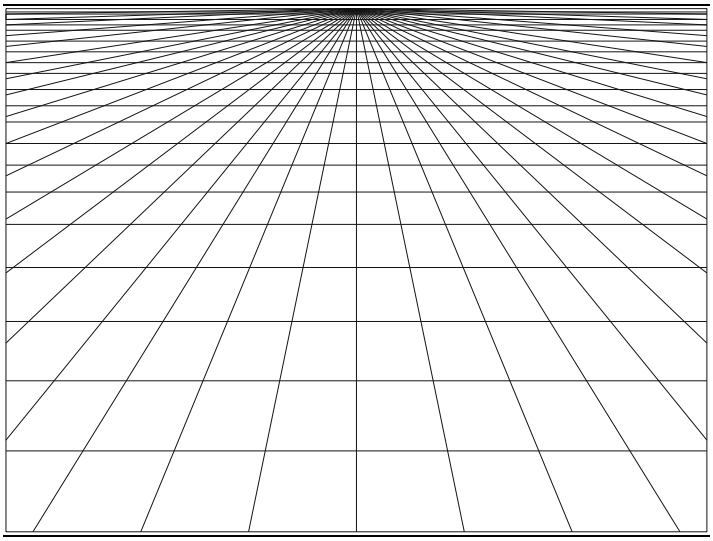
THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION



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THE REVELATION

GOD PREDICTS THE FUTURE -- A Preface to Revelation

The word **"eschatology"** is the theological term used to describe the Bible's prophetic doctrine about the Last Days ("*eschatos*" = last [end]; "*logos*" = word or teaching). Hence, "eschatology" is teaching about the last days of this age and about the glorious eternity to follow.

The word **"Revelation"** (1:1 - "*apokalupsis" "apo"* = away from; *"kalupsis"* = to cover, veil, or hide); Hence, the full word refers to the removal of a covering; a taking away the veil; an exposure of something that has been hidden. In Revelation God unveils His mysterious plan for the Future of mankind and planet Earth.

"The study of Bible prophecy *(particularly the book of Revelation)* is fascinating and profitable. God has seen fit to draw aside the curtain of the future and to reveal enough of His heavenly plan to inspire His children with confidence and hope. Let us approach our study with joyous expectation" -- Charles Woodbridge

A. The Importance of Studying Revelation

What is the purpose for studying prophecy?

1. To teach us what God's plans are
   A knowledge of Bible prophecy "provides the believer with an optimistic philosophy if history" (Alva McClain)

2. To inspire us about the greatness of God (Is. 46:9-11)
   (He is omniscient [He knows all] and He is sovereign [He controls all])
   The Omniscience of God has foretold His plan (Is. 14:24; 44:28-45:1, 13; 46:9-10) and the Sovereignty of God will accomplish His plan (Is. 46:10b-11)

3. To assure us of the unity and reliability of Scripture
   A vast portion of the Bible is given to predictive prophecy. It is said that 333 distinct prophecies were literally and exactly fulfilled at the first coming of Christ (the chances of this happening by accident have been computed as 1 in 87,000--plus 90 more zeros).
   For every verse speaking of Jesus' first coming in Scripture, there are eight which speak of His second coming.

4. To encourage us to be faithful to God and His Word

   God's future program is a source of:

   a. Comfort to the sorrowing Christian (I Thess. 4:13-14; John 14:1-4)

   b. Strength to the Christian enduring testing (II Cor. 4:14-18; Rom. 8)

   c. Warning to the lazy, unfaithful Christian (II Cor. 5:9, 10)

   d. Correction to the Christian who places too much value on this life (II Peter 3:10-12)

   e. Reproof to the Christian who becomes doctrinally careless (II Thess. 2:5; II Pet. 1:19)

   f. Cleansing for the Christian who keeps his eyes on Christ and His future glory (I Jn. 3:2-3)(cp. W.E. Blackstone, Jesus is Coming, p. 180)

5. To wake us up to realize the extreme urgency of the hour in which we live (Rom. 13:11-12). God's longsuffering is so that others might be saved (II Pet. 3:8-9, 15)

6. To prepare us for the most dreadful time of persecution in human history -- the 70th week of Daniel (commonly called "The Tribulation Period") (Rev. 14:12)

7. To bless us with God's revelation about the future (Rev. 1:3)

B. The Method of Studying the Book of Revelation

1. **Pray** for the **Holy Spirit** to teach you His Word (John 16:13; Rev.2:7,11,17)

2. Allow the Bible to formulate your system of beliefs (your theology), rather than forcing your pre-supposed beliefs into the Bible

3. Interpret the Revelation **literally** unless an obvious figure of speech, metaphor, symbol or analogy is being used.

   Take God's Word for what it says, rather than allegorizing the Bible and dreaming up a deeper, hidden meaning that cannot be proven by the context, grammar, or by an accurate comparison with other Scripture.

   "An important rule of interpretation is that *what is literal must explain the figurative and never should the figurative be used to explain the literal*"
   (J.B. Smith, A Revelation of Jesus Christ, Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa, p.16)

   When a figure of speech is being used, God will draw attention to it by:

   ...using the word ***"like"*** (Greek: homoios)
   ["*His feet like unto fine brass" -1:15]*

   ...using the word ***"as"*** (Greek: hos)
   ["*I...heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet - 1:10]*

   ...using an obvious **symbol** and then ***directly*** explaining or interpreting the symbol
   ["*The seven stars (1:16) are seven angels" (1:20)]*
   ["*The seven candlesticks (1:13) are seven churches" (1:20)]*

   ...using an obvious **symbol** and ***indirectly*** explaining or interpreting the symbol
   ["*Time, times, and half a time" (12:14) are 1,260 days (12:6)]*

   ...using an obvious **symbol** and requiring the reader to carefully ***cross-reference*** the rest of Scripture for the correct interpretation.
   ["*A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (12:1)* represents *the Nation of Israel* (Genesis 37:9-11)]

4. Remember that God has not necessarily revealed all the details of His plan yet (Rev. 10:4)

5. Understand the unique features of Bible prophecy

   a. Not all prophetic passages are chronological (cp. Rev. 11 with 12:1-5)

   b. Often there are time gaps in prophecy (that were not discernable to the prophet himself) (Is. 9:6-7, 61:1-2; cp. Lk. 4:18-20; Dan. 9:24-27)

   c. Often there are parenthetical interjections that do not necessarily follow the events that preceded these episodes in chronological order.

      Example: After the Seventh trumpet of the Day of the Lord's Judgment is sounded at the end of the 7 year tribulation ((11:15-19), God backs up and interjects two parenthetical chapters which focus on the mid-point of the 7 year tribulation (12-13).

   d. Often, future events are recorded as if they had already occurred (EX: Rev. 20:15; compare Is. 9:6, 5:13, 53:12). Why?

      1) To express the certainty of fulfillment (Is. 46:10)

      2) To express the viewpoint of the prophet who was seeing the vision of the future (EX: Rev. 20:15)

INTRODUCTION
"THE IMPORTANCE OF REVELATION AND ITS REVEALER"
REVELATION 1:1-8

I. THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS IMPORTANT (v. 1-3)

A. Revelation is important because of its source (v. 1-2)

V. 1

"The Revelation" = lit. a revealing; an unveiling.
The word describes an opening up to sight that which was previously covered.

"The Revelation ***of Jesus Christ"*** = the phrase could mean
a revelation *about* Jesus Christ (objective genitive, in which Jesus would be the content of the revelation)
OR a revelation *from* Jesus Christ (subjective genitive, in which Jesus would be the giver or the source of the revelation).

While much of the book is devoted to describing the person and works of Jesus Christ, the Revelation covers more than a treatise on the doctrine of Christ.

It covers all end-time events that Jesus has the authority to unfold. It is an unveiling from Christ. God the Father gives Christ the revelation to show us what will take place (SEE Rev. 5:6-14 - Christ takes the book from God the Father and opens the seals).

1. The Father planned it (v. 1)

2. The Son revealed it (v. 1)

3. An angel brought it (v. 1b)

4. John wrote it (v. 2)

5. The Spirit speaks it (Rev. 2:7 etc. - "hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches").

"Must shortly come to pass" -"the things which are necessary to happen with speed."

"Shortly" = speedily. We get our word "tachometer" from it, which measures speed.
In other words, when the events in this book begin to occur, they will be fulfilled with speed (swiftly) (7 years) - unlike the view of many who view this book as having been fulfilled through the centuries.

V. 2

"All things that he saw" = John saw one picture (scene) after another as God unveiled the future before his eyes.

John received a panoramic view of the likes that no Hollywood motion picture could depict. We will have the privilege of seeing through the eyes of faith what he saw, as we read this book.

B. Revelation is important because of its promise (v. 3)

"Blessed" = describes one who becomes the privileged recipient of divine favor. One who is fortunate to receive showers of good things from God.
"Blessed" = this is one of seven beatitudes or promises of blessings in the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14)

"He that readeth" - refers to the one (NOTE - singular) who would publicly read this book before others.

"They that hear" - (plural) those who listen as it is read.

"Keep" = to hold on to what God says. To preserve what you hear in your heart and mind. To not be a "forgetful hearer" but one who pays serious attention to what he has been taught (cp. Rev. 12:17; SEE: 22:7).

The reason why the readers of this book are blessed is:
"for (because) the time is at hand." I.e., the season (of the end) is near.
The angel later tells John not to seal up (keep hidden and closed from our view) "the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand" (Rev. 22:10).

No other book in the Bible promises a blessing to the reader, listeners, and doers like Revelation; And yet many have never taken the time to read it. Many are afraid of it, and view it as totally incomprehensible.

II. THE CHRIST OF REVELATION IS IMPORTANT (v. 4-8)

v. 4

"To the seven Churches"

The book was addressed to seven local churches that existed in John's day. The descriptions of these seven churches will characterize the spiritual situation of churches in the last days.

"Grace" = the unmerited favor of God is even needed by those who are saved to victoriously live the Christian life.

"Peace" = the consoling blessings of God

NOTE: Grace and peace only come from God. He is the only source of those blessings.

Grace and peace come from:

1) The Father - ***"Him which is, . . . was. . . and is to come"*** - a reference to the eternal nature of God. The one who is = same idea as the name: "YAWH" (a prominent name for God from the Hebrew "to be" verb).

2) The Spirit - ***"The seven Spirits"*** - must be a reference to the Holy Spirit for the following reasons:
--Grace and peace only come from God.
--If the spirits represent angels, why are they distinctly separated in Rev. 3:1 (cp. 1:20 with 3:1).
--Compare the 7 lamps of fire (Rev. 4:5 with Zech. 4:1-6); compare the seven eyes (Rev. 5:6 with Zech. 4:10).
--The number 7 is associated with completion, fulfillment, and perfection (Examples: Gen. 2:2 - creation; Ex. 20:10 - Sabbath rest; Lev. 14:7 - sprinkling of a leper 7 times, then pronounced clean; Naaman immersed 7 times before leprosy healed - II Ki. 5:14; 7 years of tribulation) (cp. Ryrie Study Bible note on Rev. 1:4 regarding the number 7).
***The phrase "Seven Spirits" refers to the Holy Spirit in His fullness. The seven-fold perfection of the Spirit (cp. the Spirit's description in Is. 11:2 - "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."

3) The Son (v. 5) ***"and from Jesus Christ"***

John in verses 4-8 describe the exalted Christ.

A. His words are believable (v. 5a)

"Faithful witness" = one who gives a trustworthy testimony.
His faithfulness as a witness shows that Jesus only tells the truth and always tells the truth.
In Rev. 3:14, He is called: "the faithful and true witness" In 1:2, Jesus' testimony is one an equal level with the Word of God. He not only tells the truth, He is the truth (Jn. 14:6). He who is called "the Word" is faithful! What He said while on earth was absolutely true. What He said from Heaven that is recorded in this book of Revelation is absolutely true.

B. His resurrection is pre-eminent (v. 5b)

"First begotten" = lit. first born. Just as the firstborn son in a Jewish home received certain rights, privileges and authority, Jesus (who is the firstborn from the dead) holds rights, privileges, and authority that no one else shares.

He who was the first one to be resurrected with an incorruptible, immortal body is the one who now has authority over the grave (SEE Rev. 1:18; Jn. 5:21-29).

C. His reign is universal (v. 5c)

"The Prince" = lit. the head or one at the top; the ruler.

Jesus is the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16).
While Christ is ultimately over every king even today (He has all authority - Mt. 28:19), the reference here no doubt alludes also to His reign over those kings which will reign in the future (SEE: Rev. 17:12-14). Jesus "calls the shots" in world affairs.

D. His sacrifice is efficacious (v. 5d-6a)

Christ's sacrifice was not a mere example. It was effective to release you from sin and its penalty. "Love and sacrifice" always go together.

"Washed us" = loosed us; freed us; released us. Nothing can unshackle sin's grip from your life except the finished work of Jesus Christ. Nothing can release you from out of the prison of sin except the ransom He paid with His blood.

Because of Christ's blood, we will one day reign as kings with Him (Rev. 20:4).

We right now are priests who offer up "spiritual sacrifices" to God the Father and intercede for others in prayer.

E. His glory and dominion are eternal (v. 6b)

Because of who Jesus is (God the Son) and because of what He has done (Loved us and washed us), He deserves all the glory (praise, credit, honor).

Even though we are called "kings and priests" and will yet reign with Christ, we must never forget that He made us such.

It is because of Him that we anticipate that future privilege.

We will indeed reign (Rev. 5:10; 20:6), but our oversight is ultimately under (subordinate to) His reign.

F. His coming is certain (v. 7a)

"He cometh with the clouds" - not the ordinary clouds of nature that Jesus descends into, but clouds that went with Him into heaven (Acts 1:9; Dan. 7:13) and clouds which He will return with.

