

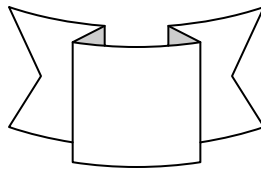
**The Message
Of the
REVELATION
LETTER**



Arranged & Prepared By

**Paul E. Cantrell
2001**

The Message of the
REVELATION
LETTER



*The Conflict between
Good & Evil*

12 lessons

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The Revelation Letter"

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Lesson One

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ"

("Revelation 1:1-20)

"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near." (Revelation 1:3)

The Revelation that Jesus gave to His servant, John, was given through an angel. It was while John was imprisoned on the isle of Patmos. Bible scholars may differ on the time that these things were written, but most believe it to be one of the last, if not the last, book of the New Testament. A possible date would be 95-96 A.D. Conflicting approaches and understandings have come from the reading and study of this book. This is not what God intended! This book is the one book of the New Testament that pronounces a blessing on the one who reads it, hears, and keeps the things in it. So, we should strive to understand it.

For the person who knows little about the Bible as a whole, the book of Revelation is a curiosity, hard to understand, and a mystery. Part of the reasons for this would be:

1. That it is written somewhat differently from our western way of thinking and writing. But it is certainly possible to adjust our understanding to these things.
2. That it uses terminology that comes from the Old Testament—especially the Prophetic books. Some of the same symbols and terms are used in such books as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. An understanding of these books would be of value to help understand Revelation.
3. The use of time and numbers may have more symbolic concepts that they represent and not necessarily literal time and actual numbers stated.

Revelation is a book that is filled with great imagery and symbolism. It is a book that takes the ordinary and blows it up so that we can see the real issues that are involved in life. But because of this symbolism, the book is left open to various interpretations by the reader. **Since we do not have an inspired interpretation of these symbols, it is important that we refrain from dogmatism about these matters.** However, that doesn't mean that we cannot get the "**Big Picture**" that God wants us to get, whether or not we understand all about the symbolism in the book. The value of the symbols is to help us to identify certain characteristics of that which is being revealed. Some of these are a real challenge to our imagination.

This book is a revelation, not a closed book! It is a revealing of that which was not formerly known or knowable by man. It is a book about the tribulations and triumphs of God's people. It is a book of the future of the kingdom of God among men. It was formerly written down in a book and sealed, but the seals have been broken and the contents revealed through the Apostle John. All should want God's blessings that are pronounced upon the one who reads, hears, and keeps the things written in this book.

DESTINATION OF BOOK

John is told to send this revelation to the seven congregations in the Province of Asia. Why was this book sent to only seven when we know there were more in that Province alone? The answer has to be what the number seven is used to symbolize. Most Bible Scholars agree that this number is unusual and carries the idea of totality, completeness, universality, or fullness. Thus, by sending His Revelation to these seven accomplished His purposes. An interesting sideline study is to see how many things are identified with “seven” in the Word of God. (Please see appendage at end of this chapter)

By this time, individuals and churches were undergoing various forms of persecution from both Jews and Gentiles. They were losing their means of livelihood, neighbors would begin to avoid them so they would not be identified with them, and their property often confiscated when they were imprisoned. They were called upon to deny the name of Christ or be put to death. Thus, God wanted to encourage, comfort, and strengthen His people for the great battle that lay before them and others in the future. He wanted them to know that He sees all and is in control at all times—so do not fear—hold firm! He wanted them to uphold His name and to be faithful even in the face of death itself. He wants us to know that there are battles ahead---some will be great battles in which there are a lot of casualties, but He wants us to see the final outcome of these battles---to get a good look at what He has in store for His people who are faithful.

THE CHALLENGE

**I have heard how Christians long ago
Were brought before a tyrant's throne
And they were told that he would spare their lives
If they would renounce the name of Christ.
But one by one they chose to die
The Son of God they would not deny
Like a great angelic choir sings
I can almost hear their voices ring.**

**I pledge allegiance to the Lamb
With all my strength, with all I am
I will seek to honor His commands
I pledge allegiance to the Lamb.**

**Now the years have come and the years have gone
And the Cause of Jesus still goes on.
Now our time has come to count the cost
To reject the world, to embrace the Cross.
And one by one let us live our lives
For the One who died to give us life.
Till the Trumpet sounds on the final day,
Let us proudly stand and boldly say:
I pledge allegiance to the Lamb
*With all my strength—with all I am
I will seek to honor His commands
I pledge allegiance to the Lamb.***

History reveals that thousands of Christians were persecuted, tormented, and put to death during the first three centuries of the church's existence. They took the pledge and were faithful to it. Are we willing to make such a pledge of allegiance?
Are we willing to give up our life for Him?

"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

--Revelation 2:10

FOUR GREAT TRUTHS

1--IDENTIFYING

THE GREAT ENEMY OF GOD AND MAN

It is not only important that men see who their real enemy is, but something about that enemy and how he works. Following are some terms that will be used by God to describe him:

Revelation 12:3—*"a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads."*

Revelation 12:9—*"the great dragon, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan."*

Revelation 12:10—*"the accuser of our brethren."*

Satan's fall came because of his rebellion against God. He not only rebelled himself, but he tried to get the angelic host to do the same. The battle is pictured as having raged between Michael and his angels and the Dragon and his angels until he was overcome and cast out of heaven. (Revelation 12:7-8). He then is pictured as turning upon man, God's creation, to get him to rebel as well. It is not just to get them to rebel, but to worship the Dragon also (Revelation 13:10).

Through his efforts he has helped to bring about the downfall of mankind. His efforts with mother Eve in the Garden of Eden were successful and caused God to drive man out of the beautiful and desirable Garden (Genesis 3:1-6, 22-24). He is called the "great deceiver" because he has *"deceived the whole world."* (Revelation 12:9).

His next great project was to *"persecute the woman who gave birth to the male child."* (Revelation 12:13). The woman was able to escape his clutches and fly into the wilderness for a period of time. The Dragon and all his helpers have as their great goal—the destruction of the church of the living God! All his efforts are pictured as being poured out to accomplish this great feat.

2--REDEMPTION PROVIDED FOR MANKIND BY GOD

The second great truth that Revelation deals with is the fact that God has provided a way to escape the clutches of the old Dragon. This is the One Great Theme throughout Revelation! The following are some of the terms that God uses to describe the One who brought this great redemption for all:

Revelation 1:8—“*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*”

Revelation 1:18—“**I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.**”

Revelation 5:5—“**Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed...**”

Revelation 13:8—“**The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**”

Satan’s power over mankind is through SIN and DEATH. For SIN to be atoned for and the penalty of DEATH removed required a sacrificial death in our place, so we could be set free. Jesus shed His blood and died that death to give us life. This is described in the following terms:

Revelation 12:11—“**And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.**”

Revelation 1:5—“**To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.**”

Revelation 5:12—“**Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing.**”

Revelation 5:13—“**Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever.**”

Thus, Jesus is pictured as worthy of the worship, not only of redeemed mankind, but of all of heaven as well! The worship scene in chapter five is repeated again and again in this great book. God’s people today should thrill to join in with such worship of the Son of God.

3--THE ULTIMATE DEFEAT OF SATAN AND HIS FOLLOWERS

The Great Sacrifice of Christ has given assurance of this third great point—the ultimate defeat of wickedness! This theme is also repeated over and over in very vivid symbols and figures. God’s persecuted people are pictured as calling on Him to carry out His promise of defeat.

Revelation 6:9-10—“**When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they**

cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’”

The Dragon’s ultimate defeat is developed throughout the book in various symbols:

Revelation 12:9—“So the great dragon was cast out....he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

Revelation 20:2—“He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.”

Revelation 20:10—“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

But God also spells out what will happen to those who reject His Son and follow the ways of the Dragon in vivid terms as well:

Revelation 20:15—“And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of Fire.”

4--THE ULTIMATE REDEMPTION OF THE FAITHFUL

Various symbolic pictures are given to reassure the people of God of their glorious future. This theme is repeated over and over as well, but the book concludes with a great emphasis upon what we have to look forward to.

Revelation 7:4—“*And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.*”

Revelation 20:4—“*And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*”

Revelation 21:1—“*Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*”

Revelation 22:3—“*And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.*”

The book ends with a vivid description of heaven and all its glories for redeemed men. Truly blessed will be those who “do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.” (Revelation 22:14).

What a glorious future the child of God has to look forward to someday. It will be a great delight just to read about and to anticipate what is in store for us.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Each of these great themes will be elaborated upon as we study through the book. The reader is called upon to picture it in his mind each scene that is depicted in the book; and, we will try to also picture some of these things on paper for you. We are called upon to hear the trumpets that are meant to alarm the listener. We will be called upon to see the horribleness of the enemies of righteousness. We need to smell the awful stench of the smoke arising from the pit of wickedness. We are called upon to get a taste of what the wine of God's fury will be like in the judgment of unrighteousness. Etc.

These great scenes are meant to: (1) arouse our sense of horror of God's punishment upon the unrighteous; but also (2) to arouse our sense of great comfort and assurance in the God we worship and His promises.

The book ends with two things that men must come to recognize:

- 1. Men are warned not to add to or take from God's revelation to man** (Revelation 22:18-19).
- 2. Men are reminded that we all have a choice of the destiny we want to experience** (Revelation 22:17).

What about your choice, dear reader?

Have we given our allegiance to Christ, the Son of God and are we upholding that commitment day by day faithfully to the end?

“Whoever desires, Let him take the water of life Freely.”(Revelation 22:17)

USUAGES OF THE NUMBER “7”

1. Creation was completed in seven days (Genesis 1:1-31; 2:1-2).
2. Noah and his family were in the ark seven days before the rain began to fall (Genesis 7:1-5).
3. Children received the mark of the Abrahamic covenant after they were seven days old (Genesis 17:1-4)
4. Pharaoh saw seven fat and seven lean cattle, and seven good ears and seven blasted ears of grain (Genesis 41:1-7).
5. Joseph told Pharaoh of seven years of plenty to be followed by seven years of famine (Genesis 41:25-57).
6. The Golden Lampstand in the Temple had seven branches to give light in the house of God (Exodus 25:31-39).
7. The feast of unleavened bread lasted seven days (Leviticus 12:15).
8. The feast of tabernacles also lasted seven days (Leviticus 23:33-44).
9. God commanded the Israelites to let their land rest every seventh year (Leviticus 25:1-7).
10. The atonement for Israel was to occur in the 7th month (Leviticus 16:29-34).
11. Seven priests bearing seven rams' horns encompassed Jericho seven days at the command of God (Joshua 6:1-20).
12. All Israel were commanded to keep the seventh day sacred on penalty of death (Exodus 20:8-11; 35:1-3).
13. Naaman, the Syrian Captain, was commanded to dip seven times in the river Jordan to have his leprosy cleansed (2 Kings 5:1-14).
14. Seven times or seven years were to pass over Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon (Daniel 4:1-34).
15. Jesus said that men are to be willing to forgive—not just seven times—but seventy times seven (Matt. 18:22).
16. The book of Revelation tells us about:
 - a) Seven churches (1:4)
 - b) Seven Spirits (1:4)
 - c) Seven golden lampstands (1:12)
 - d) Seven stars (1:16)
 - e) Seven seals (5:1)
 - f) Seven angels (8:2)
 - g) Seven Trumpets (8:2)
 - h) Seven Thunders (10:3)
 - i) Seven last plagues (15:1)
 - j) Seven golden bowls of wrath (15:7)

The above is not all the usages of the number seven, but they do help to illustrate the special concepts connected with this number.

Lesson Two

“Jesus’ Evaluation and Challenge to His Church”

(Revelation 1-3)

The New Testament books are a Revelation of Jesus: (1) In His pre-existent state; (2) In His fleshly state; and now (3) In this book in particular, in His glorified and exalted state. John was permitted to see Jesus in this remarkable condition as he states in 1:12-16:

1. He saw Jesus standing in the midst of 7 golden lampstands.
2. Jesus was clothed with a garment down to his feet.
3. He was girded about the chest with a golden band.
4. His head and hair were white like wool—as white as snow.
5. His eyes were like a flame of fire.
6. His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace.
7. His voice was as the sound of many waters.
8. He had 7 stars in his right hand.
9. Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.
10. His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

John said that when he saw Him, he fell at His feet as if dead. The drawing to the left probably doesn’t even begin to do justice to what John saw and the effect upon him as he witness such a sight. It must have been an overwhelming sight to behold for it to have brought such a reaction by John. The Lord reassured Him, told him to get up, and to write down in a book the things that would be shown him.

TERMS TO IDENTIFY JESUS

Many terms are used in the New Testament to identify Jesus. Quite a few of them are found in these first three chapters of Revelation. Following is a list of terms used:

1. He is a faithful and true witness (1:5; 3:14).
2. He is all-powerful—the Almighty (1:8, 11).
3. He rules over the kings of the earth (1:5).
4. He is the Alpha and Omega—the First and the Last (1:8, 11, 17; 2:8).
5. Even though He is the Son of Man, He is also the Son of God (1:13; 2:18).
6. He is Deity—the One who is, who was, and who is to come (1:8).
7. He became flesh and died as a man—but He is the first-born from the dead. He is alive again forever more, and possesses the keys of Hades and death (1:5, 18; 2:8).
8. It is this Son of Man—Son of God who walks in the midst of the 7 lampstands (churches) (1:20; 2:1).
9. It is this One who is Holy, True, and the Amen (3:7, 14).
10. It is this One who is the Beginning of the Creation of God (3:14).
11. It is this One who has the key of David (3:7).

HIS ABILITY TO EVALUATE

Certainly such a One as described above is more than capable of giving a true and needed evaluation to His churches. But a real challenge is—are we willing to listen and do something about His evaluation of us?

