up the living saints out of the world before the Tribulation begins. This Psalm therefore presupposes the catching up of the saints (the Church, the body of Christ) out of the world before the Tribulation. Thus the Lord gives the call to the celestial beings commanding them to bring forth these who are in the heavens.

At the same time He issues the call with reference to the earth. Both calls are "Gather my saints together unto me." The saints in the heavens above and those upon the earth beneath are to be gathered into one place in order that the Lord may judge them (Matt. 24:29-31).

Who are the saints upon the earth at the time of the coming of the Lord to the earth to set up His reign? There can be but one answer which is this: They are those who turn to the Lord after the Rapture of the Church and during the Tribulation. We call them the "Tribulation saints" because they turn to the Lord and accept Christ under the influence of the preaching of the Gospel by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists. They will carry forward the work of Christ after the Church has been removed. That there is to be a mighty host of people who will turn to the Lord during the Tribulation is foretold by different prophets. It is assumed by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thess. 2:11, 12 and is declared by John in Revelation, chapter 7.

We are told by the Lord that those who believe on Him shall not come into judgment but have passed out of death into life (John 5:24). Their judgment occurred at the cross. The punishment that was due to fall upon them fell upon Him. They therefore do not come into the

judgment of the Great White Throne which occurs after the thousand years' reign of our Lord (Rev. 20:11-15).

Into what judgment do they come? They come before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive the things done in the body whether it be good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10). Men are saved by the grace of God through faith. Saved people are to work for the Lord who will reward them according to their works. The Lord calls together all His saints—those in the heavens above and those in the earth beneath and brings them before His Judgment Seat. He rewards them for the services which they have rendered in His cause.

The saints who are to be rewarded at the time of this great assize are "Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Ps. 50:5b). There is but one approach to God. Christ is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. He is the one sufficient and acceptable sacrifice that the sinner must bring to God by faith. Everyone who comes unto God through Him by faith is acceptable not upon the basis of any merit of his own but upon the worth and merit of the blood of the Lamb of God. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. Nothing that man can do or say can add in anywise to the merit and the efficacy of the sacrifice of the all-sufficient Lamb of God.

### Description of Christ at His Second Coming

In Rev. 19:11-16 we have a vivid and graphic description of our Lord as He will appear when He returns in glory. Here He is represented as a rider, a warrior, mounted on a white horse. Anciently, warriors rode on white horses and led their armies into battle. This representation is common to the Old Testament. For instance, in Deut. 32:39-43 our Lord is presented as a warrior who takes His sword, whets it, seizes His bow and arrows and goes into

war against His enemies. In Ps. 45:3-5 He is likewise represented as a warrior who goes against His enemies in battle and stands the triumphant Conqueror over all foes. In Isa. 9:6 Christ is represented as the Miracle One who is able to counsel, and the Mighty God, that is God the Hero. This passage looks at Him as He will be when He comes back, enters the field of battle and conquers the world. But the passage upon which the language of John in Rev. 19:11-16 is based is found in Isa. 63:1-6. Here we see the description of our Lord as He will take the field of battle against the enemies of Israel and will bring deliverance to His sorely tried people.

Our Lord will have the name "Faithful and True." According to verse 11 He comes forth in righteousness to judge and to make war. Whatever He does is in accordance with the highest standard of righteousness. He could not do otherwise because He is "the way, and the truth, and the life." He is faithful and true to His holy nature and to the promises which He has made. He is the very embodiment of truth itself, everything that He does will be in righteousness. He is coming to judge the world. All judgment has been delivered unto Him "because he is a son of man" (John 5:26, 27). In the Olivet Discourse the Lord gave us a picture of His sitting upon a throne of glory and judging the nations that survive the Tribulation Period, see Matt. 25:31-46. This is the special judgment to which reference is made here. Moreover, His name is called "The Word of God." He will have on His head many diadems. (There are two Greek words "stephenas" from which we get *Stephen*—meaning *little crown*, not a diadem; but *stephenas* means a little victor's crown. In the Olympian games the one who won the contest was given a little crown, or a wreath of laurel, fresh today, faded tomorrow. That is not the diadem here.) "Diadem" means *crown*—crown of royalty, majesty. When Christ comes, "upon his head are many diadems." He is going to be the King

of every nation. There will be a French crown, the Italian, etc., but they will all be one—many, yet one, and they will be on the head of Christ. He is going to be King of all nations.

There will accompany Him "the armies which are in heaven" who will be arrayed in fine linen, white and pure. These are the saints of God who come back with Christ when He returns to this earth.

Out of Christ's mouth will proceed "a sharp sword," not a literal one, but it is the weapon with which He will fight. He will speak the word of judgment and His commands will be carried out by the power of Omnipotence. He therefore is represented as having a sword which proceeds from His mouth. He will also smite the nations with this sword and will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. Moreover, He has written upon His garment and upon Himself the title, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Examine carefully Habakkuk, chapter 3, for a similar vivid and graphic description of Christ at His second coming. Also examine Ps. 18:7-18.\*

### Invitation to the Birds of Heaven

When Christ takes the field of battle there will go forth from the hand that was once pierced for our redemption, rays, death rays, that will destroy all the wicked, see Hab. 3:4. Read Jer. 25:30-38 for a

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\* For a thorough study of the second coming, see Dr. David L. Cooper's book, *Messiah: His Glorious Appearance Imminent*

further description of our Lord's destroying all the wicked when He comes back in fulfillment of this grand prophecy.

In Ezek. 38:1-39:16 we have a prophecy concerning the invasion of Palestine by the forces of Russia and her satellites which occurs before the Tribulation.

Then Gog's armies will meet the Almighty and will be completely annihilated. In contrast with this invasion will be the invasion of Palestine by the forces of the Antichrist at the end of the Tribulation as set forth in Ezek. 39:17-29. In verses 17 and 18 the language used furnishes the foundation for the passage presented by John in Rev. 19:17, 18. This, of course, is the War of the Great Day of God, the Almighty.