To a Jew, clouds are associated with God's presence (Mt. 17:9 - "And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.")
Example: the pillar of cloud that led Israel (Ex. 13:21 - "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night." Ex. 16:10 - "And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.")

"every eye shall see him" **-** The time of the coming mentioned here can only refer to the end of the Tribulation (SEE Mt. 24:29-31). Christ's coming will not be a hidden, cryptic, secret event.

G. His <u>presence</u> will be unavoidable (v. 7b)

"They also which pierced Him" = Israel.

Zech. 12:10 - "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

Israel will recognize Jesus as their Messiah. And they will weep (in sorrow and repentance) over the one whom their forefathers pierced (Jn. 19:37).

H. His <u>name</u> is wonderful (v. 8)

"Alpha & Omega" = first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, indicating the eternal and infinite nature of God.

Who is the Alpha & Omega? Answer: The Godhead. Specifically Jesus Christ (cp. Rev. 1:11-13). The Lord Jesus is the beginning (Rev. 3:14; cp. Is. 41:4) and end of all things.
Jesus is the Author & Finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2).

"The Almighty" = the omnipotent one; (the all-powerful one).
Jesus said: "<u>All power</u> is given unto Me. . ." (Mt. 28:19)

The OUTLINE of the Book of Revelation

In 1:19, The Book of Revelation is outlined as follows:

I. "The things which <u>thou hast seen</u>" (1:9-18)
(John saw a vision of Christ)

II. "The things which <u>are</u>" (1:20-chapter 3)
(The Seven Churches which existed in John's Day)

III. "The things which <u>shall be hereafter</u>" (Chapters 4 - 22)
(Events to occur in the Last Days and on into Eternity)

1:9-18 - "The things which thou hast seen"

"A GLIMPSE OF CHRIST'S GLORY"
REVELATION 1:9-20

V. 9

"Companion" = co-sharer; fellow partner.
The beloved Apostle John shared in the 1) pressures (tribulation and affliction) and 2) kingdom, and 3) endurance (patience; ability to remain under) that all come to us in Jesus.

When you received Christ as your personal Savior you also received all things that are "in Christ."
We can all delight in the kingdom which is ours in Him. We are also thankful for the patience (endurance) that is ours in Him. But remember, tribulation (pressures and afflictions) are also in Him.

Phil. 1:29 - "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."
Rom. 8:17 - "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."
II Cor. 1:5 - "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

John encourages us that we are not alone. John endured opposition for the faith also.

John was exiled to the small island called ***"Patmos for (because of) the Word of God and [even] for the testimony (witness) of Jesus Christ"*** (cp. 1:2).
God's Word and Christ's testimony are synonymous.

V. 10

"I was in the Spirit" - not a reference to being filled with the Spirit; but to John's being brought in the spiritual realm! (cp. Rev. 4:2).

"On the Lord's Day" = the first day of the week that Christians set apart for church attendance (SEE Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2) - to hear a message from the Word of God and to give their offerings.

On this particular Lord's day, John really got a message! And he had no trouble hearing it! (cp. "great voice" with 1:15 "voice as the sound of many waters")
John was to get a glimpse of Jesus Christ that would no doubt change his viewpoint of Christ for the rest of his life.

A Practical Key Truth **-- We need to see Jesus Christ as He really is!**

NOTE: In verses 13-16, the words *"**like**"* and *"**as**."* John does his best to describe Christ in human terms. No doubt, this picture cannot do full justice to the glorious appearance of Christ.

I. Christ is the Center of His Church (v. 11-13a)

Why were these churches to receive John's letter?

1) They were close in proximity to the island of Patmos where John was exiled.
2) They (together) had all of the characteristics that Christ's churches in the last days would have.

NOTE: The letters went to each individual church (ex. 2:1), but were also for all churches (Note plural - 2:7 "churches").

V. 12

"Candlesticks" = light holders or lamp stands, which represent local churches.

While the 7 churches are lamp stands (luchnia), the 7 spirits are the lamps (lampas) (Rev. 4:5 - the Holy Spirit).

In other words, while the 7 churches are light holders (nothing more), the Holy Spirit is the light.

The reason why the Holy Spirit is pictured as 7 spirits is because His ministry of giving light was to 7 churches (lamp stands).

The Holy Spirit is the oil and the light. We are mere vessels that hold (contain)_ the light. Let Him glow in your life! Let Him shine!

"Ye are the light of the world..." (Mt. 5:14; cp.II Cor. 4:6-7; Eph. 5:8)

Our church is to be a lighthouse!

V. 13

"In the midst" = Christ is the center of a church (compare: Mt. 18:20)

II. Christ is our High Priest and Judge (v. 13b)

V. 13

"Like unto the Son of man" = lit. "like unto a Son of man" (no defin. article).

John is not saying that he saw someone who looked like Jesus (the Son of man), but that he saw Jesus, who looked like "a son of man."

What is significant about the title "Son of man"?

1) It shows that Jesus took upon himself the like nature of man (Phil. 2:5ff). "The Son of God became the Son of man so that we, the sons of men, might become the sons of God." (Other references to the son of man - Mt. 16:16, 27).
2) It shows the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 7:13 - "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.") (cp. Jesus's statement in Mt. 26:64).
3) The phrase is a reminder of the fact that Jesus one day will be Judge.
   "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," and "hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (Jn. 5:22, 27).
   The world will be judged by [the] "man he hath ordained." (Acts 17:31).
4) The phrase is also a reminder of the fact that Jesus is our high Priest.
   Because Jesus became man, now as our high priest, He is "touched with the feelings of our infirmities..." (Heb. 4:15).
   And we can go directly to God through Him: I Tim. 2:5 - "For there is one god, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
   The clothes described correspond to Aaron the High Priest's robe known for its "glory and beauty" (Ex. 28:2), and Aaron's wide girdle which covered his chest had golden thread in it. Christ's, however, is totally made of gold.

III. Christ is Eternal in His Holiness (v. 14a)

"White" indicates age:

Dan. 7:9 - I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment as white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire."

Christ, being "God the Son", looks like God the Father, the "Ancient of days."

EX: gray hair on a man indicates "glory or honor," one worthy of respect.

It does not symbolize weakness but wisdom.

White also indicates "purity or holiness"

Jesus Christ is the spotless Lamb of God without defect.

He is holy, holy, holy (Is. 6:1ff).

IV. Christ is Infinite in His Knowledge (v. 14b)

Christ identifies Himself to the church of Thyatira (Rev.2:18) as having eyes like fire and says: "I am he which searcheth the reins [minds] and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (v. 23).

Heb. 4:13 - "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."
Cp. Job 26:6 - "Hell is naked before Him."
II Chron. 16:9 - "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth..."
Christ's eyes are as torches (lamps - cp. Rev. 4:5 with 5:6) which are "sent forth into all the earth." (cp. Zech. 4:10).

V. Christ is Pure in His Judgment (v. 15a)

"Brass feet" = judgment
"Burning in a furnace" = glowing purity
Christ's enemies will one day be crushed under His feet.

Ps. 58:10 predicts that the Lord will "wash His feet in the blood of the wicked." The imagery is of the brass laver that also had brass feet (Ex. 30:18), where the priests washed their feet.

For other verses describing the Lord's Judgment using the imagery of His feet, SEE Is. 18:7, Ps. 68:23.

Lk. 20:43 - "Till I make thy enemies thy footstool." (cp. Ps. 110:1; Heb. 1:13, 10:13).

VI. Christ is Mighty in His Message (v. 15b)

The great sound of Christ's words identifies Him with Jehovah God -

Ezek. 43:2 - "And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory."

VII. Christ is Sovereign in His Control (v. 16a)

"Seven stars" = 7 angels (messengers) of the 7 churches. Whether the angels refer to human messengers pastors) or angelic creatures, the point is the same - Jesus is in control of them!

VIII. Christ is Piercing in His Word (v. 16b)

The verse that immediately comes to mind is Hebrews 4:12 - *"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

However, this sword is a different Gk. word, which points to a destructive, severe sword used in Judgment. This sword will consume multitudes at the Battle of Armageddon - Rev. 19:21 - "And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

IX. Christ is <u>Blazing in His Glory</u> (v. 16c)

This blazing brilliance is descriptive of Jehovah God (Ez. 43:2).
"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" Jesus is the "light of the world."
The brilliant light of Jesus blinded Saul (Paul - Acts 9:3).
In God's kingdom, we will not need the sun, for the New Jerusalem "had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the <u>Lamb</u> is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23)

X. Christ is <u>Eternal In His Divine Nature</u> (v. 17b)

"First and Last" - nothing existed before Christ and nothing will exist after Him. He is the Alpha and Omega," the "beginning and the ending" (1:8, 11).

Jesus is Jehovah, therefore eternal (Is. 44:6 - *"Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last: and besides me there is no God."*

XI. Christ is <u>Complete in His Authority</u> (v. 18)

Because of Christ's resurrection, He now has <u>full authority</u>.
"Mt. 28:19 - "All power ..."

"Keys" = denote authority, ownership, and control. One who holds the keys has the control over doors (cp. 3:7).

Jesus has control over ***"Hell"*** (Hades - the abode of the unbelieving dead)

Jesus has control over ***"death"*** (He determines when we die; No believer dies unless Christ is finished with him/her).

The Lord is comforting John, who is prostrate on his face shuddering in fear, with the fact that he need not fear death, because Jesus has total authority over it!

V. 19

Because Jesus is who He is, He can outline all future events!

"Seen" - chap. 1
"Are" - 7 churches in Rev. 2-3
"Shall be" - chap. 4ff - End Times

"EPHESUS: The Love-less Church"
Revelation 2:1-7

V. 1

"Angel" (angellos) - lit. messenger (an "angelia" is a message - I Jn. 3:11)

2 Views of "Angel" (messenger):

1) a supernatural messenger (an angel)
   (Mt. 1:20, 24; 2:13, 19)
2) a human messenger (a pastor)

Supposed proofs for Angelic Messenger:

1. Angels interacted with the revelation to Daniel, so why not to the churches? (Dan. 8:16; 9:21)
   ANSWER: God did use angels (particularly Gabriel) to reveal revelation to a prophet or specially chosen individual (Luke 1:26), but never to a local church.

2. Angels do observe the conduct of believers at church gatherings (I Cor. 11:10).
   ANSWER: However, nowhere in the Bible does it state that they are responsible for the conduct of believers. In Rev. 2-3, the messenger along with the people is held accountable (Messenger = singular..."I know your - singular).

3. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who will be heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14).
   ANSWER: True, they are servants of the church, but never do they give an oral message to the church!

4. Here, the Lord Jesus addresses one angel (messenger) of the Ephesian church, whereas in Acts 20:17, Paul addressed the "elders (plural) of Ephesus."
   2 POSSIBLE ANSWERS: 1) the Church met in houses and each had one pastor overseeing it.
   2) The church had one senior pastor like the Jerusalem church with James.

**Proofs for a Human messenger (a pastor):

1. The word translated "angel" can also be translated messenger and refer to a human messenger.
   a. John the Baptist is called a "messenger" (angelos)
      (Mk. 1:2 - "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee").
   b. John the Baptist sent "messengers" to Jesus (Lk. 7:24; cp. v. 27)
   c. Jesus sent "messengers" to Samaria in Lk. 9:52
   d. The two spies Rahab protected were called "messengers" (James 2:25).

2. Why would John write to an angel, when he was writing "by means of" (dia) an angel (Rev. 1:1)? [Angels were revealers not recipients of revelation - Rev. 17:1; 19:10; 22:8].

3. If "messenger" meant "angel," why would Jesus need to tell one of the 7 angels that He was the one holding the 7 angels in his hand. The angel (being a spirit being functioning in the spiritual realm) would already know this.
   However, if "messenger" refers to a human pastor, he (being finite and mortal) would need this revelation.

4. Since the 7 golden lampstands (1:20) refer to literal local churches, the 7 messengers (depicted by "stars") would most naturally correspond to the nature of the churches. (since churches are people, the messengers would be also)

Jesus is walking around in the midst of His churches.

"Walketh" = Christ patrols His churches; He is always on guard; He protects (like a police officer walking his beat).

"In the midst" = Christ has a close relationship to the churches.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20).

He is the center or focal point of local churches (NOTE: the pre-eminence of the local church, the only divinely-appointed religious institution in the N.T.).

"He that holdeth the seven stars" = "He who has power over"; or "He who has a strong grasp on the seven stars."
This one who has such a close relationship, He who holds us in His hands (Jn. 10:27-30) must remain our first love!

A Practical Key Truth -- Our "first Love" must remain first!

V. 4

"Left" = to let something go; to leave something; to abandon it.
The word points to a conscious departure from our first love, rather than having lost it in the shuffle.

"Your first love"

"First" = Can refer to first in time (EX: She is the first girl I ever dated)
or first in importance (priority) (EX: She is first on my list; she is tops!)

Both are true in our relationship to Christ --
1. He was the One whom we loved first, before we came to love anything else about true Christianity.
2. He was and is to be our pre-eminent Love. Our priority Love. He is the most important one we should love.

Two points to remember:

I. GOOD SUBSTITUTES CAN'T REPLACE ONE'S FIRST LOVE (v.1-3, 6)

A. Ephesus was a working church, yet had left her first love (v. 2a)

"I know your works" - Jesus is saying, *"I know what you did*. I know all the things you did in and through your church."

"thy labour (exhausting toil) and ***patience*** (endurance; ability to stick it out)" Jesus is saying: *"I know how you worked."*

The Ephesian church had followed Paul's example in working hard. Paul reminded them; "I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak..." (Acts 20:35)

Although Ephesus was a working church, because love was missing, her works did not meet Christ's approval. She is called on in verse 5 to do the "first works."
In contrast to the church of Thessalonica: "Ephesus had works, but not a work of faith; labor, but not labor of love; patience, but not patience of hope (I Th. 1:3).
Indeed, they had "left" the greatest of these (I Cor. 13:13). (Smith, p. 64)
Cp. Martha's work with Mary's love (Lk. 10:40-41).