Seven churches were chosen by the Lord, out of all that existed, in order to give various examples of conditions with which the churches could be faced in the future. Some even suggest that these seven churches are representative of the seven successive stages of the church through the centuries until the end of time. One thing that is obvious—these seven churches serve as a means of continual measurement for each congregation of God’s people both then and now! He who is the head of His church and the One who walks in the midst of the churches is now ready to give a true assessment of their condition.

SEVEN-FOLD EVALUATION

CHURCH AT EPHESUS (2:1-7) The city was a well known one because of the famous Temple of Diana—one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Paul had brought the gospel message to this city and from there spread throughout the area (Acts 19:1-41). Several years later, He wrote them a letter that contained no real rebuke. It is also believed that the Apostle John moved to Ephesus with Mary after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. And now, some forty years after their beginning, the Lord writes to let them know how He sees them.

He Commends them for:

- Their labor and endurance in right doing—and not growing weary—their perseverance for Jesus’ name sake.
- Their unwillingness to put up with those who continue in sin—they did not endorse their actions or lack of such.
- Their diligence in putting teachers to the test of God’s Word.
- Their hatred for the wicked deeds of the Nicolaitans, which the Lord Himself hates.

His Rebuke of them:

- They had left their first love. It was growing cold. Their zeal and enthusiasm for their mission had diminished since their conversion. Something had dampened their ardor and their enthusiasm was dying.
- Their need was to repent and do the first works. Regenerate your original efforts for Christ and His church.
- The dangers of this condition—it leads to indifference, laxness and eventually spiritual death.

CHURCH OF SYMRNA (2:8-11). A city founded by Alexander the Great. It was known for its Olympian games and its large public library. Polycarp served with this church some years after this letter was sent.

He Commends them for:

- Enduring tribulation, poverty and blasphemy from those who claim to be Jews, but are not. They are in reality the synagogue of Satan.

- He reminds them that they are rich in the things that really matter.

His Admonition to them:

- Don't fear the things you will soon suffer.
- Some of you will be thrown into prison by the Devil—so you can be tested.
- Be faithful, even unto death itself.

CHURCH OF PERGAMOS (2:12-17). This city was the capital of the Roman Province of Asia. It was a center of Emperor worship. It had many gods and goddesses: Zeus, Apollo, Dionysos, Aphrodite, and Aesculapius. Sensuality commonly went along with idol worship. It was a city of temptation!

He Commended them for:

- Being in the dwelling places of Satan but holding fast to My Name and did not deny My faith when Antipas was martyred.

His Rebuke of them:

- You allow the ungodly among you to go undisciplined.
- You allow the doctrine of Balaam to be taught and practiced among you.
- You also allow some that hold to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans to be among you without discipline.
- They are advocating sacrificing to idols and engaging in fornication.

His admonition to them:

- Repent—do what you are supposed to do with such people.

CHURCH OF THYATIRA (2:19-29). The city was known for its dyes. Lydia was a seller of purple and from Thyatira (Acts 16:14). The church received the longest of the seven letters.

He Commends them for:

- Their love, service, faith, and patience.
- Their works which had grown.

His Rebuke of them:

- You allow the woman Jezebel to teach and seduce my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols.
- Such will be given time to repent.
- If will not repent, will be cast into a sickbed and into great tribulation. Her children will be killed. I will give to each according to their works.
- Their punishment will be an object lesson to others.

His Admonition to them:

- I will require no other burden to faithful.
- Hold fast what you have till I come.

CHURCH OF SARDIS (3:1-6). A well fortified city in the mountains. They fell to Cyrus the Great because of over-confidence. It was the capital city of the Ancient Lydia that Croesus was king over.

He Commends them for:

- You have a name that you are alive.
- You have a few names that have not defiled their garments.
- They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

His Rebuke of them:

- You have deceived others and yourself about your true condition.
- You are in reality on your deathbed.
- You are ready to die.
- I have not found your works perfect before God.

His Admonition to them:

- Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain. If you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief.
- Remember how you have received and heard.
- Hold fast and repent.

CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA (3:7-13). The city was founded by Philadelphus for the purpose of spreading the Greek language. It was possibly the more encouraging of the churches.

He Commends them for:

- You have little strength, but have kept My word, and have not denied My name.
- I will cause those who claim to be Jews to come and worship before your feet and know that I have loved you.
- You have kept My command to persevere. For that I will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth.
- I have set before you an open door that no one can shut.

His Admonition to them:

- Behold, I come quickly...hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown.

CHURCH OF LAODICEA (3:14-22). The city was rich. They were known for their eye salve and their black wool. The city had been rebuilt after an earthquake in AD 62. The church seems to have been affected by the materialism of the city.

His Rebuke of them:

- No Commendations.
- They were lukewarm—neither cold or hot.
- Instead of being rich, the Lord said they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

His Admonition to them:

- He counsels them to turn to Him for the true riches, proper garments, and the ability to see clearly.
- He reminded them that He chastens those whom He loves.

- Be zealous and repent.
- He is knocking at the door for them to open to Him.

At the end of each of these letters was the repeated admonition to listen closely to what the Spirit of God was saying to them. To those who will hear and respond faithful and zealously to His admonitions, He offers a wide variety of blessings that are very meaningful and encouraging when their meaning is understood. The last section of this chapter will give a listing of those promised blessings to those who overcome.

REWARD TO THE OVERCOMERS!

- 1. *Be given access to the tree of life in the Paradise of God (2:7).***
2. Will not be hurt of the second death (Lake of Fire) (2:11).
3. Be given a crown of life (2:10).
4. Be given hidden manna to eat (Never again have to worry about food to eat) (2:17).
5. Be given a white stone and a new name on it (Showing to whom they belong) (2:17).
6. Be given power over the nations (Great influence for good) (2:26-27).
7. Be given the Morning Star (The abiding glory of Jesus) (2:28).
8. Walk with the Lord in White—because we are worthy (3:4).
9. Be clothed in white garments (Righteousness) (3:5).
10. Name will not be blotted out of the book of life (3:5).
11. He will confess our name before the Father and His angels (3:5).
12. He will keep us in His hands in the hour of trial (3:10).
13. He will make us a pillar in the temple of God—to go out no more (3:12).
14. He will write on us the name of God and the city of God (New Jerusalem)—indicating who the true children of God are) (3:12).
15. He will write on us His new name (3:12).
16. We will sit with Christ on His throne (3:21).

What great things the children of God have to look forward to some day!

CONCLUSION

How well would we hold up as individuals or as a congregation of God's people under such an evaluation? Is our Lamp stand still shining brightly in our community? Would we have more pluses than minuses in our evaluation? Do we really care what the Lord thinks of us? What does the future hold for the congregation that I am a member of—and what part will I play in its existence and effectiveness? May we be impressed with the Lord's great insight to our lives and activities, but also be impressed with His concern for His people—among whom He is constantly walking in their midst!

Lesson Three

“The Deserved Worship of Deity”

(Revelation 4-5)

“But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him” (Hab. 2:20)

The Prophet Habakkuk is calling upon the whole world to be in silence in the presence of Deity—to be in awe of His Majesty, His Holiness, His Greatness, His Justness, and His Righteousness. He calls upon all to give reverence and respect for the One who is so far superior to men and angels. When the apostle John was allowed to come into the presence of Deity, he said that he ***“fell at His feet as dead.”*** (Revelation 1:17).

“The Lord is in His holy temple: Let all the earth keep silence before Him; Keep silence, keep silence, keep silence before Him.”

The Prophet Malachi rebuked the people for their lack of reverence and respect to God in their worship assemblies.

***“A son honors his father, and a servant his master.
“If then I am the Father, where is My honor?
“And if I am a Master, where is My reverence?
“Says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise My name.***

***“Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’
“You offer defiled food on My altar.
“But you say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’
“By saying, ‘The table of the Lord is contemptible.’***

***“And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil?
“Offer it then to your governor!
“Would he accept you favorably? Says the Lord of hosts>”*** (Mal. 1:6-8)

When men & angels come into the presence of Deity and see Him in truth and reality, it is fitting that we should do as John did—to fall at His feet as dead. But neither men nor angels will be able to keep silence for long—because the reverent heart must break forth and express in word and action their adoration, praise, and giving of glory to Him who sits on the throne.

Chapter four of Revelation opens with John being called up into heaven in order to see things that must take place after this. The apostle was the last of the apostles to be alive. All had met a martyr's death. Thousands had already been called upon to meet the test of faith in Jesus

and gave their lives—holding fast to His name. John himself had been banished to the Isle of Patmos in order to stop his preaching and influencing of the people. False teachers were also plaguing the church in many places that was also causing great alarm. So, God pulled back the curtain of time and allows John to see the future triumph and glorification of the Lord. The first of many scenes that are revealed to him is the great worship scene in these two chapters (4, 5).

John reveals to mankind the Majestic Throne of Deity—the Throne of the Universe! He helps us to see the glory about this throne. And then, he begins describing Him who is upon the Throne.

**THE VISION OF HIM WHO SITS ON THE THRONE
(Revelation 4:3-6)**

The appearance and radiance of Him who sat upon the throne was like a Jasper and Sardine stone. These could be a way of representing the great mercy and judgment of God. The Sardine stone is white or clear crystal-like, while the Jasper stone is fiery red. And to further exalt Him who was on the throne, John saw a rainbow completely encircling the throne that was like an emerald. The seven colors known to man stood out in great distinctness, and yet blended into one harmonious whole. The circle was complete—possibly emphasizing Deity’s perfection and eternity. The earthly rainbow is a half circle—indicating incompleteness. The seven colors blended into an emerald (green) color. Proceeding from the throne were lightnings, thunderings, and voices that depicts the awesomeness of the presence of Deity. Also before the throne were seven lamp stands that burned continually representing the perfection of the Spirit of God. And the purity of the throne of God is seen in the sea of glass (like crystal) that surrounded the throne.

**BEINGS JOHN FIRST SAW AROUND GOD’S THRONE
(Revelation 4:4, 6-11)**

After John had first focused his attention on Him who sits on the throne and His awesomeness, he next turns to observe those who surround this great throne. The closest beings to Deity were the four living creatures in the midst of and around the throne of God. His first impression of these beings were that they had eyes everywhere in front and in back—which gives emphasis upon the all-seeing ability of Deity. The first Being was like a lion—emphasizing strength and majesty. The second Being was like a calf or ox—emphasizing submissiveness or the ability to serve. The third Being had a face like a man—emphasizing intelligence. And the fourth Being was like a flying eagle—emphasizing swiftness. The living creatures also all had six wings with which to constantly encircle the throne of God, crying constantly (day and night) that God is ***“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come.”*** These Beings were giving constant emphasis to the superlative characteristics and nature of Deity. The prophets, Isaiah and Ezekiel, both record a very similar sight around the throne of God (Isaiah 6:1-5; Ezekiel 1:1-28). Isaiah’s reaction to what he saw was overwhelming awe and the deep sense of uncleanness in God’s presence—***“For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”*** Ezekiel’s reaction to what he saw was similar—he fell on his face for what he saw was ***“the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.”*** (1:29). Mankind needs to be impressed with the greatness of the God whom we should be serving in righteousness.

The second group of beings that surrounded God's throne were the 24 elders. They were sitting on thrones, clothed in white robes, and had crowns of gold on their heads. When the four living creatures expressed their glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sat on the throne—this was the signal for the 24 elders to fall down before God and worship Him and cast their crowns before His throne. Then they would cry out, ***“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.”*** The number 12 doubled makes 24. Who stands out in the Scriptures that could be identified with the number 12? The 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles are the most obvious! The very term, “elder,” would indicate leadership—leadership of God's people under both covenants. These elders had undergone the trials and tribulations of life successfully and are clothed in white—signifying righteousness. They had crowns of gold—signifying victory at the end of earth's battles. They were paying great homage to the One that had made all of this possible. They wanted to deeply express their adoration and praise of the One whom they had served faithfully.

“Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee; Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God over all, and blest eternally.

“Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee, casting down their golden crowns around the crystal sea. Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee, who wast, and art, and evermore shalt be.

“Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea. Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God over all, and blest eternally.”

THE SIGHT THAT CAUSED JOHN TO WEEP! (Revelation 5:1-4)

All of us have probably experienced a period of ecstasy and immediately afterwards we come down off of a high to an almost feeling of depression. This seems to be what happened to the apostle John. One moment, he is overwhelmed by the worship scene he is viewing; and the next moment he is weeping continually! What could cause such a change? John had now seen in the hand of the One sitting on the throne, a scroll (book) that had writings on both sides, rolled up and sealed with seven seals. The fact that it was sealed indicates that its contents could not be known until the seals were broken. All of a sudden, a strong angel with a loud voice rang out the question, ***“Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”*** To John's amazement and dejection, no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look at its contents. Would the contents of the scroll be forever closed to mankind? Would the mysteries of the future be revealed to men or be hidden from him? John had gotten a taste of the glories that lie ahead for the faithful Christian, but now he and mankind would be allowed to see no more—unless someone who was worthy to open it for all to see. Thus, he began to weep for himself and for others who would be deprived.

**ASSURANCE IS GIVEN TO JOHN
(Revelation 5:5-7)**

One of the elders finally called to John to stop weeping because there was One who was worthy to open the seals to the scroll. He is Jesus—the Lion of the tribe of Judah—the Root of David. As John stopped weeping and looked up, he saw a beautiful and wondrous sight! He saw a Lamp in the midst of the throne. He was as though he had been slain. He had 7 horns and 7 eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. Here is a paradox! Horns usually denote great power—rulership. Yet, the Horns are on the head of a lamb—which gives the concept of meekness. Jesus was meek and lowly (Matthew 11:29-30), but He was also raised to be King of kings and Lord of lords! And the 7 eyes—the ability to see all—denoting Deity!