#### The Final Battle of the War of the Great Day of God the Almighty

In Rev. 19:19-21 we have a prediction of the Antichrist's gathering the armies of the world and invading Palestine. He does this to wipe out the remnant of the Jewish people and to oppose Christ at His second coming. From the language of verse 19 it is clear that the Antichrist, inspired by Satan, will know that Christ is going to make His appearance in Palestine at the end of the Tribulation. In order to be prepared for Him, the Devil will inspire the Antichrist to gather all the armies of the world there to engage in battle. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army" (vs. 19). The beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet who performs signs in his presence, will be taken, captured, and the two will be "cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone." On the surface there appears to be a contradiction between Rev. 19:20 and Paul's statement in 2 Thess. 2:8. There it is told that Christ *slays* the Antichrist by the brightness of His coming. Here we are told that

the Antichrist and the false prophet are *cast alive* into the lake of fire. But the discrepancies are only apparent, not real. When Christ comes at the end of the Tribulation He slays the Antichrist by the brightness of His coming, but he is immediately restored to life and is cast with the false prophet into the lake of fire, where they will be forever and ever.

The rest of the wicked are slain "with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh" (Rev. 19:21).

Thus ends the last war, the war that is fought to stop all wars. From that time forth and forevermore there will never be another war that will plague this world.

O Lord, hasten that day!

## Chapter 20

### The Reign of Christ and the Judgment of the Great White Throne (Rev. 20)

Much confusion exists in the world today concerning the Millennium. There are those who take the position that Christ's coming to the earth precedes the Millennium. Those who believe this are called *premillenarians*. On the other hand, there are those who hold to the theory that the world is getting better and that by the preaching of the Gospel the era of righteousness, peace and joy will be introduced. Then Christ will return at the end of the one thousand years of a converted world. Those holding this position are known as *postmillennialists*. Very few people hold this hypothesis today. A third theory is that which is known as *amillennialism*. Those who hold this position believe that there is to be no Millennium whatsoever, but that what is spoken of as the Millennium is to be understood spiritually, or figuratively.

In the first six verses of Revelation, chapter 20, we are told that Christ will come, will bind Satan for a thousand years and will reign on this earth for that length of time. The expression "thousand years" is used six times in the first seven verses. Notwithstanding the fact that the language is crystal clear, these theorists, while they admit that the language actually says that Christ will reign for a thousand years, insist that this passage is very highly figurative and that we cannot, in view of that fact, accept it literally. Thus there are false theories that have been devised to explain that which is quite evident.

## The Binding of Satan for One Thousand Years

In Rev. 20:1-3 we are told that when Christ comes, Satan is bound and is put in the pit of the abyss which is sealed over him. "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand (vs. 1). Who the angel was we are not told. This angel "laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years." There are those who say that this is a literal chain and that an attempt is made to bind a spiritual being, Satan, with a literal chain. That is nonsense. But remember this is a presentation of spiritual reality under the figure of realism. "Sheol" is called in the Greek New Testament "Hades" and is located in the heart of the earth. There is also a place that is called the "pit of the abyss" or "Tartarus" as referred to in 2 Peter 2:4, where only disobedient angels have been confined. There Satan will remain for a thousand years during which Christ will reign upon the earth. This is in perfect alignment with the prophecy that is found in Isaiah, chapter 24. In the first twenty verses we have a vivid, graphic description of the Tribulation Period. At the end of that time God incarcerates the hosts of the high ones on high (the evil spirits that inhabit the air). "And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and after many days shall they be visited [or punished]" (Isa. 24:22). Here is the Old Testament prediction to the effect that God will incarcerate Satan and his hosts in the pit of the abyss for "many day," that is, a thousand years.

During the time that Christ reigns for a thousand years the people living on earth will not be deceived by Satan. These people will be those who survive the Tribulation, who have been truth seekers and who will be permitted to enter the Millennium (Ps. 15 and Ps. 24:1-6). The Gospel, however, will be given to them by converted Israel.

They will accept Christ and will re-populate the earth. These are the ones who will be put on the right hand of Christ when He judges the living nations (Matt. 25:31-46).

### Christ's Reign upon the Earth for One Thousand Years

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived [lit. came to life], and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4-6).

### The Saints

There are three groups of people who reign with Christ according to this verse. Who are the ones referred to in the clause "and they sat upon their [thrones]"? The only possible antecedent of this pronoun is the "armies of heaven" found in Rev. 19:14. These are the saints of the present age who are raptured before the Tribulation and who come all the way to the earth when Jesus returns to reign upon the earth.

The second group that reigns with Christ is mentioned in these words: "and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God." These are doubtless the martyrs who are slain during the first half of the Tribulation and who are mentioned in Rev. 6:9-11.

The third group that is mentioned is spoken of in this statement: "and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand." These are also the Tribulation martyrs—those slain under the Antichrist during the latter half of the Tribulation. They are killed because of their faith but they come to life and reign with Christ a thousand years. While all of these reign with Christ there is a distinction between those constituting the body of Christ that is called out during the present age and the Tribulation saints.

#### The Wicked Dead Come to Life After One Thousand Years

The rest of the dead [that is, those who are not raised before the thousand years begin] lived not until the thousand years should be finished" (Rev. 20:5), namely, at the judgment of the Great White Throne, which occurs after the thousand years.

There are two resurrections. The first resurrection embodies all who are raised before the thousand years begin. The second embraces all who are not raised until after the thousand years are finished.