B. Ephesus was a discerning church, yet had left her first love (v. 2b, 6)

"Thou canst not bear them which are evil" = You don't lift up or carry around bad (evil) people.
The only banner we must lift up is holiness, righteousness and truth!
--As a church, we don't tolerate sinful practices on the part of our members.
--We practice church discipline (Mt. 18).
--We believe in moral, personal, and ecclesiastical separation (and we must! II Cor. 6:14-18; Gal. 1:6-9; Eph. 5:11-12; Ii Th. 3:6; I Tim. 6:3-5; II Jn. 9-11).
BUT, we must never abandon our first love.

"Tried them" - lit. you thoroughly examined or tested them to see if they were genuine.
They knew the Scriptures. They had their spiritual senses exercised to discern good from evil (Heb. 5:14).
The Ephesian church definitely took to heart Paul's admonition to their pastors ("elders" - Acts 20:17), when he warned them about false teachers (wolves) that would spring up around them (SEE Acts 20:28-31).
They did not believe every spirit, but tried the spirits to see whether they were of God, having known that many false prophets had gone out into the world (I Jn. 4:1).
They were not children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men. They knew there were those who in cunning craftiness, were waiting for the chance to deceive (Eph. 4:14).

V. 6

"Nicolaitanes"

Who are the "Nicolaitanes?" Whoever they are, it is clear that Christ hates their "deeds" (actions) and their "doctrine" ("teaching" - 2:15).

NOTE: Whenever there is corrupt teaching, there will also be corrupt behavior, and vice-versa.

Two Views:

1. Followers of a man named Nicolas, who had a religion, but lived anyway they wanted.
2. Others derive their description from the name ("Nikao" = to conquer; laos = the people, the laymen), point to a clerical hierarchy (EX: RCC).

*These believers overcame (were victorious over) heathen religions -

Ephesus was headquarters for the idolatrous Diana worship (Acts 19:27). The temple of the "great" goddess Diana was located here and was one of the seven wonders of the world.

Small silver shrines (niches) with a figure of Diana int he middle were manufactured by the thousands and sold to worshippers (Acts 19:24ff) (EX: RCC - amulets of saints).

*These believers when first converted burned all of their magic arts, witchcraft, and devil-worship books (Acts 19:17-20).

Right from the start, they were Biblical separatists! Yet this is not enough! We must separate from apostasy! But never must our love be separated from Christ!

C. Ephesus was an enduring church, yet had left her first love (v. 3)

"Borne" = While they did not bear them that were evil (v. 2), they no doubt did bear reproach for Christ (I Tim. 4:10; Heb. 13:13f). They no doubt did bear (carry) each other's burdens (Gal. 6:2).--They had the fruit of love, but not love itself.

"Patience" = endurance, an ability to remain under pressure without giving in or giving up. They refused to quit.

"Laboured" = worked to the point of exhaustion, yet they did not faint with exhausting.

They were a "hard-nosed" people who like soldiers did their duty and even did it for the sake of Christ's name, yet did not love Him like they should have.

Beware: Don't let a love for the cause replace your love for Christ!

It's easy for many churches to fight for the cause of fundamentalism, America, separation, family, etc., but we must fight because we love Christ! (All other motives are inferior).

V. 4

How do I know I have left my first love?

1. When you serve but don't find joy in it.
2. When you teach, but are cold and uncompassionate.
3. When you work at church for the applause or recognition of men
4. When you take a stand for Christ, but do so with bitterness and a "holier than thou" attitude toward everyone else.

Why do Christians leave their first love?

1. Other things look more appealing.
2. We take it for granted (thinking: "it will still be there when I come back").
3. We neglect it and don't nurture it and thereby forget about it (therefore, God calls on us to remember - v. 5).

II. GOD'S STEPS MUST BE FOLLOWED TO REGAIN ONE'S FIRST LOVE (v. 5)

3 Steps to regaining your first love:

1. Remember
2. Repent
3. Return

A. Remember

"Remember" = call back to memory the height from which you have fallen.

Many new converts are standing on higher ground than those who have been saved for years. Why? They are deeply in love with their groom - Jesus Christ!

"Fallen" = the picture is of someone who is down at the base of a mountain looking up to the point he once was at.

SEE I Jn. 4:19

If it is true that we *"love Him because He first loved us,"* it is imperative that we really know how much He loved and loves us so that we will love Him more.

God's love for us was unconditional (the verse does not say, "He loved us because we first loved Him.").

Our love for God, however, is conditional. It is conditioned by our knowing His love for us.

No one loves God (in the true sense) who has not first experienced His love. The times we love God are the times when we see clearly His love for us.

In order for us to truly love God, we must know (be assured of) His love for us.

Why did you leave your "first love"?

ANSWER: You failed to remember v. 5). You lost sight of Christ's gracious love for you:

1. We lose sight of the cross (when first saved, this is all we thought about) HYMN - "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross."
2. We forget what wretched sinners we were when God's unconditional love found us. (we start thinking about how "great" we are) Is. 51:1 - "Look unto the rock...pit." I Tim. 1:15 - "...chief of sinners."
3. We doubt His wondrous love for us now that we are saved.

Of all the disciples, John seemed to love Jesus the most; the reason most likely is the fact that John was deeply aware of how much Jesus loved him (Jn. 12:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 21:20).

B. Repent

"Repent" = whereas the remembering is to be a continual attitude (present tense), the repenting is to be a decisive change of mind (aorist tense) (a once and for all decision to make clean break from the rut you are in).

C. Return

"Do" - begin doing what you did at first! (like when a couple first "fell in love" ILLUS: dating and newlyweds). What did you do at first?

We spent more time praising Him.
We spent more time listening to Him.
We spent more time ministering for Him, not for selfish advantage or to please others.

It's not so much what we did for Christ that was different; it's why we did it and how we did it.

The imperatives in this verse are a blessing! Why? Because they show that regaining lost ground in our love for Christ is possible.

"***Remove thy candlestick*** (lampstand; lightholder)" = The judgment would be:

1) Personal ("***I will come***; Jesus has full authority over every church)
2) Sudden ("***quickly***")
3) Severe ("***remove thy candlestick***" - Jesus is saying, I will remove your influence in the location you are at; your evangelistic efforts will be zero. Your witness will be ineffective.)

The Lord wants to shine out through every Bible-preaching church, but He does not have to. He can't shine out of a loveless church - "By this shall all men know . . . if ye have love . . ." He can't shine out of people who do not glow with the One they supposedly love.

Churches that do not have a real love for Christ always die! A dead church is a loveless church!

The church may preach sound doctrine, be busy doing things, having church programs and activities, etc., yet still be without that necessary virtue that gives it real life!

Verse 7

"Churches" (Plural) - this shows that even though John originally wrote to the church (singular) at Ephesus (2:1) in his day, this passage applies to our church and every one of Christ's churches.

What did the church at Ephesus have to overcome? ANSWER: her lovelessness.

Those who have love for Christ (which is an evidence of salvation - I John 4:7; I Cor. 16:22) will be with Christ throughout eternity (the New Jerusalem) and will have the right to eat of ***"the tree of life."***

"Paradise" = a Persian word meaning a park or enclosed garden.

Two paradises are spoken of in the Bible:

1. The Garden of Eden (where tree of life was) (Gen. 2:8, 23 - LXX)
2. The abode of the souls in Heaven (Lk. 23:43 - thief; II Cor. 12:4 - Paul)

Smyrna: The Suffering Church
Revelation 2:8-11

"Smyrna"

Smyrna was a major political center for Rome. In 195 B.C., Smyrna built the first temple in Asia dedicated to the worship of the Roman government. In A.D. 26 Smyrna was chosen to erect a temple in honor of Tiberius Caesar. While Rome had unified much of the known world by the roads she built; the "peace" she provided, and by the law she enforced, the last unifying force was to be religious in nature. Each year every citizen had to appear in the temple, burn incense on the altar and repeat the formula, "Caesar is Lord." Christians, however, believed that the word "lord" was reserved only for Christ. Saying "Christ is Lord" meant to them "Christ is God." The choice was, therefore, idolatry or persecution. "One famous leader to die because of this custom was Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna. In A.D. 155, he was brought before the authorities and given the choice of worshiping Caesar or being put to death. The proconsul pleaded with him to save his life by denying Christ and promised to set him free. Polycarp replied, *"Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior?"* Although it happened on the Sabbath, the Jews were so eager to see him die they violated their own Sabbath laws by carrying wood into the stadium for the fire. That afternoon Polycarp was burned to death. This persecution was coming on the church when John wrote his letter about sixty years earlier. Polycarp, still a young man, may have been one of the members addressed in the letter."

(Marshal Neal, Seven Churches, BJU Press, p. 28).
(cp. "The Martyrdom of Polycarp", The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, pp. 37-44)

A Practical Key Truth -- No matter how intense the pressures may get, Believers must be faithful right to the end!

I. CHRIST'S EXAMPLE OF VICTORY (v. 8)

Jesus addresses the suffering Smyrna church with this most comforting description of Himself.

He encouraged John (who greatly feared when He saw the glorified Christ) with the same words: SEE Rev. 1:17-18

The phrase ***"The first and the last"*** points to Christ's eternal nature, and identifies Him as Jehovah God. Isaiah 44:6 - *"Thus saith the Lord the king of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts: I am the first and the last; and beside me there is no God."*

"Was dead" = Jesus became dead or entered into death.
"Is alive" = He lived (again). Pointing to His resurrection
Christ's resurrection gives believers (especially, the martyred Smyrna Christians) confidence of a resurrection.

II. CHRIST'S WORDS OF COMFORT (v. 9-10)

A. *"I Know"* (v. 9)

When suffering, it is a real comfort to know that someone else knows and is concerned. It lightens the burden. To bear burdens alone (to feel that no one knows or cares) makes the weight unbearable.

1. Jesus knew the works the Smyrna church did for Him
   Heb. 6:10 - *"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."*

2. Jesus knew the affliction the Smyrna church endured for Him
   "Tribulation" = pressure, trouble, affliction.
   The tribulation in view is due to opposition for the faith (cp. v. 10)

3. Jesus knew the material necessities the Smyrna church sacrificed for Him
"Poverty" - does not refer to someone who goes without luxuries, but to someone who goes without even the necessities. It means extreme poverty.

The Smyrna church, when persecuted, was stripped of even the necessities of life, yet she had that which could not be stolen.

"But thou art rich" - It is a paradox to be at the same time poor and yet rich. Paul said that as a servant of Christ he was "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (II Cor. 6:10).

In the physical realm, you may not have much (don't envy others who do), but in the spiritual realm you are wealthy beyond measure (never forget: This is our "real estate.").
How is the believer rich?
a. He is rich in faith (Ja. 2:5a)
b. He is rich by inheritance (Ja. 2:5b) (cp. Eph. 1:3ff)

"Say they are Jews" - Question: Are these Gentiles claiming to be Jews; or Jews who were not true Jews? (i.e. physical descendants of Abraham, but not spiritual descendants)?
Answer: Jews who were not real Jews.
A true Jew, according to Romans 2:28, 29, was not one who "is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."
These Jews, however, were not real. The Jews instigated persecution against Christians (the early church) everywhere they went.

B. *"Fear Not"* (v. 10)

Jesus warns the Smyrna church that the Devil (slanderer) was about to throw some from among their number into prison (NOTE: how Satan is responsible for deeds of wicked that his tools [people] perform).

Tribulation (to one degree or another) is part of being a Christian.
God NEVER promised to keep his people from "tribulation" nor from "the great tribulation" (Matthew 24:21) nor from Satan's wrath (Rev.12:12; Luke 21:23), but He did promise to keep us from His wrath (I Th. 5:9).

--Jesus prepared His disciples for tribulation - John 16:33 - "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
--Paul prepared the churches he established for tribulation -
Acts 14:22 - "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
I Th. 3:3 - "That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto."
II Tim. 3:12 - "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
--Peter prepared the churches he wrote to for tribulation -I Pet. 4:12 - "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you"

"Tried" - tested.
Tests are not for the benefit of God seeing whether or not our faith is genuine, but for us to see, as well as for Him to be glorified, and our faith purified.
Job proclaimed: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." He knew the purpose of trials as evidenced by his words: "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." [compare: I Peter 1:3-9 (*v. 7)]

Some commentators believe that the reference to ***"ten days"*** refers to "ten periods of time" - that is, ten periods of persecution from Nero (A.D. 64) to Diocletian (A.D. 316). (Epp, Ryrie, Smith).
The better view, however, is to take the word "days" in a literal sense, just as the church described is a literal church.

"Be faithful" - be full of faith.
Full of faith in what? In God's faithfulness.

"It is written that a king commanding a Christian to recant and give up Christ, said, "If you don't give up Christ, I will banish you." The Christian smilingly answered, "You cannot banish me from Christ; He has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. The king then angrily said, "Well, I will confiscate your property." The Christian replied, "My treasures are laid up on high, you cannot get to them.: The king, in greater anger, said, "Well, then, I will kill you." The Christian answered, "I have been dead with Christ through this world for 40 years; my life is hid with Christ in God; you cannot touch it." To which the king replied, "What can you do with such a fanatic?"

"Persecution was never a defeat for the true followers of God anymore than death on the cross was a defeat for Christ" (Prisoner Bulletin, summer, 1987, p. 23).

III. CHRIST'S <u>PROMISE OF REWARD</u> (v. 10b-11)

A. <u>A crown of life</u> for the faithful (v. 10b)

A ***"crown"*** ("stephanos") was a victor's wreath made out of pine, given to the winner of an athletic event. This was corruptible (I Cor. 9:25); ours will be incorruptible.