**THE WORSHIP OF THE LAMB
(Revelation 5:7-14)**

As the apostle John looked on in amazement at the sight of the Lamb, the Lamb stepped forward and took the scroll out of the hand of the One who sat on the throne. Jesus, the Lamb of God, has become the center-view of the universe! He alone, of all creation, is able not only to bring redemption to fallen man, but to let His people view their triumphant future with the glorified Christ. At that moment all heaven broke loose in Praise and Adoration of the Lamb! He is given the same worship as Almighty God, the Father, for He is God, Himself. The four living creatures along with the 24 elders all fall down before the Lamb. They are pictured as having harps and golden bowls full of incense to offer in Adoration to Him. The harps could represent the harmonious songs of joy offered in thanksgiving to the Lamb—along with the prayers of thanksgiving from the saints of God. These are beautiful sounds and beautiful smells in the ears and nose of Almighty God. These Beings were singing a song that was never sung before, a new song indeed, as follows:

***“You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals;
“For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood
“Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
“And have made us kings and priests to our God;
“And we shall reign on the earth.”***

The people of God have been highly exalted and occupy a pre-eminent position in God’s Plan of the ages.

The apostle now seems and hears an extension of those who give praise and honor to the Lamb, in addition to the earlier scene of worship. The four living creatures and the 24 elders are joined by an unnumberable amount of angels who also cry out with a loud voice:

***“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom,
and strength and honor and glory and blessings!”***

And another group joins in with this song of praise and honor to the Lamb—All creations! All of those in heaven, on earth, under the earth, in the sea add their voices to resounding praise of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world! They cry:

“Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, forever and ever.” Then, the 4 living creatures cry “Amen!”—followed by the 24 elders who fall down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name! Let angels prostrate fall! Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all.

“Let every kindred, every tribe, on this terrestrial ball, to Him all majesty ascribe, and crown Him Lord of all.

“O that with yonder sacred throng we at His feet may fall! We’ll join the everlasting song, and Praise Him Lord of all.”

CONCLUSION

The death of Christ on Calvary for the sins of man is the central theme of God’s message to mankind. It is the most stupendous fact in all human history. It was the subject that engaged the attention of the Old Testaments Prophets for centuries. Its importance even attracted the attention of the angelic hosts of heaven.

The praise and adoration to Jesus, God’s Lamb, is not only fitting for heaven’s beings to offer, but especially the redeemed of every nation of mankind. And we will never tire of singing His praises around the great white throne of God through the ages. What a privilege it will be to be in that number someday to witness and be a part of this great sight and sound! What an honor to be a part of this sublime strain sung by the redeemed and the angelic hosts of heaven. Nothing has thus been seen or heard that will compare with such an occasion. Such a dramatic anticipation should gladden the heart of every child of God. Don’t you want to be there in that day?

Lesson Four

“Righteousness in a World of Evil and Calamities”

(Revelation 6-7)

“But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated.” (Hebrews 10:32-33)

In Revelation 4-5, we were witnesses of the great worship given to Deity—both the Father and the Lamb of God. The whole universe was called upon to pay homage to Him who sits on the throne and to the One who became God’s sacrificial Lamb to redeem mankind unto God and to make them into a kingdom of priests to serve God. A special emphasis was given to the worthiness of the Lamb to be worshipped because He alone was able to **“break the seals and open the scrolls”** that enabled the apostle John to write the **“things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.”** (Revelation 1:19).

As each seal was broken, John was allowed to see again what had already taken place and that which would take place in the future in regards to God’s people in a world of evil and full of calamities. The reader needs to be reminded that the apostle John was writing (it is believed by many) about the year of 96 AD. God’s people had already been called upon to face many things because of the Name of Jesus

THE BREAKING OF THE SIX SEALS**(Revelation 6:1-15)**

As the **first seal** is broken (6:1-2), John sees a rider on a white horse with a bow in his hand and a crown on his head, and he goes forth conquering and to conquer. White signifies that which is good and righteous. The righteous go forth under the leadership of King Jesus to spread the good news of redemption through Christ. Their success was phenomenal—so much so that the apostle Paul could pen by inspiration that the gospel had been preached to **“every creature under heaven”** by 63 AD (Colossians 1:23). God gave His people victory. They were “spiritual” conquerors in the Name of Jesus. Their victory was to be won by the word of God. Jesus also in Matthew 24:14 pointed out that the **“gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations”** before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. These two statements show the tremendous spread of the gospel even in the first century—which was to be a type of what would take place even more so later on.

The **second seal** is broken (6:3-4) and John sees a rider on a fiery red horse. This rider is allowed to take peace from the earth and cause people to kill one another. He was given a great sword with which to bring about this terrible destruction.

War seems to be intended by this vision. Where there is war, there is no peace. Where there is war, nations are in conflict that brings an unusual amount of carnage. It is understood that God’s people will live in the midst of such and will suffer along with others. Jesus’ statement in Matthew

24:6-7 indicates that there was to be wars and rumors of wars—nations will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom—all before 70 AD. But such would also be true after 70 AD, and God’s people had to be prepared to live righteous lives in such a world.

As the **third seal** is broken (6:5-6) John sees a rider on a black horse that is depicting one of the ravages of war and death—famine! Food becomes scarce and expensive that makes life hard for the masses that survive the wars.

Christians will be among those who will have to endure hardships. Jesus said in Matthew 24:7 that **“there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”** God’s people have generally not been exempt from the calamities that befall mankind in general—even those calamities brought on by the wickedness of men. Readiness to accept and deal with these things are important for the child of God.

As John witnesses the **fourth seal** being broken (6:7-8), he is allowed to see a rider on a pale horse. His name was death and Hades followed him. He was given power over a fourth part of the earth—to kill with the sword, hunger, death, and by beasts.

A sizable portion of mankind will be caught up in these sorrows—with Christians and non-Christians alike to suffer. Upon death, mankind goes into the Hadean realm (the place where departed spirits go) to await the resurrection and judgment.

These seals do not seem to be in sequence, but rather are general things that have already come to pass over a period of time (up to 96 AD) and would come to pass in the future. Christianity was able to spread over the world, but it was in the midst of turmoil, sorrows, wars, famine and even death. The world suffered, but so did many Christians. These seals are to let Christians know that God is not only aware of these things, but allows them to fulfill his purposes.

As the **fifth seal** is broken (6:9-11), John is reminded of something he was very much aware of—the martyrdom of Christians. Jesus had already fore-told of such in Matthew 24:9-13. He stated that Christians would be hated in all nations, delivered up, betrayed, and suffer tribulation and death.

What John is allowed to see are the **“souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.”** They were under the altar crying unto God, **“How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”** They were slain because of their belief and teachings of the Word of God. God reassures them by giving each a white robe (a sign of acceptance) and told them they would have to wait a while longer till others had suffered a similar fate.

An altar is where you offer sacrifices. These Christians had offered their lives on this altar. John sees “Souls”—not bodies. He is seeing mankind after death in Hades, but before the resurrection.

The wicked have not only caused so much suffering on the earth for everyone, but in addition had brought terrible persecution upon righteous people that was uncalled for.

As the **sixth seal** is broken, John is allowed to see and write about the punishment to come upon these unrighteous people. This punishment is described in strong symbolic terms:

- 1) A great earthquake and its devastation;
- 2) The Sun turns black and the moon turns to blood;
- 3) The stars fall to earth like ripe figs dropping from the tree;
- 4) The sky is rolled up like a scroll;
- 5) The mountains and islands are moved out of their place;
- 6) All men—kings, the powerful, the rich, commanders, mighty men, slave and free—hid themselves in the caves and rocks from the wrath of God and the Lamb. ***“For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”***

Jesus also warned in Matthew 23:31-39 of the terrible punishment to come upon the Jewish nation because of their rejection of former prophets, as well as of Jesus, Himself. The wrath that would be poured out would be ***“the abomination of desolation”*** that was to come in 70 AD in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. But the Jewish nation would not be the only rejecters and persecutors—Rome, herself, would also be among those upon whom the terrible wrath of God would come.

THE SEALING OF GOD’S SERVANTS (Revelation 7:1-8)

A new vision is seen by John that gives assurance to God’s persecuted and faithful people. John sees four angels at the four corners of the earth. They were holding four winds so that they could not blow on the earth, the sea, or the trees. He then saw a fifth angel ascend from the East crying to the four angels, ***“do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”*** John heard how many were sealed—144,000 of all the tribes of Israel—12,000 out of each tribe.

This vision could be an enlargement upon the question, ***“What about God’s people in the midst of all these sorrows?”*** The winds would be the forces that bring tribulations upon mankind. The four angels were to hold back these tribulations until God’s people were sealed. God wanted the gospel preached to the whole world to give opportunity for all to know the gospel message before these terrible tribulations would begin. The sealing process was God’s way of calling and accepting as His people those who were obedient to His gospel. He tells the church at Philadelphia that those Jewish people who think they are children of God need to realize that they no longer retain that coveted position among men. And God, Himself, will make it clear who His real children are today. (Revelation 3:9-10). The sealing was not some tangible mark on their physical bodies, but the influence of God upon their souls. ***“In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.”*** (1 John 3:10).

The 144,000 could be the symbolic representation of all the redeemed of God—before and after Christ. (12 X 12 X 1000 = 144,000). Such use of numbers would certainly indicate the completeness of the saved—but not physical Israel, but spiritual Israel!

GRATEFUL WORSHIP OFFERED TO DEITY

(Revelation 7:9-17)

John again is allowed to see a beautiful sight of worship to Deity. He sees a great multitude of people that no one could number. They were from all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues. They were standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white with palm branches in their hands. They were loudly crying, ***“Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”*** At this, the angels, the 24 elders, and the four living creatures all fall down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God. They gave forth what is referred to as the 7-fold praise to God: ***“Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”***

Who were these people robed in white? And the answer was given, ***“These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*** They are those who will worship and serve God forever with thankful hearts, and God will dwell among them. They no more will suffer hunger, thirst, and the heat of the Sun, for the Lamb will lead them to living fountains of water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

God’s people are pictured to us as not only sealed, but greatly blessed and rewarded by God! They have suffered, been tempted, cast low, despised; rejected, hated, hungry, thirsty, tortured, humiliated, and been brought to flowing tears—but no more! They have proven themselves—they have been the faithful ones, even unto death (Revelation 2:10). They are now given the great privilege to be around the throne of God in adoration and praise of Him who helped to see them through the great ordeal. They are the victorious, faithful, rewarded Sons of God!

CONCLUSION

These visions that we have been dealing with have two primary things, at least:

- 1) What will happen to God’s people in the midst of a hostile world? He foretells of Christianity’s onward march to the spreading of the gospel. It describes the glorious martyrs who gave their lives to propagate this gospel. And then depicts the triumph of the gospel in the lives of multitudes of people around the world.
- 2) What will happen to the peoples of the world? They will face continual calamities that they bring upon themselves, and will suffer the ultimate punishment of God for their unrighteousness.

God is fully aware of all that is transpiring upon the earth. He allows these things to happen in order to carry out His plans. He wants His people to be fully assured as they get caught up in these sorrows:

- 1) That these things are not a punishment upon them;
- 2) But rather a testing of their faith to their ultimate glorification!

Unfortunately, the unrighteous will not only have to endure the heartaches, sorrows, Temptations, and trials of life—and then, in the end, to receive the ultimate punishment from God for their unrighteousness!

Lesson Five

“Evil’s Punishment is Threatened”

(Revelation 8-9)

“But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.”

(Revelation 9:20-21)

Revelation chapter six and seven depicted the opening of six of the seven seals of the Scroll (book). The **first four seals** showed the kind of world that God’s people would live in as they attempted to spread the gospel into all the world. It indicated there would be war, famine, pestilence, and death! And it also indicated that God’s people would not necessarily escape having to suffer some of these things.

The **fifth seal** revealed that some of God’s children had been slain for their faithful stand for Him. They were depicted as crying—not for justice to be done for they believed that it would come—but they wanted to know when it would come and that their blood would be avenged. God’s answer—wait for a little while! Why....because more of your brethren must suffer the same fate as you did before my wrath is poured out upon their persecutors.

The opening of the **sixth seal** seems to be reassuring them of this fact! Chapter seven then gives a vision of God’s wrath being held back until His saints have been sealed. His sealed servants are pictured as—144,000 and the great multitude. It pictures them along with others in a great worship scene.

Chapters eight and nine depicts the blowing of the trumpets of warning of God’s coming punishment upon evil. Just like Israel marched around the city of Jericho and blew the trumpets to forecast its destruction; so, God is having His servants to blow the trumpets of doom upon those who do not accept His Son. God’s delayed punishment will come!

PREPARATORY VISION

(Revelation 8:1-6)

Chapter eight begins with the opening of the seventh seal—and there was silence in heaven for the space of about one-half hour! Silence is used to get attention or to help realize the soberness of the occasion. It could even indicate God’s reluctance to punish!

John now sees another vision of seven angels before the throne of God. They each had a trumpet to sound that was to warn of the wrath to come in various ways upon those who reject His Son. They will be like the plagues that God sent upon the Egyptians. Those plagues kept trying to tell them to repent and let God's people go! So, God is saying to the ungodly: **“Repent or perish!”**

John now sees another angel that is standing over at the Altar where the Martyrs had been crying. He had much incense along with the crying of the saints. The angel now cast live coals from the altar upon the earth. Great events begin to occur: **Thunders, Rumbings, Lightenings, and Earthquakes!** Thus, indicating that God's judgments were ready to be poured out in answer to the prayers and cryings of God's saints. Repentance was the world's only hope!

THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS SOUND (Revelation 8:7-12)

The angel blows the **first trumpet** and plagues liken to those that came upon the Egyptians began to fall upon the earth—hail stones, accompanied by fire and mingled with blood. All vegetation suffers from such devastation, which in turn affects mankind's sources of good to sustain them. But only a third part of the trees and grass were burned up—indicating that these things are warnings for the ungodly to repent, not the final judgment! God's mercy is greater than His judgments!