#### The Saints of the First Resurrection to be Priests

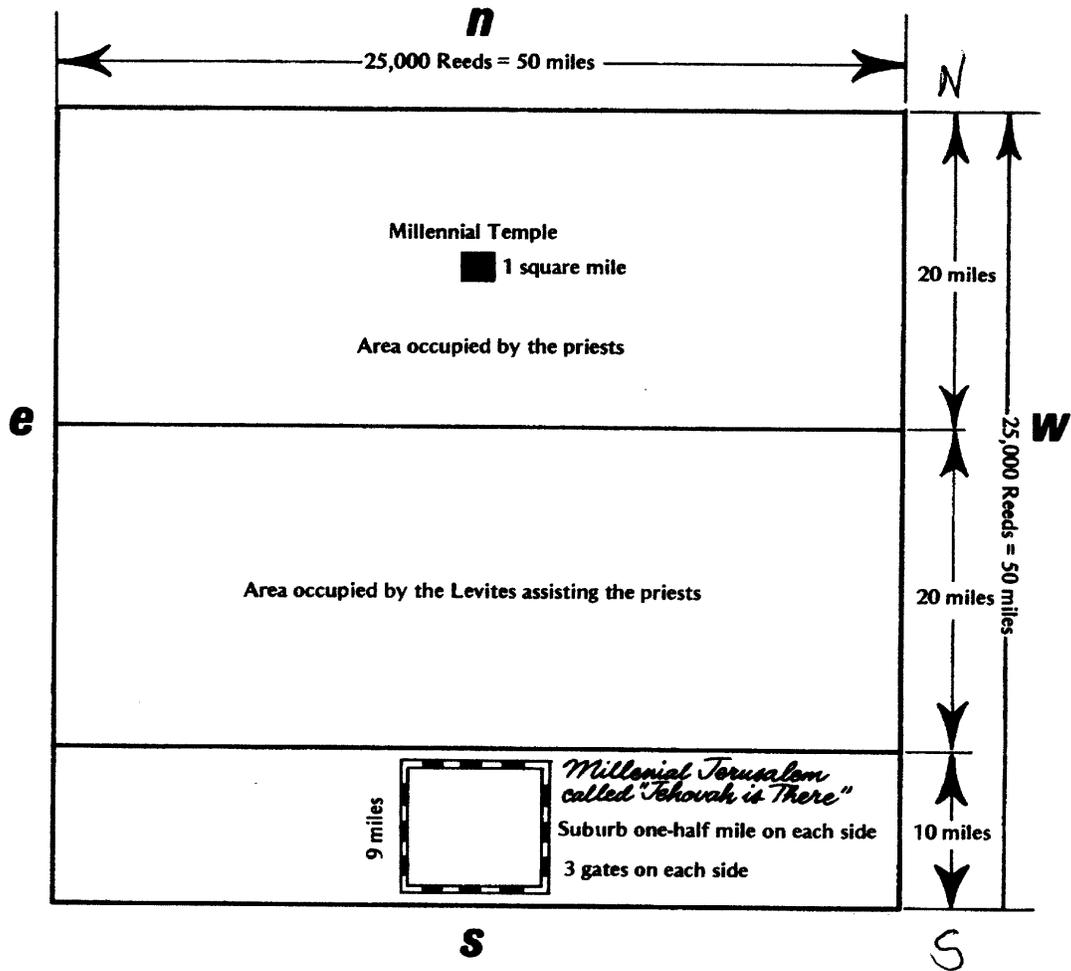
Those who come up in the first resurrection are blessed forever and ever, "over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6). Believers are going to be priests in the Millennial Kingdom and they will perform the functions of a priest for a thousand years. Believers will also judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3), "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" There will be work for the people of God which they will do joyfully. It will be delightful to them. They will assist the Lord in His administration of this righteous reign.

# The Millennial Jerusalem

THE MOUNTAIN OF JEHOVAH'S HOUSE  
EZEKIEL 48:8-35

500 Reeds = 1 mile

Top of the mountain covers 2,500 square miles



THE MILLENNIAL JERUSALEM—The chart, “the Millennial Jerusalem”, reveals the dimensions of the golden city and the temple.

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### The Millennial Temple

After the Lord's return and the lifting of the curse He will erect the Millennial Temple (Zech. 6:12, 13). This place for oblations, which will be a little south of a central position in the land, is known as the "Mountain of Jehovah's House." Isaiah, in most glowing and marvelous terms, describes this mountain in the following language: "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2, 3). The same mountain is described in Micah 3:9-4:5. In Ps. 24:3 special reference is made to this mountain. The question is asked, "Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah? And who shall stand in his holy place?"

Ezek. 48:8-20 provides us with the fullest description: The dimensions of this mountain are given in terms of reeds; five hundred of which—as is generally conceded constitute an English mile. Since the length is twenty-five thousand reeds and the breadth is the same, by simple division we understand that this mountain will be fifty miles in length from north to south and fifty miles in breadth from east to west.

This mountain is divided into three sections. The dividing lines run east and west. The section in the northern portion is fifty miles from east to west but twenty miles deep from north to south. In the center of this plot will be one square mile where the Temple of God will be located—the house of prayer for all nations. The priests will occupy the northern section. The middle part is of the same dimensions; fifty by twenty miles. This will be allotted to the Levites who will assist the priests in their daily ministrations. The southern section will be fifty miles in breadth from east to west and ten miles in depth from north to south. In the central part of this southern division will be located the city of Jerusalem with its suburbs (Ezekiel, chapters 40-48).

#### Satan's Activities After the Thousand Years' Reign of Christ

In Rev. 20:7-10 we have a prediction that Satan at the end of a little period of time which follows the Millennium will be released, will come forth and will deceive the nations that are in the four comers of the earth. He stirs up a youth army to come against Jerusalem in order to intimidate Christ, to war against Him, but not with actual weapons of war. There is a "cold" war going on now, a war between the East and the West, a psychological war. It is as real as a shooting war. Thus there will be a war of words, a war of psychology that will be backed up by demonstrations. There will go forth from the four corners of the earth a mighty host of unregenerated, unsaved people, who will try to intimidate Christ after His having reigned for a thousand years.