--God has a crown of <u>life</u> for those who <u>endure testing</u> because of a love for Christ (James 1:12 - *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."*

B. <u>Deliverance from the second death</u> for the overcomers (v. 11)

"Churches" (plural) - the promises are not limited to the Smyrna church, but extend to all Biblical churches up to the present and future. This message in this eschatological book will be especially encouraging for those believers living in the future tribulation.

"He that overcometh" - he who is victorious; he who conquers.
In context, the overcoming involves triumphing over suffering - being faithful unto death.
The believer's faithfulness is not what saves him, rather it is the grand mark or proof that he indeed was saved! What it does mean is that when we are tested specifically for our faith in Christ we won't deny Him. If pressured into renouncing Christ, the believer will stand true.

"Shall not be hurt" (emphatic - double negative)
"will <u>by no means</u> (<u>not at all</u>) be hurt (injured) by the second death."

The point is this: <u>No one</u> who is faithful unto dying once, will die twice! This reference to deliverance from the second death is in contrast to the death mentioned in verse 11.
Believers may suffer here, but here is where it ends! For unbelievers, suffering may be avoided in this life, but it will be unavoidable at death, and unceasing throughout eternity.

"Blessed and holy is the that hath part in the first resurrection: on such <u>the second death hath no power</u>" (Rev. 20:6)

The final outcome of all unbelievers is the second death, which is the lake of fire (SEE Rev. 20:14, 15; 21:8).

PERGAMOS & THYATIRA:
CHURCHES OF COMPROMISE
Revelation 2:12-29

The Bible teaches the necessity for God's children to be holy (SEE: I Pet. 1:15, 16; cp. with Lev. 11:44-45). The words: holy, saint, sanctified all come from the same root and basically mean to be "set apart" or kept pure from defilement. Anyone who believes the Bible and loves Jesus Christ must also believe in holiness or purity or being set apart. Therefore, individual believers and churches must be set-apart from evil. If you believe that, you also are a "separatist"! If one believes in "holiness" he must also believe in "separation" because they are synonymous terms.

Three areas of separation:

1) Moral - the believer is to be holy in body and mind (II Cor. 7:1; II Tim. 2:22; I Pet. 4:15)
2) Personal - the believer is not to be "unequally yoked together" with unbelievers in marriage, business, or any other personal relationship (I Cor. 5:11; II Cor. 6:14-18).
3) Ecclesiastical - a church must not associate, cooperate, or fellowship with other churches that are not of like precious faith (II Cor. 6:14-18; Gal. 1:6-9; Eph. 5:6-11; II Th. 3:6; I Tim. 6:3-5; II Jn. 9-11)

A Practical Key Truth -- A Biblical church must never compromise with those who practice what Jesus hates! (v. 15)

Remember 4 facts about compromise:

I. COMPROMISE IS NEVER JUSTIFIED! (V. 13, 19)

(The Inexcusableness of Joining Hands With False Religion)

A. Compromise is not justified, *even though a church doing a work for Christ (v. 13a, 19)*

Jesus knew that Pergamum was a working church (v. 13a).
He knew that Thyatira was also (v. 19).

Thyatira was a working church (v.19)
" loving " ("charity")
" serving " ("service")
" believing " ("faith")
" enduring " ("patience" - she remained under)
" busy " ("served more than at first - when first established)
(No doubt a growing church with many programs and activities)

"Any church or Christian that compromises with evil must have some good qualities or there would be nothing to compromise" (Neil, p. 42).

"The end never justifies the means."
God's work must always be done God's way!

B. Compromise is not justified, *even though wickedness abounds all around that church (v. 13b)*

"where Satan's seat is" Jesus knew where the church at Pergamos was situated. It was situated in the same city where Satan's throne was. Although Satan "walketh about" all over the earth (I Peter 5:8), he apparently sets up headquarters at strategic locations.

Pergamos was a capital city for over 300 years, and was called "by far the most famous city of Asia" (Neal, Seven Churches, BJU Press, p. 37).

Three major religions existed in Pergamos -

1) Worship of Asklepios, the god of healing (a temple with an idol of Asklepios existed in Pergamos. Surrounding him were serpents, and he had a serpent-entwined staff (still used as an insignia by physicians today) (SEE Neil, p. 39).
2) Worship of the Greek god Zeus. Zeus was called "savior." (Neil, p. 40)
3) Worship of the emperor (Pergamos boasted of the largest and most important temple dedicated to Caesar.

Jesus knew where they lived and how bad it was, yet He did not counsel them to run away (or move from there).
He had them there for a purpose (the greater the darkness, the greater the need for light).

The church at Pergamos lived among enemies of the gospel.
But no matter how wicked (perverse, loose) our society is, that never justifies bending convictions or loosening standards.

C. Compromise is not justified,
even though some in that church may personally remain "unaffected" by it (v.13c)

"Holdest fast My name" - Satan knew he could not shake these Christians loose from holding onto the name of Jesus.

The adversary knew he could not coerce them into an outright denial of their faith in Christ, even if it meant martyrdom. So he offers the suggestion to compromise - to give in on their separation.

II. COMPROMISE MUST BE IDENTIFIED! (V. 14-15, 20-21)

(The Warning About Joining Hands With False Religion)

A. Compromise happens when a church is tolerant

What did Jesus hold against these 2 churches?

V. 14 - ***"Thou hast there them . . ."***
V. 15 - ***"So hast thou also them . . ."***
V. 20 - ***"How sufferest (tolerate, permit) that woman"***

*Jesus was not rebuking these churches because they were in doctrinal error, but because they tolerated others to pedal doctrinal error in their midst.
*Jesus did not reprimand them for being guilty of heresy, but for fellowshipping with heretics.
*Jesus was not scolding them because they were teaching lies but because they associated and cooperated with those who were teaching lies.

--Church discipline is not easy, but it is essential to purity (Mt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5:3-7)
--Ecclesiastical separation may not be popular, but it is essential to purity.

B. Compromise happens when a Church is deceived

1. Beware: They are religious

Balaam, the Nicolaitanes, and Jezebel all have one thing in common. They all spread ***"doctrine"***. They all teach. They all, no doubt, had a Gospel to proclaim (Note, however, Gal. 1:8-10).

Balaam (v. 14) was a religious man (he did work in the name of the LORD [Yahweh].
Cp. Mt. 7:22-23 - "Many will say to me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name?..."
Nicolas (v. 15) had a religion (though immoral)
Jezebel (v. 20) - called herself a "***prophetess***." She claimed she received revelation from God, and then heralded it out.
Whether the name "Jezebel" was the actual name of a woman or a symbolic name depicting a certain woman's character is uncertain.

The fact that that ***"woman"*** Jezebel was teaching God's servants should have revealed to them that she was "false" and "out of order," because God says that women are not to teach (I Tim. 2:11, 12), but are to learn in silence in the assembly and not prophesy publicly (I Cor. 14:34).

2. Beware: They are seductive

"Balaam" was seductive (Num. 22 - 25). He was hired by the Moabite king Balak to curse Israel (II Pet. 2:15). When Balaam attempted to pronounce a curse, God allowed him to utter only blessings. When he realized he could not curse them, he decided to corrupt them.

"Stumbling block" (v. 14) - that which causes someone to trip and fall.
Balaam knew that God would not destroy Israel when they were pleasing to Him. The only way this Satanically-inspired man could have Israel ruined is if they sinned.
(SEE Num. 31:16, 25:1-9)

What did the doctrine of Balaam, Nicolas, and Jezebel have in common?
ANSWER: Idolatry and immorality under the guise of spirituality.
Balaam introduced Israel to Baalism.
Nicolas evidently introduced Christianity to license and free love (similar to Baalism)
Jezebel, by marrying King Ahab, promoted Baalism in Israel (I Ki. 16:31).

What was the doctrine of Balaam, Nicolas, and Jezebel?
ANSWER: You can have God and the world. You can worship Christ and conform to the standards of the world. You can have religion and immorality. You can have spirituality with sensuality.

As a matter of fact, Baal worship was very sensual and appealing to the base, carnal, nature of man.

It involved two things:
1) Eating meat and drinking wine that was offered to Baal (this would give credence to Baal - Num. 25:2) (Daniel refused to do this - Dan. 1:8)
2) Having sex with a prostitute (Num. 25:3)
(Both practices were part of Baal worship)

Long before this problem at Pergamos, the Jerusalem church had taken a stand on these matters: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well." (Acts 15:28-29)

What would Balaamism, Nicolaitanism, and Jezebelism be like today?
ANSWER: It is the teaching that says: "You can be saved and live anyway you want." "You can have Christ and sin." "You can lay up treasures in Heaven and treasures on earth." "You can serve two masters." "You can have your cake and eat it too." This sounds appealing, but it's a lie of Satan.

Paul warned against such teachers: Phil. 3:18, 19 - *"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."*

Satan knew he could not bring such strong churches into worldliness until he brought the world into the church.

III. COMPROMISE HAS SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES! (V. 16, 22-23)

(The Price Tag for Joining Hands With False Religion)

NOTE: Jesus' description of Himself to the church at Pergamos (v. 12) and Thyatira (v. 18). Speaks of judgment.

(***"sharp sword"*** - compare verse 12 with verse 16 - His words are severe)
(***"Eyes like fire"*** = piercing, infinite knowledge; cp. v. 23 - Jesus' penetrating eyes search the inmost part of man)
(***"feet ... like bass"*** - pure judgment)

1. The harlot herself will be judged (v. 16) Those who seek to cause God's people to compromise will be severely punished
   "I will come unto thee (believers) and will fight against them" (unbelievers).

2. The fornicator will be judged (v. 22) (Those who compromise with Paganism (i.e. join themselves or link up with false religion) will be severely punished (cp. Rev. 18:3-4 - God's call for separation from the harlot of Babylon).

3. The offspring of the relationship will be judged (v. 22) (the fruit produced by compromise will die (v. 22).
   The illegitimate offspring (supposed "Christians") will not live.

IV. OVERCOMING COMPROMISE HAS GREAT REWARD! (V. 17, 24-29)

(The Prize for Refusing to Join Hands With False Religion)

Rewards:

1. ***"hidden manna"*** (v. 17a) - in contrast to the enticing idol sacrifices, He offers the bread of God (Jesus is the "living bread, come down from Heaven" - Jn. 6:51).

2. ***"White stone"*** (v. 17b) - possibly a reference to a ballot.
   "In ancient times votes were taken by the placing of stones in a vessel. A black stone was an unfavorable vote and a white stone was a vote for acceptance. (Niel, p. 51).

3. Authority to ***"rule"*** with Christ in the kingdom (v. 26-27)
   (Believers are joint-heirs - Rom. 8:17)
   (Mt. 19:28 - *"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I saw unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*
   I Cor. 6:3 - "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"
   (cp. Dan. 7:18, 27)

4. ***"The Morning Star"*** - Christ Himself
   Rev. 22:16 - "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testimony unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

CONCLUSION:
The exhortation for those who have committed fornication with the world is "repent!" (v. 16)
The exhortation for those who have not done so is "hold fast" until Jesus returns (v. 25).

"SARDIS: A CHURCH IN NEED OF REVIVAL"
Revelation 3:1-6

Definition of "revival" - to give life back to that which had life but lost it.

V. 1

The phrase ***"the seven spirits of God"*** is evidently a reference to the Holy Spirit in all His perfection (cp. Rev. 1:4, 5:6; Zech. 4:1-6, 10).

The seven spirits are referred to as the eyes of the Lamb of God in Rev. 5:6.

The ***"seven stars"*** are the messengers (whether angelic or human pastors) of the seven churches (Rev. 1:20).

The points of Christ's description of Himself is that He has all power and authority to send revival.

There is hope for revival because Jesus--the Head of the church--is able to bring new life.

--His Spirit gives life (Tit. 3:5)

--His messengers can be used to give His people His Word (It gives life - Jn. 6:63).

"I know your works" - a phrase repeated to every church (Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15).

The Sardis church had a ***"name"*** (or reputation) for being a living church, yet it was dead.

Men thought it was a great church, but Jesus, who knows all, gave the verdict that it was dead.

The church's reputation for "life" may have been due to the faithful Christ-honoring saints who had since gone home to be with the Lord. She is sitting on her past laurels. She is resting on her heritage.

A Practical Key Truth -- Many Churches today, like the church of Sardis, need a revival!

Two points to seriously examine:

I. THE <u>ESSENTIALS</u> FOR REVIVAL (v. 2-3a)

A. God's people must <u>wake up</u> out of their spiritual slumber (v. 2a)

"Be watchful" - continually have the attitude of spiritual alertness. Wake up and stay awake.

The church is like a sleeping giant. We need God to shake us up out of our slumber.

It's time to wake up! SEE Romans 13:11-14

Ephes. 5:14 - "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

A person who is physically asleep is <u>insensitive</u>, <u>incoherent</u> (unaware of what is going on), and <u>unresponsive</u>. The same is true spiritually.

B. God's people must <u>become dissatisfied</u> with the way things are (v. 2b)

In order to strengthen our lives, we must be awake; and in order to stay awake, we must be strengthened.

"Strengthen" - the aorist tense of this imperative, points to the <u>urgent</u> need for strengthening. The idea of the verb is that some things in their spiritual lives (like muscles) began to sag and droop down, but needed to be <u>firmed up</u>.

The saying "use it or lose it" is true physically and spiritually.

"The things which remain" - that which is <u>still left</u> (with life in it).

In many people's lives, no doubt a war is going on. The Adversary (due to one's lack of spiritual vigilance) has succeeded in destroying some virtue in the lives of God's people.

"Ready to die" - imperfect tense = in the process of dying; beginning to die.
Immediate strengthening is needed!