The **second angel** blew his trumpet and John sees something that looked like a burning mountain that was thrown into the sea. It too was limited in its affect, for only a third part of the sea was affected—it became blood! The result was felt upon the living creatures in the sea—a third of them died. But it also affected a third part of the ships on the seas. Both are limited in their affects because these were warnings, not the final judgment of God upon sinful mankind. God is merciful!

When the **third angel** sounds his trumpet, John sees a great burning star fall from heaven to earth. The name of this star indicates its ability to affect what it contacts—**Wormwood** (which means bitterness). It fell into the rivers and the springs of water, but only affected a third part of them—thus limiting its devastation because of the mercy of God. The name is very fitting in describing the bitterness of judgment that was to come upon them.

The **fourth angel** blew his trumpet and John saw its effects as awful! It affected the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars—but only a third of them! This in turn affected a third part of the days and nights. It doesn't say what caused this effect, but showed the results. It could indicate that God caused an abnormal functioning of heavenly bodies to warn men of what was in store for the unrepentant! Whatever affects these heavenly bodies also affect mankind.

The first four trumpets affected objects of nature: Land, Sea, Fountains of Water, and the Atmosphere. God controls the forces of nature. He can call them to His use at any time—as He clearly demonstrated in Egypt. He can use them to bring calamities upon mankind. They could be representative of the punishments of God upon mankind. Rome was the great persecuting power of God's people. History reveals some terrible punishments that came upon the Roman Empire in the 5th Century. The Goths invaded Italy and devastated it. Rome was besieged on three different occasions in which thousands died of famine as well as by the sword. The wealth of Rome was stripped from her. However, the overthrow of Rome was not complete. The Vandals also destroyed Rome's Western Armada on the sea and sacked Rome. Attila, the Hun, became a bitter scourge for Rome also. There was great carnage in the battle for Rome. At this time, ten Northern cities of Italy were ravaged. The Western part of the Empire was so weakened that a Barbarian actually ruled most of Italy. The Eastern part of the Empire was still intact.

INTERLUDE
(Revelation 8:13)

John now sees an Angel (Eagle in some Mss.) flying in the midst of heaven. His message is not a very pleasant one, but expected. He is warning of the outcome of the remaining three trumpets to sound: ***“Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth.”*** Greater punishment is yet to be threatened upon unrepentant mankind. The first four brought about great destruction, but the additional three trumpets will be even worse.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET SOUNDS
(Revelation 9:1-12)

The intensity of God’s threats to unrepentant mankind becomes obvious. John sees a star (angel) fall from heaven to the earth. He was given the key to open the pit of abyss. When the pit was opened, smoke arose from it that caused the Sun and atmosphere to be darkened. Then Locusts began pouring out of the pit to affect mankind. They were not allowed to hurt the grass, any green thing, or trees (which they normally would affect), but they were only to hurt mankind. Yet, they were not to hurt those that had been sealed by God. Their purpose was not to kill but to torment mankind for five months (obviously a limited time). Mankind’s response to the torment of the Locusts—they will seek to die, but death will not come.

The Locusts’ torment was like the sting of a Scorpion. The shape of the Locusts was like horses prepared for battle. Everyone had a crown on it’s head liken to gold. They had faces like that of mankind. Their hair was long like women and their teeth were like lions’ teeth. Each of them had on a breastplate of iron for protection. As they flew forth, their sound was like the sound of chariots and many horses running into battle. They had tails like Scorpions, and their sting was for tormenting mankind for five months.

They had a leader (king) over them who was the angel (star) of the pit of abyss. This star or angel had a name: Abaddon in the Hebrew and Apollyon in the Greek. The terms mean “one who destroys or destroyer.” Verse 12 then says in emphasis—you think this is bad, wait till you see what the next two woes have in store for unrepentant mankind!

POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE THINGS

The fallen star (angel) could be Satan who is obviously king over wickedness, evil, error, and all that is false. The pit of abyss (bottomless pit) is the source of all kinds of wickedness and evil. The purpose of the smoke is to block the light—to keep truth hidden from men, so they will remain in darkness and error, falsehood, or false religion—which are the great tools of Satan to control mankind.

Sin brings its recompense—its horrible results! ***“What a man sows, he will reap.”*** If men want to live and grope in darkness (spiritual and moral blindness), then God will give them up to their iniquity—and then destroy them for it. Living in darkness brings its torture: uncertainty, fear, discomfort, superstition, and a smitten conscience. Wickedness and evil are fostered by men of intellect, people of beauty and desirability, the fierceness of their efforts, and the preparedness to

battle against truth. They are led by Satan, himself, because he is the destroyer of mankind. The lies, falsehoods, half-truths of Satan hold men in their sway, keep them in rebellion against God, and lead them to their utter ruin.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET SOUNDS

(Revelation 9:13-19)

The sixth trumpet causes the vision to be transferred into heaven. John hears a voice that comes from the very presence of God—from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God. (This imagery seems to be taken from the sacrificial offering altar under the Old Covenant system.) The sixth angel was told to let loose the four angels who are bound (restrained) at the great river Euphrates. These angels had a special mission to kill a third part of mankind. The hour, day, month, and year had been pre-planned by God for this specific time and event.

The angels released 200,000,000 horsemen prepared for battle. They had on breastplates of different colors: Red, blue, and yellow. The horses' heads were like lions (fierce). Out of their mouths came forth fire, smoke, and brimstone. These three plagues killed a third part of mankind. The power of the horses was in their tails and mouth.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE THINGS

The sealing of God's people had been finished, so the destructive forces could be turned loose to accomplish their purposes. While the Locust could only torment and hurt with their tails, the horses brought death with their tails and their mouths. The large number of the army certainly indicates an irresistible force that men cannot stop. False doctrines, errors, and false religions will bring retribution upon men from God. They will be awesome, terrible, irresistible and unstoppable. The Locust seems to represent internal torment of people, while the horses could represent the external influences upon men.

From a historical standpoint, the Eastern part of the Roman Empire was now being affected by the scourge of Mahomet—the rise of the Islam Religion greatly affected Constantinople. They were greatly tormented, but not completely overthrown. Later, the Ottoman Turks overthrew and sacked Constantinople. It was accomplished by a huge army.

OUTCOME OF THE SIX TRUMPETS

(Revelation 9:20-21)

God's warnings to mankind often go unheeded! The consequences then come—and you would think that men would wake up and repent and turn to God. But they do not. They continue in their idolatry, demon worship, murdering, sorceries, sexual immorality, and thefts. Trumpets were not the final judgment upon mankind, but the forewarning of such to come. If men will not come to their senses, the only thing left is **THE LAKE OF FIRE!**

It is significant that God gives vivid illustrations of how he will bring retribution upon the persecutors of His people. Their cries do not go unheeded! God will avenge His people.

Lesson Six

“The Church Persecuted, But Exalted!”

(Revelation 10-11)

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.” (1 Peter 2:21)

The Lord pulled no punches in regards to what His people can expect from an unbelieving world: ***“These things I have spoken to you, that in the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”*** (John 16:33). Peter’s inspired statement makes it very clear that Jesus’ example of suffering is to be a pattern for His followers—and that they needed to get themselves ready for such. Also, Paul’s inspired statement emphasizes the same: ***“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”*** (2 Timothy 3:12).

In the previous lesson (chapters eight and nine) six of the seven warning trumpets were sounded—indicating calamities coming upon men to warn them of the grave dangers of their sinfulness. Such were pictured in various symbols:

- a) Hail, Fire, Blood (affected the Land);
- b) Burning Mountain (affected the Sea);
- c) Burning Star (affected the Fountains);
- d) Sun, Moon, Stars (affected the Atmosphere);
- e) King of Locust (torment);
- f) Huge Army (ravage).

The outcome of these calamities was not what it should have been—men refused to repent and continued in their sin and rebellion against God. Thus, the seventh trumpet is now ready to be sounded—BUT—before it does, God needs to show some things about his church and the afflictions that it will go through. They are not pleasant things to anticipate, but there is a glorious end awaiting the faithful! The beautiful and encouraging words of the following song reminds us of what lies before us:

“Tempted and tried we’re oft made to wonder Why it should be thus all the day long, While there are others living about us, Never molested tho in the wrong. Faithful till death said our loving Master, A few more days to labor and wait; Toils of the road will then seem as nothing, As we sweep thru the beautiful gate. When we see Jesus coming in glory, When He comes from His home in the sky; Then we shall meet Him in that bright mansion, We’ll understand it all by and by. Father along we’ll know all about it, Father along we’ll understand why; Cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine, We’ll understand it all by and by.”

**FIRST INTERLUDE VISION
(Revelation 10:1-11)**

The apostle John is now able to see a mighty angel coming down from heaven (vs. 1-7). He describes him in the following way:

- a) Clothed with a cloud (God's Authority encircles him);
- b) Rainbow upon his head (God's Covenant mercies);
- c) Face was as it were the Sun (Brightness, Glory of God)
- d) Feet as pillars of fire (All are over-whelmed in his presence).

John now tells us about his activities:

- a) He has a little scroll in his hand (That which is to be revealed);
- b) He has set his feet upon the Sea and the Earth (Master over all—his message is for all);
- c) He cries with a loud voice like that of a Lion's roar and something happens—The seven Thunders uttered their voices!

John was about ready to write down their message, but a voice from heaven stopped him and told him to seal their message up. The mighty angel raised his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it.....he sworn that there would be delay no longer! That God will not delay to finish His work. The mystery of God will be finished at the sounding of the seventh trumpet!

John is now told by the voice from heaven to eat the little scroll (vs. 8-11). He turns to the mighty angel and asked for the scroll. The Angel gives it to him, but tells him that when he eats it, it will be sweet to his taste, but it will become bitter in his stomach. When John ate the scroll, he found it to be like the angel said. Then, the angel tells him: ***"You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."***

SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE THINGS

It is obviously a great privilege to receive a revelation from God, but these things were not going to be pleasant that anticipate about God's people and the trials they would have to go through. But the people of God are encouraged to remember—God is in control—he knows all things—the future is open to Him. Don't be alarmed by the impenitence of the unbelievers and the evil they will bring upon you. God is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9), but that all should come to repentance. But His wrath will come—His longsuffering will come to an end! But before God shows that wrath, he has a special message for John to give to His people. It will be a bitter message to deliver, but it will have a good ending. God's people will be persecuted and made a laughing stock to the world, but God will vindicate them at the end of this period.

Here we are but straying pilgrims; Here our path is often dim; But to cheer us on our journey, Still we sing this way-side hymn; Here our feet are often weary On the hills that throng our way; Here the tempest darkly gathers, But our hearts within us say; Here our souls are often fearful Of the pilgrim's lurking foe; But the Lord is our defender, And He tells us we may know; Yonder over the rolling river, Where the shining mansions rise, Soon will be our home forever, And the smile of the blessed Giver Gladdens all our longing eyes."

**SECOND INTERLUDE VISION
(Revelation 11:1-13)**

John now sees a vision of a Temple and is told to measure it (vs. 1-2). He was given a reed that he could use for a measuring rod. He was told to measure the Temple of God, the Altar, and those who worship there. But he was NOT to measure the outer court because it had been given to the Gentiles. And the Gentiles will tread the holy city (church) underfoot for 42 months.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE THINGS

The Reed would be God's divine standard by which all are measured. **The Temple and Holy City** would be the TRUE and FAITHFUL church! **The Altar and Worshipers** would be the TRUE worship offered by the FAITHFUL church! God gave a pattern for His church to follow. Only those who conform to this pattern are God's true and faithful church. **The Outer Court of the Temple** was not to be measured or included in the number of the faithful. Under the Old Covenant, the outer court was for converted Gentiles. Under the New Covenant, the Outer Court may appear to be a part of the true church, but they are not! They are religious, but not acceptable—they are not true worshippers. The reason—They have been too much influenced by the world. Thus, it would seem to represent the non-acceptable religious people. (Matthew 15:7-9). **Trodden under foot the holy city** could indicate that these people would hold sway or have dominion over the church. To the world, they would appear to be Christ's church, but they really are not. They are false before God. **The 42 months** gives the idea that their dominion will have an end...it will be limited. Some suggest that 42 months is the same as 1260 days that could represent 1260 years that the false religious people will have dominion over the church. Two possible understandings of these symbols will be given as follows:

- (1) That Pagan Rome would dominate over the church by persecution. Historically, Rome did persecute the church—severely at times. The major periods of these persecutions were as follows:
 - a) Under Nero (67 AD)
 - b) Under Domitian (81 AD) (40,000 Perished that was known)
 - c) Under Trajan (108 AD)
 - d) Under Marcus Arelius (162 AD)
 - e) Under Severus (192 AD)
 - f) Under Decius (249 AD)
 - g) Under Valerian (257 AD)
 - h) Under Aurelian (274 AD)
 - i) Under Diocletian (303 AD)

It is estimate that 150,000 died in Egypt alone during the last persecution under Diocletian. It seemed that each persecution was worse than the other. Following is a list of some of worse of the persecutions:

- a) Eyes put out with hot irons.
- b) Dragged with ropes till dead.
- c) Beheaded or Crucified.
- d) Thrown to wild beasts.