Those who are in this host are unsaved people. People will be born all during the Millennium. All who are born during that period will be allowed to live at least one hundred years. If they accept Christ before their one hundredth birthday they will continue to live on through the

Millennium. But if they refuse Christ and postpone their salvation until they reach their one hundredth birthday, the curse of God will fall upon them and they will be blotted from the land of the living, see Isa. 65:19-21. It would seem that this is a "youth" movement consisting of unregenerated people who go up from the four corners of the globe to intimidate our Lord. They are spoken of as "Gog" and "Magog," terms that are echoes of Gog and Magog who invade Palestine before the Tribulation and who are overthrown when they meet God Almighty. God speaks of this hostile group which marches against Jerusalem and their destruction in terms of the destruction of Gog and Magog before the Tribulation.

After Satan does his worst in stirring up this movement against Christ, he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone "where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever " (Rev. 20:10). The Antichrist and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire at the beginning of the thousand years. At the end of that time they are still there in conscious existence and in punishment just the same as at the beginning. They will continue there throughout all eternity. It is an awful thing to pass out of this life not having accepted the peace and the reconciliation which the Lord Jesus Christ purchased and offers to one and all freely.

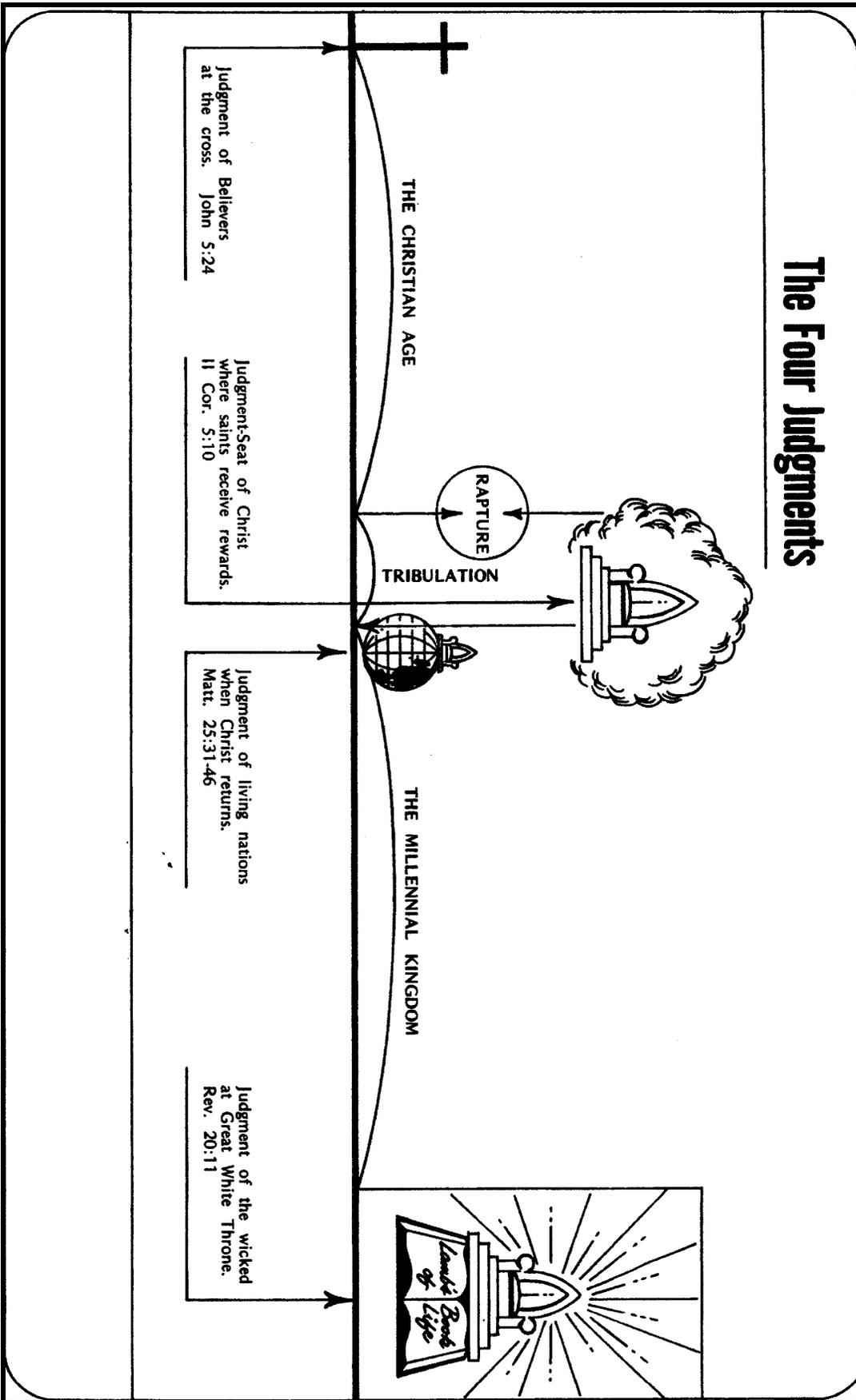
### The Judgment of the Great White Throne

In Rev. 20:11-15 we have a prophecy concerning the judgment of the Great White Throne. Let us differentiate between this judgment which follows the Millennium and the judgment of the nations which comes at the first part of the Millennium.

## The Great White Throne Judgment Not the Same as That of Matthew 25:31-45

When Christ comes back according to Matt. 25:31-45, He will gather those nations that survive the Tribulation and will separate them as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Those being put on the right hand are represented as sheep. They are allowed to enter the Millennial Age and to re-populate the earth. There is nothing said about a resurrection in this judgment nor about anyone's accepting Christ. The judgment described in Rev. 20:11-15 occurs *after* the Millennium. Those appearing here are all raised from the dead.