NOTE: The responsibility is up to us. Christ desires to strengthen us (Phil. 4:13), but we must let Him. God wants to give us His strength (II Cor. 12:9), but we must accept it.
The Lord's reason for why the Sardis church needed to be watchful and strengthen what was left was because He looked and saw her works not complete in the sight of God.

"Perfect" = brought to fullness or completion.
The character and quality of our works must measure up to God's standard. God does not accept our work unless we offer Him a finished product.
In the opinion of men, what a church (or person) does in the name of Christ might be acceptable. But all that matters is what God thinks.
Our works are in plain view before God ("All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).
A dead church is a people that are passive not active. A people who are affected by the world but leave no effect on it.

C. God's people must <u>remember</u> what God did for them (v. 3)

Something dies in us spiritually when we forget what God did for us in saving us
(As in many Marriages, when the honeymoon ends).
--We forget God's wonderful mercy and grace.
--We forget the wretchedness of our lives when rescued.
--We forget the intimacy, the thrill, the sparkle in knowing God.

Heb. 10:32 - "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions."

"Thou hast received" - the perfect tense indicates that they received something that they <u>still possessed</u>.
They received Christ (Jn. 1:12), His life, His Word, His Spirit, His power (Acts 1:8).
"Heard" - Aorist tense, looks at the moment when faith came by hearing
--Do you remember how sweet the Gospel story was to your dry and thirsty soul?
--Do you remember when the "lights went on," your eyes were opened, and you finally realized the love of God for you?
NOTE: Receiving and hearing are tied together because what we have received spiritually has come to us via what we heard.

D. God's people must <u>retain</u> what God has given them (v. 3)

"Hold fast" - God is calling on the Sardis church to pay attention to what she has heard and guard it or keep tight hold of it.
A church dies when it fails to retain that which gives life.
We must retain the Word!
We must guard against being forgetful hearers. How? James 1:22-25

--Meditation, memorization, and mobilization (let the Word move you into obedience)

E. God's people must <u>repent</u> of sin (v. 3)

Old-fashioned repentance is needed before any reviving will take place.
(II Chron. 7:14 - *"If my people, which are called by My Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven,a nd will forgive their sin,a nd will heal their land."*
Genuine sorrow for sin, a burning thirst for God and righteousness, a total dissatisfaction with the way things are in our lives, etc., are prerequisites for revival.

II. THE INCENTIVES FOR REVIVAL (v. 3b-5)

A. Incentive #1 - The Lord's return (v. 3b)

Those who are perpetually asleep spiritually reveal the sad condition of their soul. They are lost! Upon these, Jesus arrives like a thief, but to those who are spiritually awake, He arrives as Bridegroom! (Mt. 25).

"Thou shalt not know" - a double negative = "by no means know; in no way know" - emphasizing the unexpectancy of Christ's return by "dead christians".

A ***"thief"*** (robber) only surprises those who are not ready. God's people will be ready for Christ's return (I Thessalonians 5:4 - "You are not in darkness that that day should overtake you like a thief")
Christ exhorts us to watch (stay awake) so that we will not be caught off guard at His second coming (Cp. Mt. 25:5 - sleeping before Christ's coming)

B. Incentive #2 - The Lord's reward (v. 4-5)

V. 4
Most every Bible-believing church has a righteous remnant.
"Defiled" = soiled, dirtied, spotted with sin.
"Garments" - represents one's life (Jude 23 - "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.").
Cp. Rev. 16:15

V. 4 & 5
"White" = a symbol of inner purity (ILLUS: a white wedding dress).
Rev. 19:6-9 - Marriage of the Lamb

V. 5
NOTE: Our white clothing comes from the Lord, not ourselves.
"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Is. 1:18).
"Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:7).
"Many shall be purified, and made white" (Dan. 12:10).

This phrase: ***"I will not blot out his name. . ."*** does not suggest that the Lord has a practice of blotting names out of His book; it merely emphasizes the security of having your name remain in His book.

The emphasis is positive, not negative. Nowhere in Scripture is a name of a believer blotted out of the rolls (scrolls) of the Book of Life in Heaven.

The phrase is a figure of speech known as a "litotes." An obvious understatement. A way of making a positive affirmation by negating the opposite (EX: Heb. 6:10 - "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.")

"I will not" - lit. double negative = "I will in no way; I will by no means; I will absolutely, positively not blot out his name.

Our names were written before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8, 17:8).
Jesus told His disciples to rejoice because their names were "written (perfect tense) in heaven" (Lk. 10:20).
It is not those whose names are blotted out that are cast into the Lake of fire, but those who never had their name written there to begin with (Rev. 20:15).

"PHILADELPHIA: THE FAITHFUL CHURCH"
Revelation 3:7-13

INTRODUCTION: Verse 7

"Philadelphia" = Name means "the city of brotherly love"

"He that is holy" - Holiness is an attribute of Jesus' essence.
He does not merely possess holiness -He is holiness. He did not obtain holiness (like we did) - He is holiness. He is independently holy! (unlike us who depend upon God to make us holy)
Our Savior is set apart from everything that is not holy and pure.
Christ's glorified description in Rev. 1:14 revealed the blazing whiteness of His holiness.
Christ's unique attribute of holiness reveals Him to be none other than almighty God!
Rev. 15:4a - "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for thou only art holy"
--Jesus is so holy that Isaiah was silenced in shame when he saw Him (cp. Is. 6:1-5; with Jn. 12:41).
--Jesus is so holy that John fell down before him like a dead man after he saw Christ's brilliant glory (Rev. 1:17).
--Jesus is so holy that the unclean earth flees away from His presence when He finally judges the unbelieving dead (Rev. 20:1ff; cp. with Jn. 5:22).
Jesus was the fulfillment of the O.T. high priests and sacrifices, which had to be without spot or blemish.

"he that is true"
The martyrs cry out in heaven to the one who is "holy and true" (Rev. 6:10).
Jesus not only tells the truth; He is truth (Jn. 14:6).
--Seeing Christ was seeing Truth:
Jn. 1:14 - "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
--Listening to Christ was hearing Truth:
Jn. 8:32 - "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
As Pilate scornfully asked Christ, *"What is truth?"* (Jn. 18:38), he did not realize that he was standing in the presence of the One who was truth.

"Key" - depicts authority or complete control.
Cp. Rev. 1:18 - Christ has full authority over death and hell.

"The key of David" - the authority to unlock the promised future kingdom.
"As authority was given to God's servant Eliakim, over David's house (Is. 22:22), so now Christ in His own right has authority to open and to shut (J.B. Smith, p. 86).

"he that openeth, and no man shutteth..." Whatever Jesus does, man cannot undo.
When He opens doors, no one can close them.
When He closes (locks) doors, no one can open them.

A Practical Key Truth -- The Lord's blessing is upon those who are faithful!

Verses 8 - 12 illustrate how Christ blesses a faithful church. Four blessings:

I. He ENTRUSTS the faithful with SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITY (v. 8)

NOTE: The One with the keys (v. 7) can open doors!
An ***"open door"*** speaks of opportunity, spiritual opportunity for preaching the gospel.
The Lord opened the door for Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:27 - "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.").
The Lord closed the door at Asia (Acts 16:6 - "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia...")

The Lord opened the door at Ephesis (I Cor. 16:8-9 - "But I will tarry at Ephesus...For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries").

There may be adversaries, but the door stays open until Christ closes it!
A door was opened to Paul at Troas (II Cor. 2:12 - "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord").
When Paul was imprisoned, he requested prayer that God would open more doors to evangelize (Col. 4:3 - "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds").

"Behold" - an attention-grabbing word; "it means "see for yourself" (middle voice).
Our problem often is not open doors, but that we don't <u>see</u> the open doors!

The Lord opens doors:

A. For those who are <u>unable</u> to do so for themselves (v. 8a)

"For" = because. Jesus now gives the reason why He is opening the door for them.
"Little strength" = little power or ability.
For the faithful servants of Christ who may have little human ability, little physical strength - Christ opens doors!
Those Christians who don't have much in terms of resources, influence, etc., usually depend upon Christ more than a church that is self-sufficient (contrast the suffering Smyrna church which Jesus commended with the self-sufficient, fat and sassy Laodicea church which Jesus condemned).

> Even though we may at times feel weak, if Jesus gives us an open door, then He will also give us the strength to walk through it!
> Martin Luther said it this way: *"Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing"* (cited in Wiersbe, p. 578).

The Lord opens doors:

B. For those who are <u>obedient</u> to His Word (v. 8b)

"Thou hast kept My Word" - does <u>not</u> mean that everyone in this church owned a Bible.
The word ***"kept"*** refers to keeping watch over something; to <u>guard or preserve</u> something.
NOTE: They stored the word away in their hearts and preserved the true purpose of the Word: namely, to change lives. The best way to preserve God's Word is to make it a vital part of your life.
Therefore, the word "kept" refers to how they paid attention to the Word they heard. They obeyed it and in doing so preserved its true meaning for the generations that followed in their steps.

> *"If ye love Me keep my commandments*" (Jn. 14:15).
> Cp. Mt. 23:13; Mt. 28:20 - *"teaching them to <u>observe</u>..."*

The Lord opens doors:

C. For those who <u>refuse to deny</u> His Name (v. 8c)

"Hast not denied My name" - There were some distinct occasions in the past when, being put to the test, they did not deny the name of Jesus.

"Deny" - to say "<u>No</u>" To say "I don't know or believe Him"
ILLUS: Peter's denial (Mt. 26:69-75)
Cp. Paul's rebuke to the Cretians - Titus 1:16 - *"They profess that they know God; but in works they <u>deny</u> him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good word reprobate."*
Insincerity of heart is also a denial of Christ
(Mt. 15:8).

II. He EXALTS the faithful with EVENTUAL HONOR (v. 9)

NOTE: All lying (falsehood) is against the One who is true (v. 7).
These ***"Jews"*** were probably Jews physically but not spiritually.
(cp. Rom. 2:28 - 29. V. 29 - *"But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.").*
The same people who persecuted the righteous (Mt. 23:30-36), who persecuted the early church (Acts 7; 8:1; 17:5 etc.), who persecuted the church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:9), also persecuted the church at Philadelphia.
NOTE: The connection between persecution and purity. The only churches that Jesus did not have to rebuke are the churches that faced brutal opposition for their faith: Smyrna and Philadelphia.

"Worship" - means to fall down in front of; to prostrate one's self before; to welcome someone with humble respect and reverence.

> One day in Heaven, those "Jews" who persecuted the believers at Philadelphia will be resurrected at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20) and will be escorted over to those they opposed.
> At this time (before being cast into the Lake of Fire), they will "acknowledge their error and at the same time testify to the faithfulness of those whom they persecuted" (J.B. Smith, p. 87).

III. He PROTECTS the faithful from FUTURE TRIALS (v. 10)

Evidently, life had become pressure-filled for the Philadelphia church (opposition from the Pseudo-Jews, etc.). Through it all, they remained patient.

"The word of My patience" = a reference to how they with enduring patience upheld and obeyed God's Word as the Apostle John did (Rev. 1:9).

Because they had preserved (**"Kept"**) such words in their hearts, Jesus promises to preserve (**"Keep"**) them from dying during the coming bloodshed of the Tribulation (their lives will be preserved) Note: This Philadelphia church is the only church Jesus promises to protect from the hour of temptation.

"I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation"
"Keep...from" - To guard or preserve from; Not speaking of "removal from" (or "rapture" as Pre-Tribulationalism teaches) but "protection from" a specific time of temptation.

The word translated ***"keep"*** is the greek verb "tereo" which means to guard or keep watch over. The construction of the two words "tereo ek" (keep from) are only combined one other time in Scripture and they do not convey a removal from a bad condition, but protection from that bad condition.

> Jesus said: *"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest **keep** them **from** the evil (one)"* (John 17:15).

"Temptation" - "Peirasmos" (cp. I Peter 4:12) Peirasmos is a word that always refers to a solicitation to do evil (Such temptation does not come from God but from Satan (and in an eschatological context from Satan via AntiChrist).
The hour (Specific time) of temptation refers to the time when Satan severely tempts the world to deny God to follow the Beast (Anti-Christ). "Temptation" is connected with the ideas of tribulation or persecution (cp. Lk. 8:13 with Mt. 13:21, Mk. 4:17).

The word ***"Hour"*** according to our usual usage refers to a literal period of 60 minutes. However, the word is also used of the time of a specific occurrence.

> John said that we are living in the "last time" (hour) (I Jn. 2:18), which refers to the final time period from Pentecost to Rapture.

The specific reference is not to general temptation but to a specific time - the Time of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21,22); and to a universal time - because it involves "them that dwell on the earth" (Rev. 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 12:12; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:2, 8).

"Behold, I come quickly"

Upon the heels of the Lord's promise of protection (v. 10) is the promise of His coming (v. 11). This proves:

Although John originally wrote to seven literal churches in his day, the message applies to faithful churches still existing immediately before His second coming.

NOTE: Similar implications of the Lord's return:
--To Ephesus - *"I will come unto thee quickly"* (Rev. 2:5)
--To Pergamum - *"I will come unto thee quickly"* (2:16).
--To Thyatira - *"Hold fast till I come"* (2:25).
--To Sardis - *"I will come on thee as a thief"* (3:3).

IV. He REWARDS the faithful with ETERNAL PRIVILEGE (v. 11-12)

A. Eternal Privilege #1 - A Crown (v. 11)

"Hold fast" - to grasp onto something; not to let go.
Jesus' exhortation is to cling on the "the faith of our fathers"; don't let go of your confidence; don't give up your convictions; don't loosen up on your moral and spiritual purity!
"No man" - lit. no one (whether man or Satan)
"Crown" - not a royal crown (diadema) but a victor's crown (sephanos); a reward (cp. I Cor. 3:14) for being faithful and finishing your course.
The reference to some "man" taking your crown does not mean he takes it for himself; rather, he keeps you from getting it.
Some people (being tools of Satan) live to keep others from getting crowns. They themselves are not getting any, so they are out trying to throw devilish rocks in the path of those running in the race of God so that no one else is rewarded.