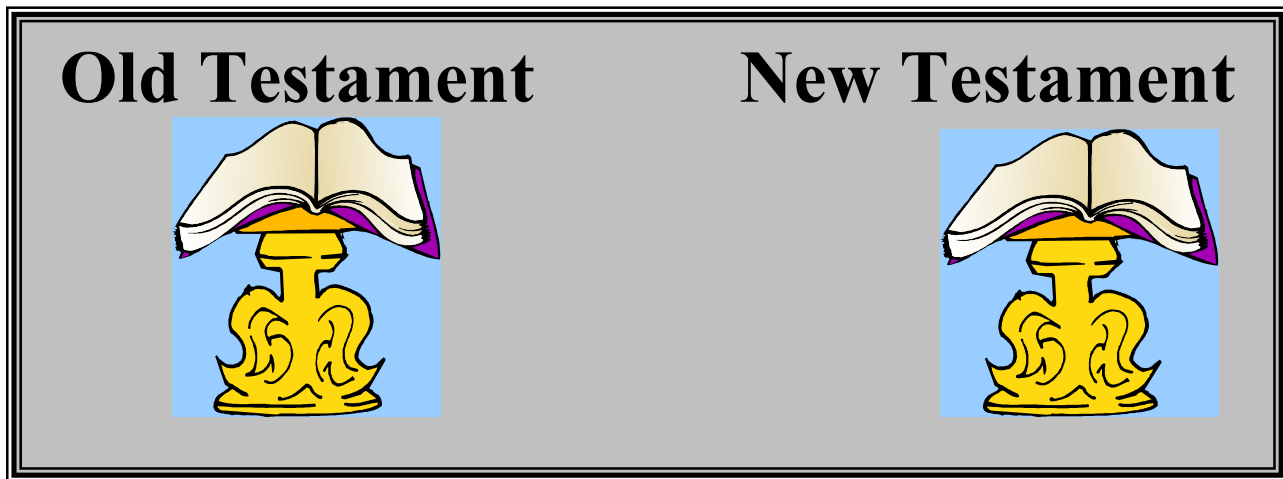
- e) Burned at stake.
- f) Tortured unmercifully.

(2) **That Apostate Christianity took over and dominated the true church.** And from history we can see that this is actually what happened also. Apostate Christianity held sway in the eyes of the world—as the church. This domination lasted for about 1260 years.

The point—the bitterness of seeing what would happen to the Lord’s church..

“Be not dismayed whate’er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you. Thro’ days of toil when heart doth fail God will take care of you; When dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you. No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, thru’ every day, o’er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you.”

John now sees two witnesses of God (vs. 3-6). These witnesses were given power to preach for 1260 days in sackcloth. They are liken to the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the throne of God. The warning is given that those who hurt them that fire would devour them. They were given great power: (1) To shut up the heavens that it rain not; (2) To turn the waters into blood; and (3) To smite the earth with plagues as often as they desired.



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE TWO WITNESSES

1. **The two witnesses.** These could have reference to the two great Covenants that God has given to His people. It is God’s faithful people who proclaim this message to a lost world. When the message is proclaimed, it offers salvation to those who accept it, but condemnation to those who reject it.
2. **The Sackcloth.** This witnessing is given during times of sorrow. This is a garment of grief and bitterness. It is sorrow because of mankind’s rejection of the message. But witnesses still must testify to God’s message to mankind.

3. **1260 days.** This is the same time frame of the Dominion over the church by either pagan Rome which persecuted it so bitterly, or the apostate church that dominated over the true church of Christ.
4. **The two olive trees and two lampstands.** Olive trees were a source of oil for lamps, and the lamps were the source of light. The Word of God gives light to a world in darkness. The church has been designed by God to be the means of giving that light to the lost.
5. **Those who resist its message.** If they reject it, pervert it, change it, and do not respect it—they will be punished with death—eternal death!

John now sees the coming of the beast to fight against the two witnesses (vs. 7-13). This beast is from the abyss (the place of wickedness). He comes to make war against them—to overcome them—to kill them! Their dead bodies are left to lie in the streets of the great city (Sodom, Egypt, also where Jesus was crucified—Jerusalem). All nations will observe their dead bodies for 3 ½ days. They rejoiced, made merry, and sent gifts to each other because the two witnesses that tormented them have been silenced! But after 3 ½ days, the spirit of life from God enter into them and they stood up again. This caused great fear to come upon all who saw this event. And then, a great voice from heaven said to the two witnesses that they were to come up to heaven. As they ascended, their enemies witnessed the sight! And at the same time, there was a great earthquake that caused a 10th part of the city to fall and 7,000 men were slain. This caused the remnant to be afraid and give glory to God.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE EVENTS

At the end of the 1260 days of domination and the witnessing that was done in sackcloth, the period ends. The Word of God had been restrained for a long period of time. But now, it was ready to be made available to all men. This caused the beast (Satan, as he worked through his followers) to make war against the two witnesses. He wanted their world-wide testimony to be stopped. He seemingly stopped the Bible progress for a time by killing the two witnesses. Great disrespect was shown for the Bible by people for a short time (lack of burial—disrespect). But the success of the beast was short-lived. The rejoicing over stopping the Bible's spread was with wild glee, but it only last 3 ½ days (3 1/1 years). God saw to it that they were raised back to life again. Their witnessing must continue. Their ascension to heaven is a way of exalting their testimony before the world. They are no longer in sackcloth! Their enemies were amazed and in fear. And a remnant turned from the false to the true church as a result of what they saw.

During a set period of time, the church will be greatly dominated and/or persecuted by wicked forces. But it will still serve as a powerful witness against wickedness. It will not be festive times of spreading God's message, but times of hardship, strong persecution, and even death. But God will preserve His Word and His Church during this time.

The apparent victory of wickedness over the church was short lived. The church may be forced to go underground for a time and may appear to have lost its place and power in the lives of men, but its demise will be short-lived. It will rise again. God will not only re-vitalize the church, but He will exalt it greatly before the world.

Historically, when things looked the worst for the church during the days of Diocletian's ruthless persecution in 303 AD, God raised up a man on the throne of Rome in 313 AD that completely exonerated and exalted the church before the Empire.

But also Historically, For hundreds of years the Bible was taken from the hands of the people. It was finally translated and put into their hands again. For a time, efforts were made to stop the Bible's spread among the nations, but their efforts did not prevail. The Bible again held a respected position among men.

“God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform; He plants His foot-steps in the sea, And rides upon the storm. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take, The clouds ye so much dread Are big with mercy, and shall break In blessings on your head. Blind unbelief is sure to err, And scan His work in vain; God is His own interpreter, And He will make it plain.”

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET SOUNDS

(Revelation 11:14-19)

It is stated that the second woe is past and the third woe is coming quickly (v. 14). And then, the blast of the trumpet of the seventh angel was heard. That was followed by loud voices in heaven, saying, ***“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.”*** At this, the 24 elders around the throne of God got down off their thrones and fell on their faces and worshipped God!

“We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.”

Then John saw the Temple of God opened in heaven. He was allowed to see the ark of His covenant. Then, there came lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail!

SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE EVENTS

Because of the victory that God brought about by His power and might, there was great rejoicing, praise, and worship of God. Such was giving recognition that God had taken an active hand in the affairs of this world. He showed His great power by doing so. He truly is sovereign over all the earth.

God has never ceased to reign, but at times it is more evident than others. This is not only a picture of victory for God's cause, but also a showing of His wrath upon the disobedient

(earthquake, lightnings, thunderings, and hail). God's people have been shown a better time for the spread of the gospel.

“King of my life, I crown Thee now, Thine shall the glory be; Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow, Lead me to Calvary. May I be willing, Lord, to bear Daily my cross for Thee; Even Thy cup of grief to share, Thou hast borne all for me. Lest I forget Gethsemane; Lest I forget Thine agony; Lest I forget Thy love for me, Lead me to Calvary.”

The church is in the world, but not of the world. It is to serve as a light bearer to a lost world in darkness. But it cannot be done without a great struggle. The true church may appear to have been destroyed, but God will see that it is revived again through His preached Word!

Lesson Seven

“The Terrible Enemies of God’s People”

(Revelation 12-13)

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12)

The trumpets of warning have sounded! They were designed to bring sinful man to repentance, but to no avail (Revelation 9:20-21). God’s people would have to endure much in the way of persecution, and God will bear long with mankind who is in opposition to Him and His church. But the punishment of these disobedient people would come. When the 7th trumpet sounded, worship and praise breaks forth in heaven over God’s manifesting His power among men. God had now exonerated His people in the eyes of the world.

The next two chapters (12-13) will present a vision of God’s people as a beautiful woman. Then, we are given a closer look at her enemies. They are vividly and symbolically portrayed before our eyes. They emphasize the great battle that is raging between good and evil; between righteousness and wickedness; between the saints of God and the visible co-workers of Satan. They are The Terrible Trio!

THE VISION OF THE WOMAN

(Revelation 12:1-2)

John records this vision as a *“great sign that appeared in heaven.”* He saw a woman that was clothed with the sun—the moon under her feet—and on her head a garland of twelve stars. The **SUN** emphasizes brightness, glory, righteousness, light, and ultimate truth (the New Testament). The **MOON** emphasizes the Old Testament with its lesser light. The **Twelve Stars** could be representative of the twelve apostles that gave the New Testament to the world.

The woman is pictured as pregnant and ready for delivery—She wants issue. The woman could represent the church and its growth throughout the world. Under the teaching of the Apostles, the church grew very rapidly—it literally had growing pains! However, in verses 4-6, a different concept seems to be used. Both seem to be tied in with the concept of the persecution that came on the early Christians by both Jew and Gentile.

THE GREAT RED DRAGON

(Revelation 12:3-5)

Another *“sign”* appears in heaven—a great, fiery red dragon! Awesome sight! He had seven heads, ten horns, and seven diadems (crowns) on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. That old dragon is Satan—he is the one behind the forces of evil against the church. He has access to all kinds of power to accomplish his task. He uses governments, armies, political and religious powers. He has a great influence that he uses to gain a following. He

has swayed both angels and men to rebel and disobey God. He has brought them down with himself!

The dragon is pictured as waiting to devour the child that the woman would bear. It was a man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Christ and the church are both described in this way. Righteousness requires strong convictions and determination to live right. But the child was caught up to God and His throne (possibly for protection from the dragon). This would seem to be an allusion to Christ, Himself. It could also be dealing with the early growth of the church and the persecution that followed.

VISIONS OF THE GREAT STRUGGLES (Revelation 12:6-12)

After the woman's man child was caught up to God and His throne, the woman fled into the wilderness. It was a place especially prepared by God for her so she would be cared for over a period of 1260 days

SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE THINGS

The symbolism seems to be of the church and its early fast growth that begin to challenge Satan's stranglehold on mankind. God would not allow His church to be destroyed and protected it. He exalted the church by its triumph over pagan Rome. Even though terribly persecuted off and on for over 200 years, Satan and his workers were not successful in destroying the church. Persecution was mostly stopped under the reign of Constantine 313 AD, and Christianity became more and more the acceptable religion of the empire. So, the Devil was defeated in His first major effort! But this was not the end of the story. After this, the church would go into the wilderness. It would go into obscurity for 1260 days (same time frame as before). This will be looked at more later. The Devil had not been successful in persecuting the church from without, so now he turns to work from within the church to destroy it.

THE DEVIL'S DEFEAT DESCRIBED

Symbolically, this war is being fought out in heaven! It is basically a spiritual battle between God and Satan. Michael and his angels fought against the Devil and his angels. The Devil was defeated. All were cast out together—The Dragon (The old Serpent, the Devil, Satan, the Deceiver) and his angels. The church won the first round.

I wonder if this symbolic picture is not making use of the actual account of what originally happened with Satan and his angels. This very vividly illustrates the battle with regards to the church.

THE RESPONSE TO THIS DEFEAT

Rejoicing immediately breaks out in heaven: *“Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.”* (verse 10). This message

is obviously meant as an encouragement to those who will be martyred for the Cause of Christ in the great battles ahead. The church will be victorious because of the faithfulness of the martyrs. They were able to win the battle by the cleansing blood of Christ, by their faithful profession of faith in Christ as the Son of God, and through their willingness to die for that great truth! Christians are encouraged to rejoice in this great victory. But this is not the end of the story! The Devil will not stop his efforts—so, woe unto mankind—watch out for his deceitful, wicked ways. Satan knows that he does not have eternity to do his work.

THE DEVIL'S RENEWED EFFORTS BRIEFLY DESCRIBED (Revelation 12:13-17)

Satan was defeated and cast down, but he was not finished! He continued to pursue the woman (church)—the product of God's truth. The woman was given two wings of a great eagle in order to fly into the wilderness—a place of safety. There she was to be cared for during a time, times and a half-time (3 ½ or 1260 days).

The Devil's efforts at destruction were by a flood out of his mouth. He would put forth overwhelming efforts to destroy her during the allotted period of time (3 ½). But even the earth (temporal rulers) will help the church to survive. Satan is enraged with the woman. He continues to make war on her offspring—upon those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The Devil tried to subvert God's Plan of Redemption through Christ and failed! He also failed in his efforts to stamp out the church of Christ by persecution. But he does not give up easily—he continues to wage war on the church. All kinds of overwhelming efforts will be put forth to destroy it. He will cause ignorance of the Word of God through the dark ages of mankind. He will encourage pride and ambition in leaders of the church to bring about a corruption of it. His followers will teach false doctrine and encourage false practices. It will even appear as though he has succeeded in his efforts. But God saw to it that the church was preserved for mankind. A place in the wilderness—a place of hardship—loneliness—but a place of safety! The church was nourished during this time. And the church would not be there forever. The church would later come back to life again because Satan cannot stop it.

SATAN'S TWO GREAT HELPERS DESCRIBED (Revelation 13:1-18)

The Devil is the arch-enemy of God, Christ, and God's people. Man, unfortunately, cannot see the devil for he is a spirit-being. But he can see his helpers. They do his work for him. They are his agents through whom he works. Through them, he brings misery, mischief, tribulations, trials, and persecution. These helpers are described in chapter 13 as two beasts—the **Beast of the Sea** and the **Beast of the Land**. Together with Satan, they form the **Terrible Trio** or the Tri-unity of wickedness. They are a far inferior copy of the Divine Tri-unity. Their purpose is to supplant God, to undermine His work, and to deceive and defeat righteousness.