# The Four Judgments



THE FOUR JUDGMENTS—The culminating Judgment of the Great white Throne is the last Judgment recorded in Scripture. This chart discloses the time element of the four basic judgments in the bible.

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### Passing Away of the Material Universe

At the judgment of the Great White Throne the entire material universe passes out of existence: "the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them"—John saw them vanish. He looked in every direction to the farthest limits of space and said that the material universe could not be found. It simply disappears. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). This passing away of the heaven and the earth is the fulfillment of the prediction which our Lord made.

### The Dead Judged and Rewarded

At the judgment of the Great White Throne "books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*" (Rev. 20:12). Everybody whose name was not found in the book of life is judged and is caused to go off into everlasting punishment. Everyone's name was originally put in the book of life. "... it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this *cometh* judgment" (Heb. 9:27). When a man goes out of this life not having accepted Christ and not having his name written in the Lamb's book of life, his name is erased from the book of life. Everyone whose name has been erased from the book of life will be sent into the lake of fire.

## Death and Hades Cast Into the Lake of Fire

At that time "death and Hades," which represent the power of death and the place where the dead (the lost) are, are cast into the lake of fire.

It is an awful thing to be banished from the presence of God and from the glory of His might forever and ever. God does not will "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Christ made ample provision for the salvation of every soul.

May God move upon the heart of men and women everywhere and open their eyes to see the necessity of salvation and the importance of accepting the Lord Jesus Christ before it is eternally too late!

At this point it is most important that we summarize and establish these facts. We have seen that at the end of the Tribulation the Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth in His glory and power. Then He lifts the curse from the earth, binds Satan and incarcerates him in the pit of the abyss for a thousand years. During this time Christ will reign upon the earth. His saints who have suffered with Him will also reign with Him at that time.

At the conclusion of the Millennium the Devil will be loosed for a little season. He will stir up a youth movement against Christ and will lead this group to go against Jerusalem in an attempt to intimidate Him. But fire from Heaven will consume them.

Next, the judgment of the Great White Throne will be set. Christ will sit as Judge upon that Throne. All the wicked dead will be raised and be brought before this judgment bar. At that time the material heavens and earth which were created in the beginning will pass away. Then will be created the eternal order of which we read in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22.

## Chapter 21

### The Eternal Order (Rev. 21:1-22:5)

#### The Millennial and the Eternal Order Differentiated

It will be well to differentiate between the new heavens and the new earth spoken of in Isa. 65:17 and referred to by the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter, chapter 3, and the eternal order which is described in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22.

Isa. 65:17 says, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." This verse begins with the conjunction for, which ties it up with that which has preceded. When we study the entire chapter, we see that verses 1-7 deal with the Christian Dispensation, during which the Jews, on account of their unbelief, are set aside, whereas the Gentiles who are seeking God are found of Him. In verses 8 and 9 we see in God's promise to Israel that, although she would be set aside during the present dispensation, He would preserve her and not allow her to be blotted from the face of the globe. The reason for His protecting His people is that He intends to bring out of them the remnant which shall inherit His mountains—Palestine (vss. 9, 10). In verses 12-16 the prophet foretold the Great Tribulation. During this time of judgment God destroys all the wicked from Israel. In verses 13 and 14 Isaiah contrasted the condition of the ungodly in Israel with the faithful remnant of that people. The Lord takes care of and protects His own, supplying all their needs. Out of Israel He will bring forth this remnant that shall enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom Age (vss. 15, 16). Then the one who blesses himself shall do so in the God of truth. The one who swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth.

The reason for this new social ethical and spiritual society is this: "Because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes" (Isa. 65:16). Everything that will be suggestive of the present sinful era will have been removed from the earth. Our present civilization will have been eliminated and everything in connection with it will be covered and hidden, declares the Lord, from His eyes. Of course He is speaking in an anthropomorphic manner—as if He were a human being. The reason that every vestige of the present age will be removed from sight is expressed in verse 17: "For, behold, I [Jehovah] create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." At the end of the Tribulation the Lord will create new heavens and a new earth. The terrific and far-reaching judgments of the Tribulation will be so destructive that there could otherwise be no Millennial Age. In order that there might be such an era, the Lord will create new material in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. Under these conditions this earth together with its solar system will have every appearance of an entirely new order.

A study of Isaiah, chapter 66, which concludes with a similar prediction concerning the new heavens and the new earth, shows that this prophecy refers to the creation of the heavens and the earth at the beginning of the Millennial Age. This fact becomes evident to one who notices that verse 22 is introduced by the conjunction *for* and is explanatory of what has preceded. An examination of verses 10-21 shows that the prophet was speaking of the Millennial Age. This passage therefore is also a reference to the Kingdom Age. The facts of this context do not lead us to believe that it has a double reference. We shall do well therefore to take it at its primary face value.

In 2 Peter 3:13 is another promise of the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. To what does this passage refer? Was Peter speaking of the Millennial heavens and earth? It is abundantly evident that the new heavens and the new earth mentioned by him are none other than the new heavens and the new earth foretold by Isaiah, which, as we have seen, will be brought into existence at the beginning of the Millennial Age. Thus Peter interprets and, at the same time, locates the promise made by Isaiah.

In view of these and many other facts that might be mentioned, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the new heavens and the new earth mentioned by Isaiah and by Peter in his second Epistle are the Millennial heavens and the Millennial earth.

The new heavens and the new earth and the new Jerusalem which comes down and rests upon the eternal earth constitute the eternal order and have no connection with the Millennial order.

### The Eternal Heavens

In Rev. 21:1 John informs us that he "saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away" and that there is to be no sea on that new earth.

After John was given a vision of the new heavens and the new earth he then saw "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband."