B. Eternal Privilege #2 - A Pillar (v. 12a)

"Pillar" = conveys the idea of stability and permanence (Rienecker, p. 821).
ILLUS: how pillars are often the only remains of ancient architecture.
(cp. the Church as "the pillar and ground of the truth" - I Tim. 3:15)
Cp. Gal. 2:9, where Peter, James, and John are called pillars because of their stability in the faith.
The following clause supports the idea of permanence (*". . . and he shall go no more out"*).
The faithful will have the privilege of being permanently close to the LORD!
Who is the faithful? Answer: "The overcomer"
Who is the ***"overcomer"***? Answer: The true Christian.

The ***"Temple"*** is a reference to the LORD, because in the New Jerusalem there is no temple (Rev. 21:22 - *"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."*).

"he shall go no more out"

The point is: We will permanently be where Jesus is throughout eternity!
Permanence:

"When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise,
Than when we first begun"

C. Eternal Privilege #3 - A <u>Name</u> (v. 12b)

"The name of my God" - the name of the Father will be permanently inscribed (most likely on the forehead like that of the faithful 144,000 - Rev. 14:1)
(Contrast this name with the number representing the name of the Anti-christ - Rev. 13:16-18).

The ***"New Jerusalem"*** (Rev. 21:1ff) evidently comes after the 1,000 year kingdom and the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:1-15).
"To a city (Philadelphia) that had experienced devastating earthquakes which causes people to flee into the countryside and to establish temporary dwellings there, the promise of permanence within the New Jerusalem would have a special meaning" (Rienecker, citing Mounce, p. 821).

"The name of the city" - What is the name?
Ezek. 48:35 (*"It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, <u>The LORD is there</u>"*) gives the answer - "The LORD (Yahweh) is there!" SEE Rev. 21:2-3.

"My new name" = In addition to Jesus writing His Father's name on you, He will write His own name. Why? Because "I (Jesus) and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30).
Jesus' name will be a name that is above all names (Phil. 2:9).
Jesus is "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."
"He is King of kings and Lord of lords."

CONCLUSION: Verse 13

"LAODICEA: THE LUKEWARM CHURCH"
Revelation 3:14-22

INTRODUCTION: Verse 14-16

"Laodicea" = "Laos" (people) "Dike" (judgment or rule) -- Hence, "The people rule"

Even the name hints at the problem at Laodicea: Christ was not on the throne of their lives; the people were!

V. 14

"The Amen" = an O.T. title for God; the word refers to truth, fidelity.

II Cor. 1:20 - "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

The one who is the truth tells the truth to a church in need of the truth (because she had been deceived by the liar [Jn. 8:44] -- like many churches today).

"The beginning of the creation of God" = This is not saying that Jesus was the first being that God created (as the Jehovah's Witnesses claim), but rather Jesus is the one who gave creation its beginning.

Jesus is the **"beginner"** = The originator; The one who made everything begin (cp. Rev. 1:8- "The Alpha and Omega , the beginning and the end"). Cp. Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-18 (*v. 18)

Jesus being the origin or the source of all creation is also the "ruler" of creation.

V. 15

Why would Jesus prefer a people to be ***"cold"*** rather than ***"lukewarm"***?

ANSWER: Because a "cold" people may awake to their coldness (deadness) and repent; whereas a lukewarm (middle-of-the-road) person will remain content!

If he was cold, at least he would feel it, become chilled, and seek clothing (v. 18).

V. 16

"Lukewarm" = Tepid; metaphorically, to be indifferent; to be neither one thing or another; non-committed. The lukewarm Christian is comfortable, complacent, and content.

Cold water is refreshing to drink. Hot water is invigorating to drink. (warm coffee; warm tea; & warm milk are to many unacceptable).

"Spue thee" = to vomit or reject with disgust.

As the Lord tastes the temperature of your spirituality, what would His reaction be?

A Practical Key Truth -- We need to examine the spiritual temperature of our hearts!

I. The CAUSE of Lukewarmness

A. *The Laodiceans cooled off when they became:* No longer dependent upon Christ (v. 17a) (Deceived by self-sufficiency)

The Laodiceans actually told others "We have it all." What more could we possibly need?

In A.D. 60, after the city suffered heavy damage from an earthquake, it declined the offer of aid by the imperial government with the reply, "I have grown rich and have need of nothing" (Smith, p. 93).

NOTE: The contrast between this church and the Smyrna church:
--The Smyrna church was in poverty (materially) but rich (spiritually);
--Whereas the Laodicean church was wealthy (materially) but poor (spiritually).

The church of Laodicea, like the city of Laodicea under Roman rule, was very wealthy. The city itself was a center of banking and finance.
No doubt it was a prestigious church -- like churches today with padded pews, wall-to-wall carpet, pipe organs, multi-million dollar budgets, white collar membership, etc. . . . yet devoid of the power of God! Dead churches with dead preachers, preaching dead messages, to dead or dying people.
Beware: We can become so wrapped up in the blessings that we forget the Blesser (We need the Giver more than the gifts; We need the Provider more than the provision).

B. ***The Laodiceans cooled off when they:***
No longer saw what really mattered in life (v. 17b-18)
(Ignorant of true values)

"Knowest not" - points to ignorance.
To have a problem and know it is sad; to have a problem and be blind to it is even sadder.
"Wretched" = someone who is living in misery or someone who is afflicted (but doesn't realize it).
"Miserable" - someone who is pitied; an object of sorrow; not someone who would be admired, but someone who would cause others to feel sorry toward.
In the eyes of men, no doubt, the Laodicean church was a church to be envied. But in the eyes of God, it was a church to be pitied.

> The characteristics of being "poor, and blind, and naked" (without the article) indicate the source or reason for their wretchedness and misery (the reference to these 3 characteristics supports this point) (Smith, p. 93).

"Poor" - extremely poor; one who has reached the level of a beggar.
"Blind" = NOTE: Laodicea was widely known for its medical school and particularly famous for an eye salve made from "phrygian powder" mixed with oil" (Reinecker, p. 821). She, who had modern technology to assist those with failing sight, was blind herself.
"Naked" - "The city was famous for its garments of glossy back wool" (Reinecker, p. 821).
"All the while, their spiritual power had been decaying, their material wealth and glowing statistics were but shrouds hiding a rotting corpse" (Wiersbe, p. 580).

"Counsel" - to advise

1. "Pure gold"

"Gold tried in the fire" - gold that has been tested and refined. Jesus is offering them "real gold" (spiritual gold).
He offered them the real stuff as opposed to the cheap imitations that they boasted over (and thought were real).
NOTE: How references to refined gold are often linked with faith.
"When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).
"The trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth" (I Pet. 1:7).
According to James 2:5, God's value of what a person has is measured not by his material wealth, but by his being "rich in faith."

2. *"White raiment"*

A reference to moral purity (cp. Rev. 19:8).
God offers garments of salvation (Is. 61:10). Man needs to be clothed with God's righteousness (Job. 29:14).
That which is important is not that you wear the latest fashions (which often do not cover one's shameful nakedness).

"Nakedness" - would refer to the lack of spiritual covering.
In the biblical world, "nakedness" was a symbol of shame and humiliation.
Today, many are spiritually naked. When the facades are removed, the inner barrenness and shamefulness is revealed.
Many do not even blush when the corrupt behavior is unveiled.

3. ***"Eyesalve"***
A reference to spiritual insight.
We need the Holy Spirit to open our spiritual eyes, to the end that the eyes of our understanding might be enlightened (Eph. 1:17, 18).

C. The Laodiceans cooled off when they:
No longer had a close fellowship with Christ (v. 20)
(Separated from intimacy with Christ)

Christ was standing on the "outside" of their lives because "inside" of their hearts, their dependence and satisfaction was found in other "things".

NOTE: Verse 20 specifically applies to believers in context (those who are objects of Christ's love - v. 19).

The phrase ***"If any man"*** would open up the applicability of this truth to unbelievers, since Christ wants all men to accept Him personally and intimately (Jn. 1:12; Eph. 3:17).

"I stand" - lit. I have been standing and still am (perfect tense) (This reveals the patience of Christ).

"And knock" - lit. I am continually knocking" (This reveals the politeness of Christ).
A Christian cools off when Christ is no longer the core of his life.
When our fellowship is intimate, however, and Jesus is able to closely minister to our hearts, we can experience what the Emmaus disciples said, *"Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"* (Lk. 24:32).
Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers that Christ would *"dwell in [their] hearts by faith"* - That Christ would be at home; settle down in them.
Too often we treat Christ like a passing visitor or like an occasional guest.
SEE John 15:1-8.
NOTE v. 4 - "Abide in me, and I in you"
NOTE v. 5 - "Without me ye can do nothing"

"Sup" - to eat a meal (English = to have supper).
To a Jew, when someone had you over for a meal, it meant that they accepted your company, they desired your fellowship. (EX: Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners; the Jews would never eat with Gentiles, because such would be an indication of fellowship)
Cp. Acts 10:28; Acts 11:3 - "Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them"
--With a disobedient brother, we are not to eat (fellowship) - I Cor. 5:11 - "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat (ie. not to fellowship)."
--Eating the Lord's Supper denotes fellowship (I Cor. 11:23ff).

II. The CURE for Lukewarmness

Jesus counsels the lukewarm Christian to:

A. ***"Buy of Me"*** **(v. 18)**

The Counselor (Is. 9:6) advises such a church to acquire the answer to her spiritual poverty.

"Poor, blind, naked" - Jesus has the remedy to each (v. 18) and He is the source of each remedy!

(NOTE: You can purchase from Him with no money - Is. 55:1ff)

B. ***"Be zealous and repent"*** **(v. 19)**

"As many as" - implies that there was at least a remnant in this assembly that were objects of Christ's love.

"Love" = "phileo" - to have an affection for; or to be fond of.

God loves His own enough to discipline. He does not let his children go their own way.

NOTE: He only spanks His own. He does not spank the devil's kids (Jn. 8:44; Acts 13:10).

For such love we should be grateful.

NOTE: The Lord's discipline of His children has 2 aspects:

1) ***"Rebuke"*** - verbal reproof - "My sheep hear my voice"
2) ***"Chasten"*** - physical discipline (SEE Heb. 12:5-11)

"Be zealous" - is an encouragement to make a decision to change. You must want to change!

"Repent" - reveals the way such change comes about (the means to change)

"Repent" = have a change of mind (attitude) about yourself.

Be honest with yourself.

Honesty is the first step to true blessing.

C. ***"Hear My voice and open the door"*** **(v. 20)**

"If any man hear my voice" -

Are you listening? Has He been speaking to you?

"My sheep hear my voice" - What would Jesus be saying to such a people? -- Answer: "May I come in?" "Do you see that life cannot go on the way it has?" "I desire to have a closer fellowship with you than I ever had. I want you to know me more intimately than you ever had."

Hence the last phrase: "I will come in to him (intimacy) and will sup with him and he with me (fellowship)."

The One who is the Amen, the faithful and true witness "will come in."

It's a promise! But it's conditioned on whether or not you will open the door!

It's rude to keep someone knocking on your door (especially Christ!).

4:1 - 22:5 "THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER"

"THOU ART WORTHY"
Rev. 4:1-11

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 7.
Rev. 4 & 5 give us a glimpse of Heaven and the majesty of God.
In heaven the focus is around the throne of God.
Key word in chapter 4 = ***"Throne"*** (14 times)
(46 times in entire book of Revelation)

4:1

"After this" = after John saw the events of chapters 2 and 3 (which described the 7 literal local churches that are characteristic of churches during the church age up until the end of the age)

"A door was opened in heaven" = the next time the door is said to be open is in Rev. 19:11, when Christ returns with His saints at the end of the Tribulation. This door was open for John to see a glimpse of the glories of the worship the Lord receives in Heaven.

"Trumpet" = the next "voice" (sound) from Heaven, we hear will be the trumpet of God at the Rapture (I Th. 4:16). That trumpet will say the same thing -- "Come up hither!"

"Come up hither" - Some Pre-tribulational Bible interpreters view this upward call of John as being a type or symbolic reference to the "rapture" of the church. However, this is an allegorical interpretation that most Bible students reject. Note: If this *"come up hither"* is symbolic of the rapture of the church, then what is the *"come up hither"* of the two witnesses at the mid-point of the "tribulation" in 11:12 symbolic of? The Mid-tribulationalists view that reference as proof for their view of the timing of the rapture. (It is the view of this professor that neither reference is a cryptic reference to the rapture.)

"Must be hereafter" = "must" = necessary or binding. The events of the future not only will take place; they must take place to fulfill God's prophecy.
Nothing will stop His Word from being fulfilled.
Even the Devil (who knows Scripture) will play right into God's plan for the future (cp. Rev. 12-13).

"Hereafter" = At some time in the future after the days of John who lived during the time of the 7 churches previously addresses in chapters 2 and 3.
The *"hereafter"* begins the third point in John's outline of Revelation (SEE Rev. 1:19).

4:2

"In the Spirit" = John entered into the spiritual realm (cp. Rev. 1:10).
"Throne" - depicts the majesty of a Ruler (king) and the authority of a Judge.

4:3

NOTE: John sees no form of God (Ex. 24:10; Jn. 4:24), but only the brilliant flashing gems that reflect His glory.

"Jasper" = was a translucent (clear) crystal; like diamond, pointing to the glory of God (Rev. 21:11); possibly hinting at the purity and holiness of God (Mounce).