THE BEAST OF THE SEA

He is described by John as having seven heads and ten horns. But in addition, he has ten crowns on the ten horns. The Beast has a name on his heads that are absolutely blasphemy against God. He is like his master, Satan! He symbolizes temporal powers, rulers, that are used by Satan to persecute, undermine, and destroy the church. He usurps God's rightful place.

He looks like a leopard. His feet are like a bear—powerful—that can overwhelm its victims. He has the mouth of a lion and his roar reminds all who it is that has the dominion and power on earth. The Dragon gave him his power, his seat of authority and became the Devil's helper.

John said he then saw one of the heads wounded, but he survived and was revived. It could indicate that he almost lost his power, but regained it.

This resulted in the people worshipping the dragon who gave the beast his power. And the people also worshipped the beast, saying, "*Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?*" (v. 4) The beast then spoke great things and blasphemies, and was given the power to continue for 42 months (same as 1260 days).

The beast became bold and blasphemed God, His Name, His Tabernacle (church) and all of those who dwell in heaven. He was allowed to make war with the saints and to overcome them. Authority was given to him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. As a result, all who dwell on the earth will worship him—except the true child of God (whose names have been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world). But his end will come by the same means as he gained his power. (verse 10).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE THINGS

This beast has power during the same 1260 days (years, etc.) that the woman would stay in the wilderness. Who is this beast? Is it the pagan Roman Empire? It ceased as such. But was it to continue under another guise to fight against the true church? Was it also a political, as well as religious (false Christianity), combination that this beast is now representing? Many believe that this is describing Apostate Christianity that took over the church for hundreds of years. It was the dragon that gave this beast its power. All nations, kindreds, and peoples were involved in the worship of the beast—all except the true child of God!

THE BEAST OF THE LAND (Revelation 13:11-18)

John now describes the second beast involved in the dragon's efforts to destroy the church—the beast from the earth (land). He has two horns like a lamb, but spoke like a dragon. He is allowed to exercise all the power of the first beast (possibly co-reigning). He caused the nations of the earth to worship the first beast whose deadly wounds were healed.

To gain this power over men, he performed great signs, and even made fire come down from heaven on earth in the sight of men. It was his way to deceive men and keep them under his

power. He caused men to make an image of the first beast and pay homage. He gave life to the image of the beast and helped to caused men to be subject to the beast. His power was so strong that people could not buy or sell without his mark. The beast's number is that of a man—666!

SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE THINGS

The Apostate church assumed power over the nations spiritually. But later, it was able to combine the temporal power of old Rome with his spiritual power to dominate all the nations of people—physically and spiritually.

The combining of these two powers could threaten people with both physical and spiritual death if they would not submit. Only the elect, the faithful, those who really listen to and obey God will escape their deception. All the rest would yield and be overcome. Such combining of powers was able to brand their own—give them a name to distinguish them. 666 is a symbol of man—three times—indicating worldliness at its greatest power.

The deceptive powers of Satan are awesome. The whole world gets caught up in his snare. The sad thing is—they don't even realize it because they are blinded and do not know the light of God's truth. This deceptiveness is seen in:

- a) The symbol of evil dressed in refinement—a counterfeit of goodness.
- b) The spirit of the world dressed in mild manners.
- c) The spirit of carnal religion—like one that opposed Jesus and slew Him.
- d) A religion ready to resort to violence to attain its ends.
- e) One that substitutes empty forms for true spiritual submission to God.
- f) A religion of sight, not one of faith.

There is no question about such for history clearly reveals:

- a) A political and religious alliance that held sway for hundreds of years.
- b) This alliance was in order to keep their powers over men.
- c) We can still see such at work, even today.

But God's faithful people will not get caught up in such false religion!

Lesson Eight

“Assurances to the Faithful”

(Revelation 14-15)

“For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.” (1 Peter 2:19-21)

The seventh trumpet has sounded and several visions have been seen:

- 1) The triumph of the woman’s child over the great Red Dragon.
- 2) Michael and his angels triumph over the Dragon and his angels.
- 3) The battle rages between the Dragon and the Woman and she is helped by the earth.
- 4) The battle between the Dragon and the Remnant of the seed of the woman.
- 5) The Dragon’s helpers (the first and second beasts) allow us see the terrible enemies that make war against God, His plans, His people, and His Word. The two beasts got their power from the Dragon and take on his character. Many are led to worship the first beast. His identity is 666 (man at the height of worldliness, wickedness and deceit).

In chapters 14-15, we have a continuation of these scenes under the 7th trumpet. They will offer great consolation to the faithful people of God. The assurance will come in different forms—but they will be most assuring to the saints that persevere. Chapter 14 begins with a song of triumph and ends with the great worship scene in the first part of chapter 15.

These scenes in chapters 14-15 are preparing us for the coming of the terrible bowls (viols) of wrath that are to be poured out onto the earth against those in rebellion against God and His Word.

VISION OF THE SONG OF TRIUMPH

(Revelation 14:1-5)

John now is allowed to see a Lamb standing on Mount Zion (Jerusalem). This Lamb was slain, but had been raised and exalted. He was slain from the foundation of the world (in the mind of God as an accomplished fact). He was slain for the redemption of mankind. But now He is standing, alive, and victorious! He is in the midst of His redeemed people.

The redeemed people are represented by the number 144,000. The Father’s name has been written on their foreheads since they belong to Him. They are God’s elect on the earth. They exemplify righteousness and faithfulness. They are able to sing a new song. Their voices are described as one voice—calm, continuous, like running water—rising at times to great heights of emphasis and then subsiding again with sounds like harpers playing. The sound is great, majestic, calm and sweet!

They are singing a song of victory that only they can sing! They are pictured as being before God’s throne in the presence of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. These are the

redeemed of God who have not been defiled and have faithfully followed the Lamb wherever He leads. They are the first fruits unto God, with more to come. They are those without guile, no deceit, and sincere followers of Christ who love and obey His truth.

**VISION OF THE ANGELS DEPICTING THIS TRIUMPH
(Revelation 14:6-20)**

The scene now turns to view the angels that come out of heaven or from before the throne of God. There are six of them! Each has a special message to offer that will encourage those who are faithful to God. They are announcing that the hour has come—great consolation is at hand for the people of God—take heart—be faithful—persevere to the end!

The **first angel** was seen flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. His was a message of hope for those who would believe and obey it. But it was a message of doom to those who disbelieve. ***“Go preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved: but he who does not believe will be condemned.”*** (Mark 16:15-16) His message is very clear: ***“fear God and give glory to Him.”*** Men are being called upon to reverence, respect God’s offer of Salvation and to give glory to Him by accepting His offer. Men are reminded that Judgment is just around the corner—it will come! So worship the true and living God who created heaven, earth, the sea and the springs of water.

The **second Angel** is an angel of Doom for Babylon! But it is news of great import for the Christian! The great persecutor of God’s people and even of the world is going to fall! Because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. She had coerced, forced, lured, deceived people and caused them to worship her, rather than God. Her punishment will come just as sure as God exist. She is fallen—a statement of fact that can be counted on. Chapters 17-18 describes this fall in detail.

The **third Angel** is an angel of WRATH or an angel of BLESSING! Wrath is to be poured out upon those who worship the Beast. Babylon will fall and be punished, but so will her followers. They will drink of the wine of the wrath of God—which wrath will be poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. Such will be tormented with fire and brimstone. This torment will be in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will ascend up forever and ever. They will have no rest day or night, and their punishment will be just and righteous.

But glory and honor is pronounced upon those who worship God and are patient and faithful to the end. Their obedience will be greatly rewarded. They will rest from their labors and those things they have had to endure. Their works (influencing of others) will follow them, linger on. These were strong and needed words for those who would endure much for the Cause of Christ in the future.

The **fourth Angel** is an angel of harvest (for the righteous)! John saw one liken unto the Son of Man sitting on a cloud. On His head was a golden crown signifying glory, majesty, and royalty. In His hand was a sharp sickle by which he would harvest the righteous from the earth.

The **fifth and sixth Angels** now come forth out of the Temple and the Altar. A voice cried out for the angel to cast in his sickle and reap the earth. His reaping was for those who rejected this gospel. The sixth angel had fire in order to burn up the chaff. He told the fifth angel that the harvest of the vineyard was ready—the grapes are fully ripe for harvest. Cast such into the winepress of the wrath of God to be trodden down. It was to be done outside the city. Blood came out of the winepress up to the horses' bridles for 1600 furlongs.

OBSERVATIONS

The great victory and rewarding of God's faithful people is obvious. Their victory was won by their godly lives unto the death and whatever they had had to endure would be nothing compared to the glories that await them.

But it is also just as obvious that punishment of the unrighteous is coming. This punishment will be frightening—none will escape. The Beast and all who follow will be punished. Chapter 15 is a prelude to the outpouring of God's wrath.

ANOTHER GREAT WORSHIP SCENE (Revelation 15:1-4)

John now witnesses another great worship scene—it was great and marvelous. He first saw seven angels with the seven last plagues. In those plagues was the wrath of God completed. He also saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire (trials and purification process). Then, he saw those who had won the victory over the Beast— over his image, his mark, and over the number of his name (666). As he observed these people, they were standing on the sea of glass and had harps in the hands. They were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God—but also, the song of the Lamb, saying: ***“Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and True are Your ways. O King of the saints! Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You. For Your judgments have been manifested.”*** They sang the song of deliverance from bondage.

THE READINESS OF THE ANGELS OF WRATH

Verse one of chapter fifteen began with a mention of the seven angels having the seven last plagues. Now, they are seen again by John in their readiness to carry out the wrath of God upon the disobedient.

These angels were clothed in pure bright linen (holiness). Their chests were girded with a golden band like a High Priest as he came to wait on the service of God in the Holy of Holies. One of the four living creatures gave them seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God and the Temple was then filled with smoke from the glory of God and His power. No one was allowed to enter the Temple till the seven plagues were completed. And no one could change the mind of God! No mercy will be offered. His wrath will be poured out!

CONCLUSION

God's people were going to have to endure a lot to be faithful to Him. But their faithfulness would pay off—even if they had to die. For now, they are pictured as being around the throne of God—singing the song of deliverance and victory.

The unrighteous are pictured as persecuting, dominating God's people. They had been riding high. They had rejoiced and made merry over their seeming defeat of the saints. But such would be short lived. They are now pictured as crying for mercy, but no mercy will be extended.

The "End of the Story" is important! The final picture is given: One group were singing songs in heaven—rejoicing. The other was groaning from below in great dejection.

Lesson Nine

“The Sevenfold Punishment of Evil”

(Revelation 16)

“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” (Romans 12:17-19)

God’s people have had to suffer many things unjustly—sometimes terrible things! We are encouraged to allow God to right the wrongs and to bring justice upon those who deserve it. The sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the bowls of wrath is God’s way of letting His people know that He will act in His own good time to recompense those who do evil. The trumpets are warning of God’s coming judgment, while the bowls of wrath are the actual carrying out of that judgment. Notice the similarities between the two:

TRUMPETS

- 1 – On the Earth**
- 2 – On the Sea**
- 3 – On Fountains of Water**
- 4 – On Sun, Moon, Stars**
- 5 – The Abyss**
- 6 – On the River Euphrates**
- 7 – Songs of Triumph**

BOWLS OF WRATH

- 1 – On the Earth**
- 2 – On the Sea**
- 3 – On Fountains of Waters**
- 4 – On Sun**
- 5 – Seat of the Beast**
- 6 – On the River Euphrates**
- 7 – It is Done!**

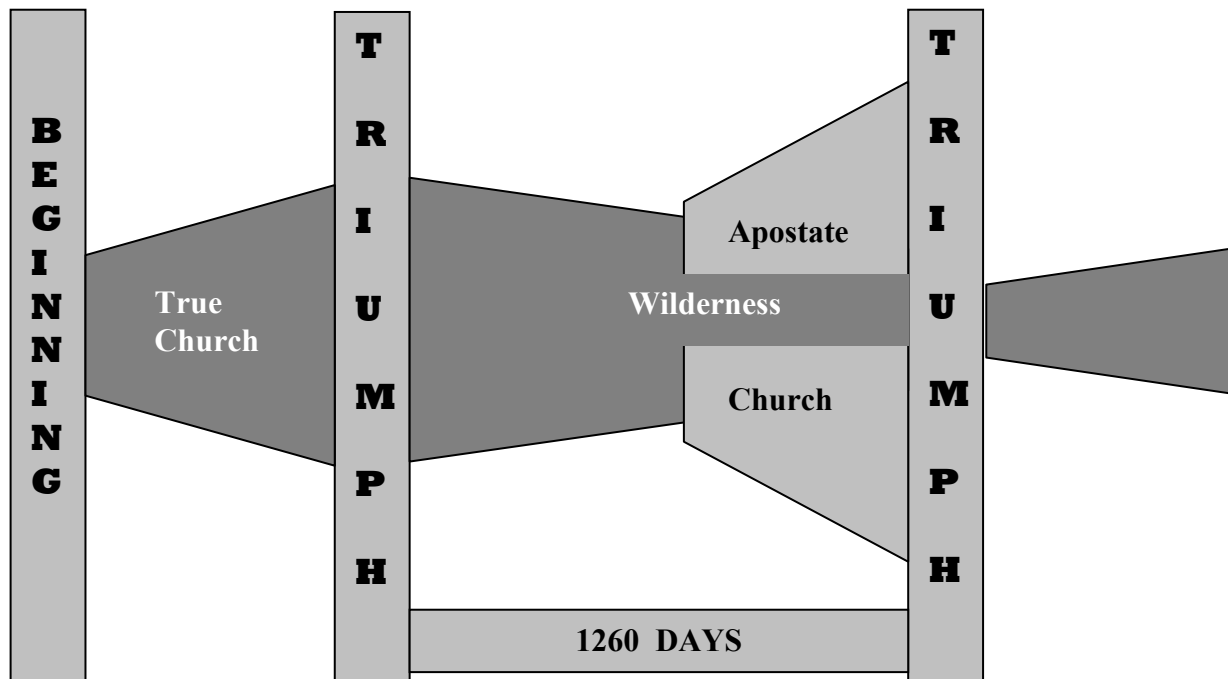
It is noticeable that the trumpets only affected “1/3rd” part of the above, while the bowls of wrath affected all and is looked upon as a recompense—justice being served. Even though the trumpets and bowls of wrath are covering the same things, it is questioned as to whether they are covering the same period of time or two different periods of time. It must be remembered that God’s punishment is pictured in a symbolic way and seems to have occurred towards the end of the 1260 day period.