When this eternal Jerusalem comes down and rests upon the eternal earth, then the Tabernacle of God will be with men. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and He will be their God. This will be an entirely new order and different from that which obtains at the present time. According to Ps. 115:16, "The heavens are the heavens of Jehovah, But the earth hath he given to the children of men."

The atmospheric heavens surround the earth. Out in space are the stellar heavens. Beyond them are the heavens of the heavens which is called the immediate presence of God. It is there that God dwells. But He gave the earth to the children of men. He does not dwell with them in the literal sense as is foretold that He will in the future.

But when the eternal order is created, God's Tabernacle will no longer be in the Heaven of the heavens. It will be in this eternal Jerusalem which will come down out of the heavens and rest on the eternal earth.

John emphasizes the fact that this eternal order will be made completely new. In other words, no material that has entered into the present physical order will be used in the construction of the eternal universe. All the materials that now constitute the present physical order pass out of existence at the end of the Millennium. Hence, the Lord creates all things anew.

According to verse 6, Christ declares: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning [of all things] and the end"—the One in whom all things find their consummation and to whom are all things. He is the One who has the fountain of the water of life. He will let anyone who will, come and drink thereof so that he may never thirst again.

In verse 7 a promise is made to those who overcome. They shall inherit all these things. God will be their God, and they will be His children.

But in verse 8, the place of awful doom for the ungodly is set forth. "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part *shall be* in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (compare 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

## The Eternal Jerusalem

In Rev. 21:9-22:5 we have a full and detailed statement of the eternal Jerusalem.

In verses 9 and 10, John informs us that he was invited by "one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues" to come with him, saying "I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb." Then this angel took John to a high mountain, from which he could view the situation of the eternal order and showed him "the holy city Jerusalem" the eternal Jerusalem, "coming down out of heaven from God" and resting upon the eternal earth. From this advantageous place John viewed these eternal matters and was thrilled to the very depths of his soul.

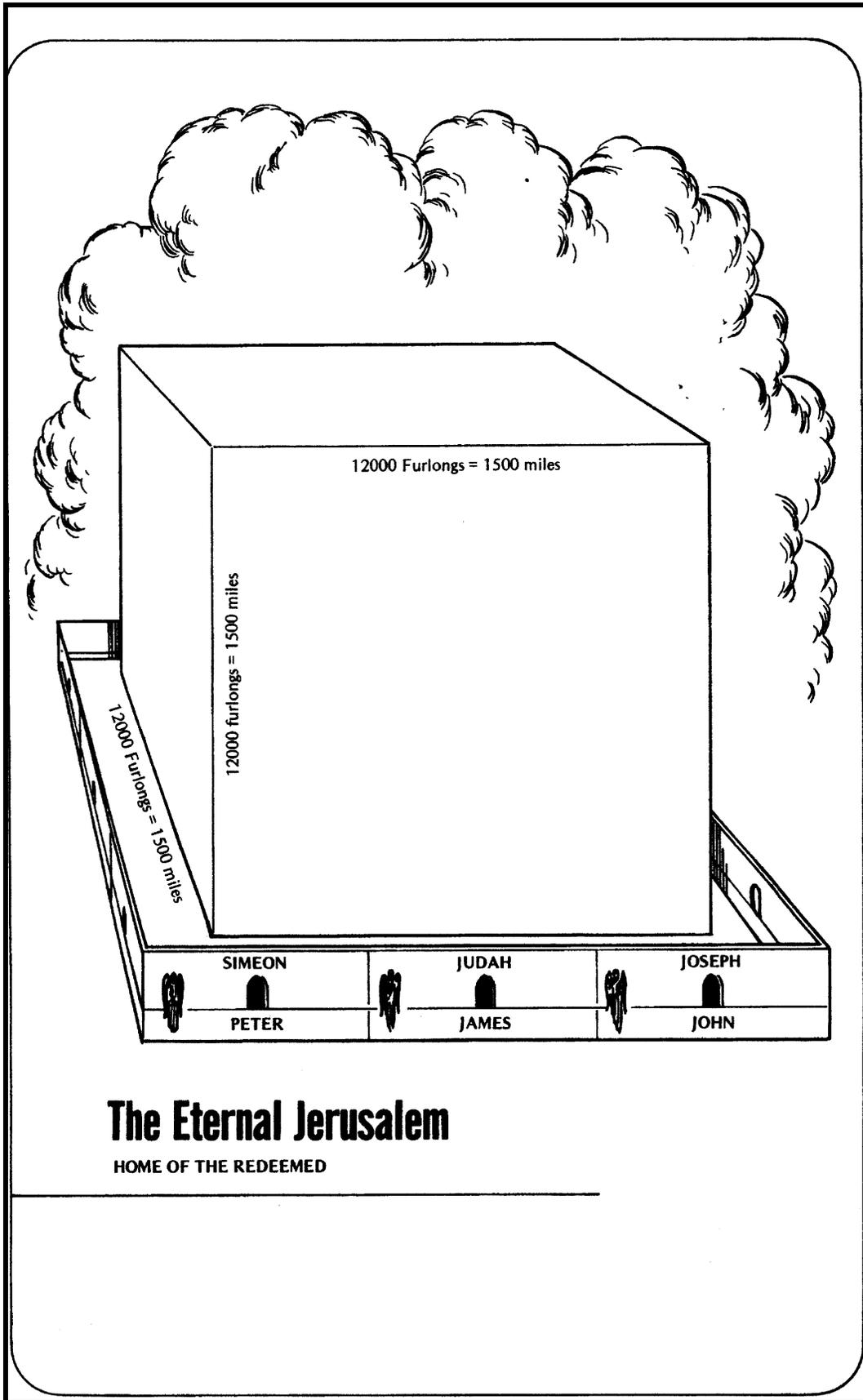
In verses 11-17 we are given a description of the eternal Jerusalem. It is a city "foursquare," that is, a perfect cube, the sides of which are 12,000 furlongs. When these Greek measurements are translated into English, we learn that this city will be 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide and 1,500 miles high. There will probably be various levels in that new Jerusalem which will be 1,500 miles high. There will be something like 2,000,000,000 ordinary city blocks on one of these levels. Everybody could be living in a house on a lot 100 feet wide and 200 feet deep, on a street 100 feet wide.