"Sardine" - sardius stone. This was a blood red stone named after Sardis near which it was found. The color "blood red" may hint at the blood that Christ shed; or the coming wrath or judgment of Christ, who wears "a garment dipped in blood" (Rev. 19:13).

This ***"rainbow"*** was a complete circle, not merely 180 degrees.

4:4
"24 elders" - literal 24 saved believers who were redeemed by the blood of Jesus (cp. Rev. 5:8-10), who have received a special position of reigning with Christ. NOTE: Every resurrected or raptured believer will reign with Christ in the 1,000 year kingdom (Rev. 20:4, 6).
These 24, however, seem to have a pre-eminent position in their reign (hence the title "elder").
Many commentators view these 24 "elders" as being representative of all church age saints. If this was so, why the specific number 24? Could not God have stated their number like He did the innumerable angels in Rev. 5:11?
[24 - cp. the 24 courses of the Aaronic priestly order mentioned in I Chron. 24:3-5; 18; cp. Lk. 1:5-9]

"White raiment" - symbolized imputed righteousness and purity.

"Crowns" - a "stephanos" or victor's wreath.
Such a crown would evidently indicate that they had been faithful during life on earth -- possibly martyrs (cp. the connection between crowns and martyrdom - Rev. 2:10).

"Crowns of gold" - victor's wreaths were normally made of corruptible materials (I Cor. 9:25). EX: In the Isthmian games, it was a crown of pine. These crowns are incorruptible! Pure!

4:5
"Seven spirits of God" - the 7-fold manifestation of the Holy Spirit. These 7 spirits are called "lamps" (Lights; burning torches - Zech. 4:2), and are part of Jesus Christ (the Lamb) - called His "eyes" (Rev. 5:6; cp. Zech. 4:10). These "7 spirits" most evidently refer to the Holy Spirit in His perfection (Zech. 4:6).

4:6
"Sea of glass like unto crystal" = Everything associated with God is pure, clean, and clear. Those saved during the tribulation are said to "stand on the sea of glass" (Rev. 15:2-4).
"Beasts" = living creatures
"Four beasts" - cherubim - angelic creatures that had the appearance of a fiery bright flame.
SEE: Ezekiel 1:4-14.
These creatures can see in all directions. Ezekiel describes them as being four-sided.
Rev. 4:8 - *"six wings"*; Ezek. 1:6 - *"four wings"*
NOTE: They had 6 wings, but 2 were linked to each other (Ezek. 1:9), forming a circle.
NOTE: Rev. 4:9 - *"Round about the throne"* = encircling the throne. These creatures surround the throne! They are constantly gazing into the face of God. No wonder all they can say is "holy, holy, holy"!

4:6b
EX: As the President of the U.S. is surrounded by bodyguards who protect him wherever he goes, so the angelic beings in Rev. 4 perhaps protect the holiness of God (Epp, p. 28).

The "four beasts" comprise the inner circle around the throne; the 24 elders form an outer circle (4:4), and Jesus Christ is in the center! (cp. 5:6) next to the Father (5:7).

4:7
These living creatures were created solely for the purpose of worshipping God!

Therefore, they comprise the best of the animate world. They are the noblest (lion), strongest (calf - ox), wisest (man) and swiftest (eagle) (Swete, cited from Reinecker, p. 823).

A Practical Key Truth -- God is worthy of your praise!

God is worthy of praise for two major reasons:

I. God is worthy of praise because of WHO HE IS (v. 8)
(His Attributes)

"Rest not" - unceasing praise! Non-stop adoration! They do not pause in their praise.
Contrast: No rest of giving praise, with the no rest of those in torment forever (Rev. 14:9-11).

They praise God's:

A. **Purity** - ***"Holy, holy, holy"*** (cp. Is. 6:3).
Why is God holy three times?
--An allusion to the Trinity
--An emphasis on this attribute

B. **Power** - ***"Lord God Almighty"***

C. **Permanence** - ***"was..is..is to come"*** - God is eternal!

II. God is worthy of praise because of WHAT HE HAS DONE (v. 11)
(His Actions)

4:9

"Glory" - to give credit where credit is due.
"Honor" - to view as priceless; beyond value.
"Thanks" - to show appreciation.

4:10

The four beasts give the cue (v. 9), and in succession the 24 elders fall down to worship (v. 10)

NOTE: In Rev. 4, the praise goes to God as creator (v. 11);
In Rev. 5, the praise goes to God as Redeemer (v. 9ff).

Essentials to True Worship:

A. **A deep sense of one's own unworthiness (v. 10**
"Cast their crowns" - depicts an attitude of unworthiness to wear the crowns. They view themselves as not worthy of recognition or honor. All honor goes to the Lord.

B. **A recognition that God is worthy of all praise (v. 11a)**
"Worship" = an old English word that meant worth-ship. To ascribe worth to one.
God is worthy; only God is worthy ("worship God" - Rev. 19:10; 22:9).
Sinful man tends to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).

C. **A desire to bring to God the pleasure that is due Him (v. 11b)**
God created all things for himself.
Rom. 11:36 *"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."*
Col. 1:16 - *"...all things were created by him, and for him"*

"Pleasure" - will or desire
God created man (and all of creation) to bring pleasure to Himself (We accomplish his by fulfilling His will - I Th. 5:18)
"The prayer of the upright is His delight" (Prov. 15:8)
All creation exists presently (***"they are"*** - present tense) to fulfill God's desires.

If the heavens declare God's glory (Ps. 19:1), why shouldn't God's people?
Cp. Triumphal Entry (Lk. 19:37-40) - "The stones would immediately cry out"
Ps. 50:23 - *"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me."*
Heb. 13:15 - Offer God *"The sacrifice of praise"*

"WORTHY IS THE LAMB"
REVELATION 5:1-14

INTRODUCTION: V. 1-6

v. 1

"Right hand" = the hand of power & authority. God the Father has power over the timing of the unfolding of the events described in the scroll.

"Book" = scroll - made of skins sewn together.
Normally a scroll would have writing only on one side, but this scroll is extensive and full!
Full of what? What are the contents? Answer: The future destiny of the world. Specifically, future judgments to occur in THE DAY OF THE LORD - [cp. Ezek. 2:9, 10. A similar scroll contained "Lamentations and mourning and woe" (v. 10).]

The contents of the scroll being opened, evidently unveil hidden details of the coming DAY OF THE LORD'S WRATH. Things that have been "shut up" (sealed) according to Daniel 12:4,9.

"Written" - perfect tense; Used of legal authoritative documents whose authority continued (Rienecker, p. 824)

"Sealed" = straps that kept a scroll closed. The contents could not be read unless the seals were unloosed.

"Seven Seals" - The 7 seals which close up the scroll, will depict events prior to the DAY OF THE LORD (Rev. 6), whereas the contents of the scroll itself unfolds the 7 trumpet judgments and the 7 bowl judgments to occur in the DAY OF THE LORD (Rev. 8-19).

Note: According to Roman Law, a testament or will was sealed with seven seals by seven witnesses (Rienecker, p 824).

"a strong angel" - Perhaps Gabriel; The name "Gabriel" means "strength of God"
A ***"strong angel proclaiming"*** - NOTE: The angel does not merely "say" or "ask", but he triumphantly announces as a herald; he proclaims a question in a rhetorical manner, almost implying the obvious answer - "...No one is worthy except Christ."

V. 4

"Wept" - to cry out loud or wail
Used of Christ weeping over Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41) and Peter bitterly weeping after denying Christ (Mt. 26:75). John now hangs his head in shame and sorrow because of the unworthiness even of the "greatest" of saints to open the scroll.
"Found worthy" = found - implies that searching went on, yet no one measured up to the privilege.

V. 5

"Lion of the tribe of Juda" - Jesus' lineage stems from Judah "according to the flesh" (Mt. 1, 2, 3; cp. Gen. 49:8, 9).
"lion" - The picture of "the king of the jungle" points to Christ's kingly authority to open the scroll.
[Christ being called a "lion" also alludes to His authority to judge during the DAY OF THE LORD]

"The root of David" - Jesus' lineage stems from David (Mt. 1:6, 17) (cp. Rev.22:16; Rom. 15:12; Is. 11:1, 10). The phrase *"Root of David"* - points to Christ's authority to open the scroll.
[Christ being called "the root of David" alludes to his right to reign during the Millennial kingdom. SEE Is. 11:1-10]
"Prevailed" - conquered; overcome; won a victory (at calvary).

v. 6
"Midst" = middle. Christ is in the middle of the throne with the Father (Note: Surrounding the throne are the four beasts; surrounding the beasts are the 24 elders).

"Lamb" - representing Christ (John 1:29).

"Stood a Lamb" - NOTE: Jesus is standing, no longer seated (Mk. 16:19). Standing because of the judgments He is about to unfold. Cp. *"The judge standeth before the door"* (Ja. 5:9).

"Slain" - lit. slaughtered. Perfect tense indicates the lasting effects of Christ's crucifixion. He will forever bear the marks of His death (Lk. 24:40; John 20:2, 27).

"Seven horns" - *"horn"* - a symbol of strength, power or might. It often symbolized a conqueror
(EX. Alexander the Great and his four succeeding generals - Dan. 8:3, 8).
(Ex: 10 horned confederacy of the revived Roman empire and the little horn representing the Anti-christ (Dan. 7:7, 8, 20).

"The Seven Spirits of God" = a reference to the Holy Spirit in His perfection.

1. The seven spirits being pictured as the eyes "of Christ" are part of Christ as is the Holy Spirit. (Jn. 14:18).
2. SEE: Zech. 4:2, 6, 10

"Sent forth" - to send as an official representative. The verb has reference to the mission of the Spirit (Swete).

Whereas Rev. 4 described the praise of God the Father (the throne-sitter), Rev. 5 describes the praise of God the Son.
Whereas in Rev. 4, praise goes to the Lord of Creation, chapter 5 - the Lord of Redemption.

A Practical Key Truth -- Jesus Christ is worthy of our praise!

I. WORTHY IS THE LAMB TO RECEIVE THE PRAISE OF HIS SAINTS (V. 8-10)

V. 8
After triumphantly taking the scroll out of the Father's hand, heaven erupts into an applause of praise and worship of Christ.

"Golden vials" = a vial was a flat shallow bowl.

"Full of odours" - incense (a fragrant smoke)

The twenty-four elders, being representatives for the Church, hold up before God the prayers of the church.

The point: Our prayers are never forgotten. Rather, they are collected and brought into remembrance before God.

ILLUS: How certain good smells remind you of a certain time or event that took place in your life. Our prayers have a scent to them that is pleasing to God and reminiscent to God (cp.Rev.8:3,4).

V. 9
The Lamb of God is worthy of praise...for (because of) 2 reasons:
1) His sacrifice (v. 9a) 2) His redemption (v. 9b)

"Redeemed" - to buy at the market place.
We were redeemed from the slave market of sin and the prospects of Judgment.
The believer was not merely redeemed, but redeemed ... to God. We became God's property (I Cor. 6:20 - *"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's."*)

II. WORTHY IS THE LAMB TO RECEIVE THE PRAISE OF ANGELS (V. 11-12)

Jesus Christ created all the angelic creatures of Heaven (Col.1:16) therefore, they should praise Him.

An innumerable host of angels encircle (surround) the throne, encircle the beasts and encircle the elders.
They form the outside perimeter of the host that envelopes God's throne.

III. WORTHY IS THE LAMB TO RECEIVE THE PRAISE OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE (v. 13-14)

Every created living creature will one day praise God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"In Heaven" - Beasts; 24 elders, angels, and deceased believers in Heaven.

"On earth" - those living during the last days (see Note below).

"Under the earth" those in graves

"In the sea" - lit. upon the sea - those on sea vessels

"all things that are in them" = even sea life and animal life will utter praise to God.

The universal praise (in v. 13) is believed to be proleptic (J.B. Smith P. 117)-- that is, with a view to the future when every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-10). Universal praise evidently will occur at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev.20:11-f). At which time those in graves, the sea etc. will be ushered into God's Courtroom and will have no other choice than to praise Christ.
Revelation 11:13 describes a remnant of people, who were not destroyed by a tremendous earthquake as giving glory to God.

NOTE: ***"The Lamb"*** (Jesus Christ) receives equal honor with the Father eternally!
This is another proof of the deity of Christ, since Yahweh said He would never give His glory to another (Is. 42:8)
Cp. John 5:23 - *"All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him"*

"Honor" - to treat with (equal) value or worth
The praise of Christ begins on the inside (the core) of those surrounding God's throne (elders, v. 8), then spreads to the outside perimeter with the angels (v. 11); then reverberates to all creation (v. 13).

"Amen" - Truly; Certainly; Most Assuredly. The four living creatures confirm the fact that Christ fully and rightfully deserves the praise just offered.

"THE SEALS OF THE LAST DAYS"
Revelation 6:1-17

Revelation 6 - 19 describes the period of future history known as the 70th. "week" of Daniel 9:27; Commonly called the "Tribulation period" (although, technically, the Great Tribulation does not begin until the mid-point of the 70th. week - Matthew 24:15-21; compare: Revelation 12-13.)

The imagery of ***"horses"*** (6:1-8) represents the world forces that God will use to fulfill His sovereign plan. The reference to horses may also imply the swiftness with which each event will unfold and lead into the next (indicating succession).

This chapter clearly manifests the sovereignty of God. It is God who allows the seal judgments to occur. Nothing happens until God gives the OK and Christ opens the seals.