The chart on the next page is an effort to visualize what we have studied up to the present time and its possible application.

The church began and spread rapidly over the Roman Empire. By 63 AD, the gospel had been preached widely (Colossians 1:23). Persecution by the Romans began in earnest towards the end of the first century—beginning with Emperor Nero. This persecution continued (off and on) for over 200 years. Revelation 6:9-11 is a picture of these martyred souls under the altar crying for justice from God. Revelation 7:13-17 reveals the reward that will be given to the faithful in the midst of persecution. Revelation 12:1-5, 7-9 gives us a picture of the war as being pushed by three enemies: The Dragon, 1st Beast, and the 2nd Beast. The church is then pictured as triumphant over her enemies. Paganism is put down in the Empire and Christianity is made the acceptable religion of the Empire. Satan had done his worse, but failed to destroy the church.

Satan now turns his forces to work on the inside of the church to destroy it. The two beasts are pictured as his helpers to accomplish this task—by gaining dominance over the church for a period of “1260 days.” The true church will flee into the wilderness to wait out this period. The apostate church would be in control for 1260 days (years?). But the church will eventually triumph again over her dreaded foes. The overthrow of the beasts will come in a succession of blows (bowls of wrath). Historical events will occur by the hand of God that will bring low this dominating religious-political power. This will allow the true church to come out of the wilderness to full view again. The true gospel will again be preached throughout the world.

PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD



***THE TERRIBLE TRIO
DRAGON—1ST BEAST—2ND BEAST
Enemies of Righteousness***

The bowls of wrath are God’s way of saying “the time of reaping what has been sown is now at hand!” These plagues of punishment come upon the enemies of God’s people. It was God’s way of undermining the religious and political powers that had held down the true church and the spread of the Gospel. The church can now come to full view again and be able to accomplish its work of preaching the gospel into all the world.

BOWLS OF WRATH (Revelation 16:1-21)

The first bowl was poured out upon the earth (16:2). It brought a terrible plague of foul and loathsome sores upon men. But it came on those who had the mark of the beast and those who had worshipped his image. This would seem to indicate that the bad state of health of this dominating power will begin to be evident to all who observe—they will begin to lose their power over men.

The second bowl was poured out upon the sea (16:3). This brought death to all in the sea. The beast will not only suffer defeat on land, but on sea as well. Great calamities will occur that will lessen his powers even more. Blood could denote great losses in life to those who support the beast and his power.

The third bowl was poured out upon the fountains of waters (16:4-7). The importance of fresh to drink is well-known to mankind. That which is vital to the survival of the beast will be taken away. It will become evident that the beast's fall is inevitable. And the justness of his punishment is made clear by the expression "blood for blood!" They had shed innocent blood of the saints. Now, they will experience the same. They were blood-thirsty—so now they get blood up to their chin bone! The law of sowing and reaping! God is vindicating His martyred saints! The justness of His actions is made very clear.

The fourth bowl was poured out upon the sun (16:8-9). That which was a blessing at first has now become a curse to the beast! The heat of the sun is turned upon the enemies of God's people. He is scorched with the heat—the pain will be terrible—there will be great anguish. Why this picture? God's people had been burned alive for their faith. The beast liked fire—a burning fire—so they will get burning fire—very hot! "Fire for fire!"

It is interesting to notice the contrast to Revelation 7:15-17 to the above. God's people will hunger no more, but the wicked will hunger—bowls on land. God's people will thirst no more, but the wicked will thirst—their water turned into blood that made it unfit to drink. God's people will experience the heat of the Sun no more, but the wicked will be scorched by the heat of it. God's people will be given living fountains of water. God will wipe away all tears of crying from their eyes. While the wicked will be filled with crying in great anguish.

As the wicked begin to experience these things, they will blaspheme God's name—they will blame God for allowing their pains and agonies. But they will not repent of usurping God's place in His church. Thus, the power of the beast will be even more lessened.

The fifth bowl is poured out upon the seat of the beast (16:10-11). The beast had set up his throne in arrogance and opposition to God (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). He had tried to take the place of God to rule the nations with his iron fist. Now God will strip him of his power over the nations. The beast's kingdom will be brought into darkness (confusion). Great pain and agony will come to him and his followers. He will try desperately to hold on to his powers and make wild claims of his God-appointed powers. He will continue in his blasphemous ways. He, nor his followers, will give due recognition to God's authority over them—thus.....NO REPENTANCE!

The sixth bowl was poured out upon the Euphrates River (16:12-16). The plague caused the water to dry up. The protection of the beast has been greatly removed. The kings of the East can now come and fight forcefully against the enemies of God's people. The terrible trio senses the battle that was coming and prepared themselves for it. They send forth three evil spirits performing wonders before the kings of the earth to seduce them back to the beast. The great battle array is then pictured—two opposing armies in the valley of decision! Guess who is going to lose this battle!

It is interesting to note that as Cyrus had changed the river channel in order to conquer old Babylon—that God used this as a symbol of spiritual-political Babylon's overthrow. This spiritual dominating political power is going to be overthrown by God. He will use natural forces to bring it about. Thus, historical events are often manifestations of God's wrath upon sinful mankind.

The three evil spirits could be an indication of the spirit of infidelity, a spirit of worldliness (carnal-mindedness), and a spirit of false teaching.

The seventh bowl is poured out into the air (16:17-21). Seven seems to indicate the completion of God's judgment upon the beast. God's purpose to take away the beast's power over the nations will be finished. This will allow for God's truth and His church to be vindicated and brought to light again. "It is finished!"—it is done!

The dramatic and emphatic changes that would take place on earth are described by physical calamities. The beast, Babylon, will be judged by God. No one will come to the aid of Babylon. God's full cup of wrath will be poured out upon the great city. It is hard for us now to fully realize the great calamities that occurred during this period of time of God's judgment upon the beast. But, in spite of its terribleness—men still blasphemed God. Great calamities occur on land and sea. Drinking waters affected. Armies turned loose against them to bring about their defeat. A huge earthquake is sent—affecting everything and everyone. Then to top it all off—huge hail stones falling upon them. Did they see the light? No! They just continued in their blasphemous ways.

CONCLUSION

Even though the power and domination of the beast has been greatly diminished, God still wants us to see the overthrow of the beast. Chapters 17-18 will further describe his overthrow. Chapter 19 will give greater emphasis to the great battle of Armageddon. And chapter 20 will further describe the over-all defeat of Satan and his co-helpers. Evilness, wickedness, darkness brings its own retributions—not only in the after-life, but here and now. And the righteous can be fully assured that justice will be meted out.

Lesson Ten

“The Unveiling of Babylon the Great”

(Revelation 17-18)

“And on her forehead a name was written: ‘MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.’” (Revelation 17:5)

Chapter 16 pictures the wrath of God being poured out upon “the great Babylon.” Chapters 17-18 talks about the judgment to be brought upon the “Harlot Woman”—a new descriptive term, but not a new idea.

In previous chapters, Satan is pictured as a 7-headed Dragon that persecutes the church, but he does it through the two beasts. The church triumphs over all three. The next great battle of Satan is to corrupt the church from within. He succeeds in causing an apostasy from the faith, but gains great spiritual power over the people. The True Church has to flee into the wilderness for a period of time (1260 days). This new image of a “Harlot Woman” seems to be used in contrast to the “Pure Woman”—the true bride of Christ. This woman is represented as sitting on the 1st beast that has 7 heads and ten horns. It is generally felt that she represents the apostate church and old political Rome combined to exercise power and authority over the nations—both spiritually and politically. This entity has been identified as the “Holy Roman Empire.” Chapters 17-18 vividly describe the results of this union upon the nations. But it also describes the great fall of this marriage. It is believed that the term “Babylon” is used to describe this union.

DESCRIPTION OF THE HARLOT

(Revelation 17:1-6)

In the Old Testament the term fornication, adultery, harlotry was used in a figurative sense to refer to Israel’s turning to other gods or idols. The term seems to be used here in the same sense of those who have also turned from God to another god (another authority). The term is obviously in contrast to Virginity, Chastity, Faithfulness, and Purity.

This woman is said to be sitting on many waters. Verse 15 states that such are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. She was not satisfied with her own (spiritual) realm, but wanted control over and to rule over the nations (politically). She also sits upon a scarlet-colored beast. This gave both spiritual and political control and authority over much of mankind.

The woman’s attire was certainly unfitting of the true bride of Christ. She wore purple and scarlet—not white! She wore gold, pearls, and precious stones—showing her great materialism. Her attire was not to draw men to the Lamb of God, but to the god of mammon. She was gorgeously dressed and very appealing to mankind. Her purpose was to seduce men to follow her, not the Lamb of God.

The “Harlot Woman” had in her hand a golden cup that was full of abominations. It contained the filthiness of her fornication. What she was offering people was lewd, sinful, wicked before God. She enticed people to drink from her cup.

The woman is named: **Mystery** (people did not know her true identity); **Babylon the Great** (She is compared to Old Babylon who held God’s people in captivity for 70 years); **Mother of Harlots** (She not only practices harlotry herself, but so do her offspring as well. Those who come out of her will practice her ways. As you observe those religious groups that have come out of the apostate church, it is evident that they also have a disregard for God’s authority over them. They practice things that identify them with the harlot.

This woman is said to be drunk with the blood of the saints—martyred in the name of Jesus. She was furious that some would not accept her deceptive ways. The martyrs knew who she was—A Harlot! They saw what John sees in his vision—a drunken, lustful, worldly woman that is sitting on a 7-headed, 10-horned, scarlet colored beast that is enticing the nations with her deluding filth of her fornication. John was over-awed (utterly amazed) with what he saw!

DESCRIPTION OF THE BEAST (Revelation 17:7-18)

This beast is the same beast of chapter 13. He was, and is not, and yet is! He came from the abyss (the place of wickedness) and from Satan. He is Satan’s tool, his helper to destroy the people of God. The beast **Which was** (Rome pictured in her height of power and glory); **Which is not** (Rome as she gradually declined and fell in 476 AD); **And yet is** (Rome revived as the “Holy Roman Empire.” Under the domination of the apostate church, Rome ruled through the powers of the Harlot Woman.

The beast had 7 heads (mountains or hills). Everyone knows that Rome sat on 7 hills. Political Rome ruled the world from these hills. The heads could be 7 forms of government. Five were already past when John wrote this book. One was now in progress as John wrote. There was one more to come later. And then an 8th would arise out of the 7th. According to historians, Rome went through 7 different kinds of rule or governments. The 8th followed the 7th and came out of it. The 8th is believed to have been the apostate church’s rule. It is identified in history as the “Holy Roman Empire.” Its rule would not last over the nations, but was to come to an end. It would be the last form of universal power that Rome would exercise as a world empire.

Upon the beast’s 7 heads were 10 horns. They represent 10 kings yet to be. Rome’s fall would be only temporary. It would divide into 10 kingdoms. These kingdoms will be enticed by the Woman to form an alliance. She will offer them power if they give allegiance to her. They will become a part of the rebellion against God. They, together, will make war with the Lamb (His Cause). But the Lamb will overcome them. However, these 10 kingdoms will later rebel against the Woman. They will become disenchanted with her delusions. They will strip her of her powers. All of this will be God’s doings. The Woman is that great city that reigns over the kings of the earth.

THE WOMAN'S PUNISHMENT DESCRIBED (Revelation 18:1-8)

The fall of ancient, “indestructible” Babylon is used to symbolize the fall of the woman on the beast. She shall receive the wine of God’s wrath. God will send plagues upon her. She will be punished according to her deeds. She shall drink the bitter dregs of her cup of abominations. Her wantonness will reap torment and mourning. She will suffer three-fold plagues: Death, Mourning, and Famine. She will be burned with fire.

The reason for her punishment is because of her fornications with the nations. Her worldly, carnal concerns for worldly power and her arrogance (“*I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow*”) had reached up to the heavens and God remembered her iniquities. Her fall will come quickly. It took ages to build her great power. But her fall will come in a very short time in comparison. The world will be amazed at her quick fall from power.

A warning is now given to all peoples to come out of her—to have no fellowship with her and her sins. If they partake of her sins, they will also partake of her plagues.

REACTIONS TO THE WOMAN'S FALL (Revelation 18:9-20)

The kings of the earth are both surprised, but saddened at her swift fall. The divine right of kings to rule came from the apostate church. When papal Rome fell, they lost this concept. Merchants and seamen also mourned her fall. Their riches came from the Harlots luxurious and licentious living. They lost their wealth because of her fall.

But God’s people are told to rejoice over her fall. Heaven is called upon to rejoice. The apostles and prophets are called upon to rejoice. Because God has judged her and shown her up for what she was.

FINALITY OF THE WOMAN'S FALL (Revelation 18:21-24)

The woman on the beast will never exist again. Six times the phrase is used, “*No more!*” She is compared to a great millstone cast into the sea to rise no more. The apostate church with its temporal powers over the nations will never exist again! She has been stripped of her power and earthly glory. Her true character is seen for what it really is. An unfaithful bride to the Lamb!