We should make a contrast between this eternal city of Jerusalem of which we read in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, and the Millennial Jerusalem. When we study Ezekiel's prophecy, chapters 40-48, we have a full and detailed description of the Jerusalem of the Millennial Age and of its Temple. The city of Jerusalem will be upon what the prophet called the oblation, the high mountain that will be created in Palestine at the beginning of the Millennium. It will stand throughout the Kingdom Age. The city of Jerusalem with its suburbs will be a city ten miles broad by ten miles long. In other words, the

Millennial Jerusalem will cover one hundred square miles. But this is a very small city in comparison with the eternal Jerusalem, the ground plan of which will cover 2,250,000 square miles. These facts show conclusively that the Millennial Jerusalem is one thing and the eternal Jerusalem is an entirely different matter.

Since God has a sense of proportion and does all things well, we may assume that the eternal earth upon which the eternal Jerusalem will rest forever will be enormous in comparison with this present earth.

Surrounding this eternal city of Jerusalem will be a wall which will have twelve foundations and twelve gates. They will rest upon these twelve foundations. Over each gate will be engraved the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. On the foundation underneath each gate will be the name of one of the Apostles of the Lamb. Only through these gates will anyone be able to enter into this eternal city.



THE ETERNAL JERUSALEM—The chart, “the Eternal Jerusalem,” reveals the scope of the city foursquare.

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In verses 18-21 we read of the various gems out of which the foundations and the gates of the city will be made. The glory that will radiate from this place is far beyond the imagination of any mortal.

According to verses 22 and 23, God and Christ will be the Temple and the light of the city. There will be no need of sun, moon or stars "for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof *is* the Lamb."

Verse 24 is a very important and strikingly significant passage: "And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it." The Common Version adds a modifying clause which reads: "And the nations of them that are saved." This clause was added to the original text by a very late Latin manuscript. It is not in any of the old, reliable Greek manuscripts.

Who are referred to in this passage? All of the saved from the present material universe will be in the city of Jerusalem. These people and their kings will live out of the city and on the eternal earth. These will come and visit this eternal city. This conclusion we cannot avoid if we accept the statements as they are given. I am inclined to believe that this will be a new race of people who will be created and live upon that eternal earth. Sin will never touch them. They will be in perfect harmony with the will of God throughout all eternity. It is altogether possible that the saints who suffer and labor for the Lord and who reign with Christ in the Millennium will likewise reign over this new race of people, see Ps. 102:18.

In Rev. 22:1, 2, we have a most beautiful picture of the river of water of life, "bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." This river will flow in the midst of *the* street. This is probably the street mentioned in Rev. 21:21.

On either side of this stream is the tree of life which bears "twelve *manner* of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." There will be no sickness, no death in the eternal order. A better rendering appears to be "and the leaves of the tree were for the HEALTH of the nations." This tree of life will have the same purpose that it had in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24).

In Rev. 22:5 we read of this land of eternal day: "And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

It has never entered the mind of mortal man what God has in store for those who know Him and who love Him. We shall be occupied throughout all eternity in reigning with Christ as we are told in the last quotation. We who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and who are trusting Him and the merits of His shed blood shall enjoy these great and marvelous blessings for ever and ever.

It pays to be on God's side, to know Christ and to labor for Him while we have time and opportunity. May the Spirit of God stir our hearts to loyalty and faithfulness in the discharge of every duty that comes upon us.

## Chapter 22

### The Closing Remarks of the Book of Revelation (Rev. 22:6-21)

"THESE WORDS ARE FAITHFUL AND TRUE"

At the conclusion of the last vision the interpreting angel said to John that the words which he had spoken and showed him were faithful and true. This statement is correct regarding everything that God has said. The Psalmist David declared: "The words of Jehovah are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, Purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6).

The statement regarding God's faithfulness and truthfulness is followed by a prophecy that the Lord will come quickly. Following this prediction is the exhortation: "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book."

#### Worship God Alone

John declared that he is the one who saw and heard the things that are written in the book of Revelation. When the Apostle heard, he fell down before the angel that showed him the revelation. When he did this, the angel said that he should refrain from worshiping him because "I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book." The angel concluded his words with the exhortation that men should "worship God" and worship God alone!

#### Prophecy is Not Sealed Today

In verse 10 we have this language: "And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand."

When Daniel was given the revelations recorded in his book, he was urged: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4). The expression "shut up the words, and seal the book" indicates that the revelation given to Daniel was a closed book for the people of that day and time. It becomes an open book in the time of the end as the verse declares. That we are in the end of the age there can be no doubt. God has, figuratively speaking, removed the veil, and anyone who wishes to know the message of the book of Daniel can do so provided he will seek diligently for the truth and will ask God to open his eyes.

The Lord said that John *was not to seal up* the book of Revelation. In other words he was to put it in such a form that men can understand it.

Prophecy can be understood! People must have the proper idea and attitude towards it. If a person thinks that prophecy cannot be understood; that it is enigmatical, he, of course, cannot comprehend it. The expression that prophecy cannot be understood is absolutely false. One should study the prophecies that are quoted in the New Testament from the Old and then examine carefully the context in the Old Testament. We should take everything at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the context point to the conclusion that the words are not used literally but are employed figuratively or symbolically—then we can understand the message. The same thing is true with reference to prophecy in the New Testament. A person can understand history as it is recorded in the Old Testament as well as in the New. If a person can understand how to study the historical portions of the Old Testament and if he realizes that prophecy is but history prewritten and approaches the study of

prophecy from that point of view, he can come to a correct understanding of the predictions in both the Old and New Testaments.

### Christ and His Message

In verses 11-15 we have a message that centers around Christ who is set forth in verse 13 in the following words: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." The words Alpha and Omega are the names of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. By this language Jesus is saying that He is the first and the last. There was none before Him and He will continue on forever and ever. He is the beginning of all creation in that He created all things and by Him all things hold together (Col. 1:9-17).

Statements with reference to the Trinity must be understood in the light of the fundamental passage of the Old Testament, namely, Deut. 6:4 which, when properly rendered, reads: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity." There is but one Divine Substance or Essence but three Persons subsisting in that one Divine Essence. These great truths are fundamental and underlie all the teaching of the Word of God both in the Old and New Testaments. Christ is God and is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. Since He took the initiative, laid aside the glory that He had with the Father before the world began and came here as the God-man to redeem man, He is the central figure around whom all things revolve. "... the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).

Christ "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" urges people to continue in the way that they have chosen and are determined to go. Thus He said: "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: ... and he that is holy, let him be made holy still" (Rev. 22:11). The Almighty has never forced anyone's will. He uses moral suasion to influence people to choose

and to do the correct thing, but He does not pass over the threshold of anyone's personality in an effort to force or coerce him to do the right. If a person deliberately chooses unrighteousness, or filthiness, or anything of that nature, the Lord will not force him away from the choices which he has made. He will allow him to go on in the same bent of his mind. On the other hand if there is any righteous one—someone who loves truth, righteousness and justice—he is urged to pursue that kind of life in accordance with the true fundamental principles of righteousness and justice.

According to verse 12 Jesus will come quickly. When He comes the second time, He will bring His reward with Him and render to everyone according to his work. When Christ came nineteen hundred years ago, He appeared upon earth as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. He worked out God's plan of redemption of mankind and made it possible that everyone who desires light might have the opportunity and the privilege of becoming sons of God. When He returns, He will come with His reward and will render to every man according to his deeds. We are urged to stop laying up our treasures upon earth but we are to continually lay up our treasures in Heaven.

The Lord gave a message concerning those who are saved. Hear Him: "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right *to come* to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). Those people come voluntarily in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. They wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Regardless of how sinful a person may be, if he will only come to Christ, the Lord will wash him and make him whiter than snow.

Those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb will have access to the tree of life. They will be permitted to enter the holy, eternal city, where they will be with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit and loved ones throughout all eternity. Hence the saved are indeed in a blessed and happy condition!

In contrast with those who enter the eternal Jerusalem are those who are denied that privilege. They are spoken of as being "without" the city. This word is not to be understood as implying that immediately outside the eternal Jerusalem will be the wicked, that is "the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone that loveth and maketh a lie." In contrast with the saved who will be "within" the city, the evil, reprobate ones will be "without." They will be in the place that is called "the lake of fire" which burns with fire and brimstone forever and ever. Just where perdition will be no one can tell. But it is in a certain locality in the universe. They will never be able to depart from that place.

### The Angel Sent by Christ to Testify

In verse 16 we read: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star."

The Lord sent His special angel to testify the things that are written in the book of Revelation to the churches. Why to the churches? There is but one answer: That they might know what is contained in the revelation appearing in the book and that they might conform their lives thereto. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim 3:16, 17).

Christ speaks of Himself again as the "root and the offspring of David." By this expression He meant that He is a descendant of David, humanly speaking. Christ is great David's "Greater Son"—the God-man.

However, He calls Himself "the bright, the morning star." The morning star appears just before daybreak. As it rises before the break of day so will Christ appear as "the bright, the morning star." This statement refers to Christ's appearing before the dawn of the great and bright Millennial Day. In other words, Christ will appear as "the bright, the morning star" *at the time of the Rapture, which will occur immediately before the Tribulation* breaks upon the world. The Lord Jesus Christ will Himself "descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." The saints who are left upon the earth will be snatched away, being caught up to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

### Christ's Invitation to all Thirsty, Weary Souls

In Rev. 22:17 we have one of the three great invitations that appear in the Bible. The first one is found in Ps. 2:10-12. This is extended to the atheistic and unbelieving leaders of the end time. They are admonished not to do what they contemplate but to turn to God and worship Him and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

The second great invitation is that which was extended by the Lord Jesus Christ. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for

I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

The last of the three great invitations is Rev. 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely." The "Spirit" is the Holy Spirit. The "bride" is the Church. Both of them extend the invitation to the sinner to come and accept Christ. The one who hears and accepts the invitation should sound forth the message to others that they, too, may come to Christ and be saved. The one who is thirsty let him come also. Whosoever will may come and partake of the "water of life" freely and be saved. Thus the Bible ends with this marvelous invitation to all who will, to come.

#### Warning Against Adding to or Taking from the Scripture

In one of his final orations Moses, immediately before his death, warned the people not to add to anything that God had said nor to take from it: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2).

In Rev. 22:18, 19, the Lord concludes the book of Revelation and at the same time the Bible, with the same warning that men must not take from the Scriptures nor add to them or mutilate or change them in any way. The Scriptures are the infallibly inspired Word of God. They say what they mean, and they mean exactly what they say. People should be careful how they change, warp, distort, or modify what God has said! If one takes from the Book, "God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city." If he adds to it, God will "add unto him the plagues which are written in this book"—

the book of Revelation. The only safe course to pursue is to take the Word of God as it is written and to follow the letter and the spirit of the instructions.

The Lord in verse 20 promises that He is coming: "Yea: I come quickly." The Apostle John then chimes in and says: "Amen: come, Lord Jesus." Every true heart who recognizes the truthfulness of the Christian faith and the blessedness of the eternal home prays with John, O Lord, come! Come, Lord Jesus!

The Bible ends with the Apostolic prayer: "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen" (Rev. 22:21).