CONCLUSION

Babylon was to fall—God said so—and it happened! The appeal was to come out of her and not to partake of her sins. She is not only a harlot (unfaithful to God), but she has spawned many offspring who are also harlots (unfaithful to God). Religiously, we are either the chaste bride of Christ (faithful to Him—respecting His headship), or we are the harlot (unfaithful to God and not respecting His headship).

Lesson Eleven

“The Victory of Righteousness Assured”

(Revelation 19-20)

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5)

Babylon has fallen! ***“...with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.”***(Revelation 18:21) God has judged the Harlot on the beast. The outcome is now obvious. The Harlot will be stripped of her power over the nations. Chapter 18 was an appropriate funeral dirge over fallen Babylon. Thus, Chapter 19 opens up with the Halleluia chorus. The church has survived Babylon’s worse. It is now able to come out into the open once more as God’s True Bride. God’s judgment has liberated the earth from Babylon’s hold. The Word of God now has free course again on the earth among men.

VICTORY CELEBRATION DESCRIBED

(Revelation 19:1-21)

The Great Babylon has been humbled! Political and Spiritual Rome with all her fearfulness has been brought low. The magnificent city that men thought would last forever has fallen! God’s justness and righteous judgment has been brought to bear upon her.

Who brought about this humbling of the Great City? Obviously, it was the Lamb with his great power. Verse 11-16 describes the Lamb coming to do battle with Babylon. He was riding a white horse (the righteousness of His Cause). He judges righteously. His eyes were like a flame of fire (the ability to see and know all). Many diadems or crowns on His head (the ultimate ruler over all). He was clothed in linen, white and clean (unsoiled by sin or evil). He has a flaming sword coming out of His mouth with which to do battle (the infallibly inspired Word of God). His names are Faithful and True (He lives up to His promises—He is dependable). It is a name that only He knew (denoting the inability of mere men to fathom Him). He is the Word of God (the expression and revealer of God’s Will to mankind). He is King of kings, Lord of lords (emphasizing his dignity and superiority over all). His vesture is dipped in blood (possibly denoting victory over His enemies). He smites the nations with His sword, which either converts or condemns them (using the Word of God). He has an army following Him. They too are clothed in white linen (righteousness) and riding on white horses.

How is this defeat envisioned? It is like a great supper to which birds are invited. It is called the feast of the Great God. Their food is the flesh of those killed in battle—there were dead bodies all over the battlefield. Who killed them? It was Him that sat upon the white horse with the sword coming forth from His mouth. The defeat is also envisioned as being cast into a Lake of Fire. Notice that only the Beast and False Prophet were cast into the Lake of Fire. They were cast alive into the Fire. This is their overthrow—never again to rise. However, the followers of these two were merely slain with the sword. Their final punishment has not come as yet.

This great defeat calls for a celebration! This brought about the great Halleluia chorus expressing great praise to God for the victory. Not only the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures around the throne of God, but a great multitude break forth and cry out: **“Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”** Also to be celebrated is the marriage of the Lamb and His bride. The Lamb has been faithful—He has carried out His promises. But the True Bride of Christ has been faithful also—thus, she is adorned in white and linen. What a privilege it will be to be invited to this marriage feast. This feast is in stark contrast to the Feast that will be mentioned later. John was overwhelmed with what he was allowed to see and fell down to give worship to the angel, but was forbidden. He was told to give glory only to God for this great victory. Jesus has made this great victory possible for God’s people.

**OUTCOME OF THIS BATTLE
(Revelation 20:1-6)**

The Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet were introduced in chapters 12-13. The Beast and the False Prophet are envisioned as Babylon or the Harlot on the Beast. Their overthrow was seen in chapters 17-19. The Beast and the False Prophet were cast into the Lake of Fire indicating the end of this powerful arrangement forever. But the Dragon, Satan, was not cast into the Lake of Fire as of yet. He was only bound! Imperial and Papal Rome were his tools to rule over men. But they were humbled and cast into the Lake of Fire. They perished, but Satan still lives. Thus, his next efforts will surely come, but he will have to find a new tool to use.

Satan was bound a **“thousand years.”** What is meant by this expression? There is no indication that it is to be taken in a literal sense. One thousand carries with it the idea of “completion.” If it has reference to a time sequence, it could indicate a completed period of time. It is not important for us to know the exactness of time. But it does seem to follow the period identified as the 1260 days.

E N D O F 1 2 6 0 D A Y S	SATAN	LOOSED	B A T T L E	J U D G M E N T D A Y
	CHURCH IS VICTORIOUS AND REIGNS	BESEIGED		
	BOUND 1000 YEARS	LITTLE SEASON		

What will be happening during this “thousand years?” Three things seem to be obvious in these six verses:

1. **Satan is bound!** He has been defeated in his efforts to deceive the nations. As the Word of God has free course, men’s minds are enlightened. As long as the Word of God is preached, men cannot be deceived as before. Satan no longer has the use of the Harlot on the Beast to deceive and rule over the nations.
2. **The Saints are reigning!** They have been placed on “thrones”—denoting victory. The church has again survived Satan’s onslaughts. It was a time of exaltation, vindication, and judgment. This is symbolically spoken of as the first resurrection. It is like looking over a battlefield with much dead. All of a sudden—certain ones come back to life! Both the dead saints and living saints enjoyed this victory. Both shall share in this great triumph. They reign with Christ during the entire period of time (1000 years).
3. **The Enemies of God stayed dead!** They stayed dead for the entire period of time. They were defeated—thus, they obviously do not share in this triumph. Only the saints of God share in this triumph.

OBSERVATIONS

With the defeat of Babylon, the Word of God was able to have free course upon the earth again. God’s True church, His Cause begins to grow and thrive again. The Devil’s great deception no longer holds the world in subjection. Those who are involved with the “first resurrection” will not be punished with the second death—as enemies of God will be!

SATAN’S FINAL EFFORT AND PUNISHMENT (Revelation 20:7-10)

After the “1000 years” Satan is loosed for a “little season.” Is it “little” in comparison to the “1260 days” or of the “1000 years?” This could be a way of indicating Satan’s weakness or limitations that have been placed on him since the Word of God has been made available. But Satan will again attempt to deceive the nations. The reason Satan was not cast into the “Lake of Fire” like the “Beast and the False Prophet” is because God has further use of him. Satan will again be allowed an opportunity in some way to deceive the nations into fighting against God and His people. He will strongly attempt to overthrow God’s work among men.

Satan is pictured as gathering at Gog and Magog for the great battle that is to come between Righteousness and Wickedness. Gog and Magog represent Satan’s new efforts to fight against God. They gather around the church to lay siege to her. They will constantly try to overthrow her. The outcome of this battle will fail also—just like Babylon’s efforts. No matter how many or how great Satan’s efforts are, he will fail. For Satan and his followers will be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone where they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

THE FINAL JUDGMENT (Revelation 20:11-15)

From Satan's final defeat, the revelation turns to give a finality to all things by depicting the great day of judgment of all mankind. John sees a great white throne upon which God sat. The heavens and the earth fled away from his presence at His command. Then, all the dead were called forth to stand before God's judgment throne. The basis of His judgment was to be from the books (God's Word) according to the works or actions of the people. If one's name is not found in the book of life he is cast into the "Lake of Fire" where the Devil, the Beast, and the False Prophet have been cast. The "Lake of Fire" is a symbolic concept of the "second death"—which signifies eternal separation from God (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

CONCLUSION

God's people have had to suffer for righteousness sake throughout the centuries. But the final accounting has not yet come, but it will come—be assured of it! While the nations were deceived for a period of time by the Great City, God saw to it that her deception was stopped. So, Satan will have to look elsewhere to accomplish his task. He will eventually find another way to deceive the nations, but it will be short-lived. Then will come the final judgment. We need to be sure that our names are written in the Lamb's book of life!

Lesson Twelve

“Behold, I Make All Things New”

(Revelation 21-22)

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”
(2 Peter 3:13)

Throughout the book of Revelation we have seen the continued efforts of Satan to destroy the church. God’s saints have been beaten down, persecuted, and killed, but the church still survived. Satan’s use of the Beast and the False Prophet failed to destroy the church and were eventually stopped by God. Satan then turned to destroy the church from within by the Harlot and the Beast, but God again intervened to put down this great apostate ruler over the nations. In the previous lesson, we saw the continued efforts of Satan to fight against the church until the end would finally come and when he and all of his helpers are punished.

It is now time to see the great reward of God’s faithful people as found in chapters 21-22. God wants all to see His church which is His masterpiece of beauty. It is a haven of righteousness, peace, and security in a world of darkness and confusion. It is God’s healing servant for the nations. And it has a great reward awaiting it someday. God now uses every conceivable thing of beauty and desirability to describe His church and the reward He holds out to it.

VISION OF THE CITY OF GOD

(Revelation 21:1-8)

God uses a material, earthly city to help us appreciate the beautiful city of God. Because of our limitations, we can only grasp this great spiritual city by the use of earthly terms. The city is now identified:

- 1. It is not old Jerusalem, but new Jerusalem.**
- 2. It is not in the present heavens and earth, but in a new heavens and earth.**
- 3. It is a great city, like the great cities of the earth.**
- 4. It is a holy city, filled with only righteous people.**
- 5. This city is like a beautiful bride ready to be married.**
- 6. It is a city where God, Himself, will dwell.**
- 7. It is a city where:**
 - a) There will be no more tears—crying, sobbing, sorrow, or mourning over terrible happenings brought on by sin and wickedness.
 - b) No more death—it has been destroyed—cast into “Lake of Fire.”
 - c) No more pain—suffering affliction—because we are no longer in the flesh.
 - d) Where all things are made new!

God extends an invitation to all to come into this great city. His plan of Redemption has been completed and He can give eternal life to all that will come to Him. The over comer shall inherit all things promised. Direct communion with God is promised to His children. But to those

who disbelieve and reject or turn their hearts away from God, He will not be allowed to enjoy the fruits of living in this great city. Neither the cowardly, the abominable, murders, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, or liars will enter this city. Their place will be in the “Lake of Fire” that burns with brimstone. They will experience the second death—separation from God forever.

THE EXTERIOR OF THE CITY DESCRIBED (Revelation 21:9-21)

The angel stated that this city, this new Jerusalem, is the bride of Christ. John saw this great city from the mountain top as it descended into view. Its **glory** was as the glory of God. Its **light** was like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Its **security** was made possible by its great, high walls. But its **accessibility** is also great! It has 12 gates with an angel at each one. And each gate has a name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. Its **permanence** is seen in its sure foundation. It has 12 foundation stones—each one has the name of one of the apostles. The church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus as the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). Its **perfection** is emphasized by a perfect cube (12,000 X 12,000 X 12,000)--giving overwhelming emphasis upon its perfection. Its **spaciousness** is seen by the measurement of the walls. They were 12 X 12 X 1000—144,000. The **splendor** of the city is overwhelming—walls of jasper, city of pure gold, foundations adorned with all kinds of precious stones, the 12 gates were of pearl, and the street was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

UNUSUAL THINGS ABOUT THIS CITY (Revelation 21:22-22:5)

1. **The city has no temple.** Since God and the Lamb are the temple in which we can dwell. Its glory is greater than any earthly temple.
2. **It has no Sun or Moon.** For God is the light of this city. His glory illuminates it with great light. The saved walk in this light. The kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor into it as well.
3. **The gates do not need to be shut.** Old Jerusalem had to shut their gates for protection from their enemies—especially at night. But there will be no night or darkness there—only light. No defiling thing will enter through the gates into the city. Only those whose names are in the Lamb’s book of life will enter in.
4. **It has two special things in this city:**
 - a) **It has the river of the water of life.** There is salvation in this city. There is satisfaction to those who thirst for righteousness. It flows from the very throne of God and of the Lamb.
 - b) **It has the tree of life.** It sustains all in the city. It produces 12 kinds of fruit—one kind a month. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations. Thus, there will be no more curse in this city.
5. **Activity in this city:**
 - a) **God’s servants will serve Him.**
 - b) **There will be fellowship, communion, and closeness.** The relationship that was lost in Eden is now regained.
 - c) **God’s name will be on their forehead.**
 - d) **They will reign with God forever and ever.**

**CONCLUSION CONCERNING THINGS IN THIS BOOK
(Revelation 22:6-21)**

The assurance of these things is strongly emphasized. God's word is faithful and true—it can be depended upon. God will carry out His plans speedily and quickly. Those who are obedient will survive these things unto glorification.

John view of all of these things was overwhelming to him. He attempts again to worship the angel, but forbidden. Only God is to be worshipped.

Words of warning are now given from the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Reward and punishment will be meted out. Those who are ready and prepared because they lived righteous, holy lives will be rewarded. Those unprepared because they lived disobedient and sinful lives will be punished. Those who keep His commandments will have access into the Holy City and to the tree of life. Those who will not have access to the City are: Dogs, Sorcerers, Whoremongers, Murderers, Idolaters, and those who love and make a lie.

Final assurance is now given. Jesus sent His angel to give assurance of these things to the churches. That assurance rest upon who Jesus is:

- a) He is Alpha and Omega (the beginning and the end).
- b) He is the root and offspring of David (the promised Messiah-King).
- c) He is the bright and morning star (the hope of mankind).

A final invitation is now extended to the reader. God's Holy Spirit, through His church, invites sinners to repent and come to God. Those who will hear and understand are encouraged to also invite others to come as well. Those who are thirsty for righteousness are encouraged to come. Whosoever will, let them all come to drink of the waters of life freely.

Then, a final warning is given—don't add to or take away from the words of this book. The punishment will be terrible for those who do. Jesus again states—He will come quickly—emphasizing the assurance of his coming. Men need to be prepared for that come. John's added thoughts to this was: ***“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”***