NOTE God's Sovereign control:

v. 2 - "a crown was given unto him..."
v. 4 - "power was given to him..."
v. 8 - "power (authority) was given unto them"

Revelation 6 runs parallel with Matthew 24 and Luke 21

The Harmony of Revelation 6, Matthew 24, and Luke 21

Revelation 6		Matthew 24		Luke 21	
Seal # 1	**Deception**	**v.4-5**	**Deception**	**v. 8**	**Deception**
Seal # 2	**War**	**v.6-7a**	**War**	**v.9-10**	**War**
Seal # 3	**Famine**	**v.7b**	**Famine**	**v.11**	**Famine**
Seal # 4	**Death & Destruction**	**v.7-8**	**Death & Destruction**	**v.12-19**	**Death & Destruction**
Seal # 5	**Persecution**	**v.9-22**	**Persecution**	**v.20-24**	**Persecution**
Seal # 6	**Cosmic Signs** (Sun,Moon,Stars altered)	**v.29-31**	**Cosmic Signs** (Sun,Moon,Stars altered)	**v.25-26**	**Cosmic Signs** (Sun,Moon,Stars altered)

A Practical Key Truth -- Be ready for the trials of the tribulation!

****The future Tribulation will be a time of:***

I. DECEPTIVE WORLD-WIDE CONQUEST (White Horse) (v. 1-2)

V. 1

The Lamb controls the timing of the Tribulation events by His loosening of the seven seals. Each time He loosens a seal, something traumatic occurs on the earth.

The opening of the first seal begins the final 7 years of this age.

"The noise of thunder" - a reference to the sound of the Beast's voice. A sound of power. NOTE: These four "Beasts" (living creatures - cp. 4:6-8; 5:14) each call attention to the four horses of the Apocalypse.

V. 2
Some have identified this rider on the white horse with Jesus Christ, who also will return on a white horse (Rev. 19:11).

The differences, however, are as follows:

	Rev. 6 = AntiChrist	Rev. 19 = Jesus Christ
1)	6:2 - "Bow"	19:15 "sharp sword out of His mouth"
2)	6:2 - rider is unnamed	19:11 "Faithful and True" 19:13 "The Word of God" 19:16 "The King of kings and Lord of lords"
3)	6:2 - "a crown" = "stephanos"	19:12 "many crowns" = "diadema"
4)	6:2 - "conquering" (by peace)	19:11 "In righteousness He doth judge and make war" 19:15 "strike the nations"

"White horse" = a counterfeit or copy of Christ's white horse (Rev. 19:11).
"This rider on the white horse evidently pictures man's last effort to bring in a reign of order and peace while Christ is still rejected" (Ironside).

"A bow" = NOTE: No arrows are mentioned. Arrows are the deadly part of the weapon.
The Anti-christ will be an imitation for Christ. He will begin as a peaceful liberator and will greatly deceive the world (John 5:43; II Th. 2:1-12).

See Daniel 9:24-27 -

--70 sevens (70 "weeks" of years) are described (v. 24)

--69 sevens or 483 years have been fulfilled [from the command to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem = 69 "weeks"]

--The final "week" (seven) awaits the coming "Tribulation"

--The "Tribulation" kicks off with the Antichrist ("the prince that shall come" - v. 26) who will sign a 7-year peace treaty ("covenant") with Israel.

The Antichrist will come to world-wide power the same way Antiochus Epiphanes did - "peaceably . . . by flatteries" (Dan. 11:21-23).

The Antichrist will make people think they are entering the Millennium when actually they are entering the Tribulation. As Satan's masterpiece, he will come in like a Lamb (first 3 1-2 years) and go out like a lion (last 3 1-2 years).

"Crown" = a victor's wreath. The crown given to conquerors; those victorious in the Isthmian games.

"Conquering and to conquer" - refers to his winning victory after victory without defeat, while aiming at a goal of total conquest. LIT. "He went forth conquering and in order that he might conquer."

The Antichrist will stop at nothing less than complete dictatorship or total mastery.

II. WARS & RUMORS OF WARS (Red Horse) (v. 3-4)

V. 4
"Red" = fiery red
The color depicts bloodshed and sin (Isaiah 1:18).

"To take <u>peace</u> from (out of) the earth" - the conquest of "peace" evidently pictured in verse 2 quickly comes to an end as other Nations battle for supremacy. These wars culminate in the war mentioned in Daniel 11:36-45. That war will end with the Antichrist receiving a fatal wound unto death, which, by Satan's power will be healed (Rev.13).

"Great sword" - a reference to the <u>short</u> Roman dagger and is symbolic of <u>violent death</u>.

III. SEVERE FAMINE (Black Horse) (v. 5-6)

V. 5
"Black" = the symbol of mourning or affliction (Ex. Black worn at funerals).
The color "Black" is often connected with <u>famine</u> in the Bible (Jer. 14:1-2; Lam. 5:10).
Famine is the result of <u>war</u> (v.3-4). "A shortage of food will always drive up prices and force the government to ration what is available."
"To eat by weight" is a Jewish phrase indicating that food is scarce (Lev. 26:26) (Wiersbe, p. 588).
"Measure" = a quart
"penny" = a day's wages (The Greek "denarius" was a Roman silver coin equivalent to a day's wages)

V. 6
"A measure" - a quart (enough for one person)
"Barley" - cheaper than wheat; was primary food for the poor (Swete)
In the Tribulation, a man will work all day just to secure food for himself! There will be nothing for his family! (Wiersbe, p. 588)
"Hurt not" - do not deplete the oil or wine (2 primary agricultural items in Israel)
With famine conditions as severe as they will be, the Antichrist will have little trouble convincing the world of the need for a <u>one-world economic system</u> to feed the hungry multitudes (Rev. 13:17).

IV. DEATH & DESTRUCTION (Pale Horse) (v. 7-8)

V. 8
"Pale" - pale green. The color of sickness. The color of death.
"Death" is pictured as sitting on the pale horse and ***"Hell"*** *(Hades)* follows closely behind sweeping up after death.
Death comes before hell; as death claims the <u>body</u> while Hell claims the <u>soul</u> of the dead (Rev. 20:13) (Wiersbe, p. 588).
--Jesus Christ has the keys of death and hell (Rev. 1:18);
--Death (body) and hell (soul) will one day be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14).
"Sword" - a large blade (cp. Rev. 1:16).

V. INNOCENT BLOODSHED (v. 9-11)

Note the end-time persecution of believers - SEE Mt. 24:9-12

"Souls under the altar" = the bottom (the foot) of the alter is where the blood of a sacrifice was poured out in the O.T. (Ex. 29:12; Lev. 4:7, 18, 25, 30).
These souls are under the altar because they allowed their blood to be shed as martyrs for Christ during the Great Tribulation. These are Church Age Saints who will be persecuted from the Mid-point of the final 7 years of this age onward until the rapture. They will be killed, but will be resurrected as part of the "first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4-6) which will occur at the rapture (I Cor. 15:51-57; I Thess. 4:13-17).

NOTE: Verse 9 proves that the saint goes to Heaven when he dies.
"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."

They were martyred for two reasons:
1. for the ***"Word of God"***
   (they would not deny their convictions)
2. for the ***"testimony they maintained"***
   (they would not let go of their faith)

"How long" = Note: The question is not IF but WHEN? Many O.T. saints asked the same thing (Ps. 74:9, 79:5, 94:3; Hab. 1:2). The fact that they are asking God "when" He will judge the Antichrist and the inhabitants of the earth proves that He has not begun His judicial wrath yet. The DAY OF THE LORD has not yet begun.

Judgment is certain, and unavoidable; but God controls the timetable. A delay in judgment does not mean that God is asleep; nor that He is aloof and uninterested in His people's suffering, but that He is fulfilling His plan.
APPLICATION: Be patient. God will recompense. Never take vengeance yourself. If you do, you are robbing God of His prerogative (Heb. 10:30).

V. 10
"O Lord, holy and true"
Note: The martyrs appeal to God's holiness and truth. Why?
God's holiness and truthfulness are the basis upon which we can be sure that He will recompense (take vengeance).

--God must judge because He is holy (His holiness demands that He execute vengeance upon evil doers - Rev. 20:1-15).

--God will judge because He is true (He cannot lie. He promised that He would - Eccles. 12:14 - "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." SEE II Pet. 2:9, 3:7).

V. 11
"White robes" = a symbol of purity and undefilement (cp. Rev. 3:4, 5).
God alone can make us white as snow (Is. 1:18). Our purity is "in Christ"; and our robe comes from God. We cannot earn or buy one with our works.
NOTE: "Souls" (v. 9) are clothed (v. 11) even before they receive their resurrected bodies.

"A little season" - a short time. The Great Tribulation does not last long (3 1/2 years); For "*the elect's sake*" this time is cut even shorter (Mt.24:22) . Jesus said that the same generation of people living at the beginning of the tribulation would not pass away until it was over - Mt. 24:34.
The Tribulation is not some long, indefinite period of time as some amillennial theologians believe.

"Should be killed...fulfilled" - God sovereignly knows the fate of each believer.

VI. INCOMPARABLE HORROR (v. 12-17)

A. Immediately Before the Day of the LORD, there will be: Terrifying Signs of Doom (v. 12-14)

The sixth seal begins "the Day of the Lord."

The "Time of the Gentiles" has run its course. Now it's time for God to undeniably step into human history!

V. 12-14

1) SEE Joel 2:30-31 - the time described is "before" the Day of the LORD (cp. Acts 2:17-21)

2) SEE Matthew 24:29 - the time described is "after" the years of Tribulation come to an end for the elect.

The physical disturbances described in verses 12-14 occur toward the end of the Tribulation, just prior to the Battle of Armageddon (SEE Is. 34:1-8).

1. *"Great Earthquake"* (v. 12a)

Earthquakes are often used to introduce God's judgment.
When God wants to make an undeniable statement, He will often do so by sending an earthquake to accompany a climatic event.

EX: Christ's crucifixion - Mt. 27:51-54
Christ's resurrection - Mt. 28:2
Paul and Silas' release from prison - Acts 16
During Uzziah's reign (Amos 1:1)
(Josephus connected this earthquake with the sacrilege and consequent punishment of that monarch - cp. Antiquities IX 10:4 with II Chron. 26:16).

Earthquakes are God's means of warning of impending judgment (cp. Is. 29:6; Ps. 18:7 - *"Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth."*).
NOTE: the earthquake mentioned in Rev. 6:12 is called "great." This quake is not a mere tremor; but a worldwide shaking of the earth that results in universal destruction. A description of the most powerful earthquake ever to occur is found in Rev. 16:17-19.

2. *"Sun...moon"* altered (v. 12b)

"Black as sackcloth of hair" - sackcloth was the rough cloth made from the hair of a black goat and worn in times of mourning (Reinecher, p. 827).

"Sun" - Is. 24:23 - *"Then the moon shall be confounded, and the **sun** ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."*

"Moon" - Is. 13:10 - *"For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the **moon** shall not cause her light to shine."*

Since the sun is darkened, the moon no longer reflects its light; but rather the moon reflects (as it were) the blood-guilty earth. (EX: How water turns to blood in Trib. in payback for all the innocent blood that had been shed. SEE Rev. 16:3-7).

The entire world depends upon the faithfulness of the sunrise and sunset to fulfill its established orderly patterns. When the sun, moon, and stars forsake this order, it is evident that the end of the world (age) is at hand (Charles, cited from Rienecker, p. 828).

The alteration of the Moon will affect the earth's ocean tides! (Luke 21:25)

3. Stars fall (v. 13)

"Untimely figs" = unripe green figs which fall off of the tree before harvest time.
It's interesting that earth is the target for all stars. Outer-space (as it were) aims its gun and fires its bullets at a world that deserves execution.

4. Heaven (sky and space) departs (v. 14a)

"The heaven" - the sky and outer-space.
A reference to the first and second heavens (not a reference to God's heaven - the third heaven - c[. II Cor. 12:2 - "The third heaven is called Paradise - v. 4)

Heaven ***"departed"*** - lit. was split apart. The picture is of sky and space being ripped in two and having the two ends rolled up like a ***"scroll"***, thus revealing what has been hidden from man's view since the creation of the world -- namely, the throne of God in the third heaven! [NOTE: their reaction when His glory is made visible (v. 15-16)]

Matt. 26:64 - *"Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."*
NOTE: There is coming a day when "they shall look on Him whom they pierced" (Zech.12:10) as they see Jesus visibly returning to earth.
There is coming a day when one last effort will be vainly attempted to destroy Him who is indestructible, as the enemies of Christ see Him coming (Rev. 19:19).

5. Every mountain and island shifted (v. 14b)

The time that <u>every</u> mountain and island will be jarred loose is when the <u>seventh bowl</u> is poured out at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 16:20) (just prior to the final battle).

B. In the Day of the LORD, there will be:
<u>No Place to Hide</u> (v. 15-17)

SEE Isaiah 2:10-21 and 13:6-13

1. Universal dread (v. 15-16)

The emphasis is on the <u>all-inclusiveness</u> of the terror. Not a living soul on earth (outside of the redeemed) will avoid the awesome judgment of God.

The following list covers a <u>seven-fold spectrum</u> of different ranks and status:

"kings" - nobility
"great men" - authority (civil officials)
"rich men" - wealth
"chief captains" - high rank (a reference to a leader of 1,000 soldiers)
"mighty men" - strength
"bond men" - a slave (servant)
"free man" - the liberated man

<u>Everyone</u> -
from the highest to the lowest . . .
from the richest to the poorest . . .
from the strongest tot he weakest . . .
from the most well known to the most unknown. . .
from the emperor down to the most insignificant slave

. . . will tremble in terror when the sixth seal is loosed.

"Fall on us" - Note their request is not to die but to be covered from the view (presence) of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Him that sitteth . . .Lamb" - NOTE: Again, God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are tied together, pointing to the equality of the Father and Son.

"Wrath" (Orge) - deep seated anger!

2. Total despair (v. 17)

"The great day" - a day of wrath like no other.

"The wrath of the Lamb" - "wrath and lamb" do not usually go together, since a lamb is a tender, small, harmless animal. Many wrongly view Jesus Christ as weak, impotent, powerless, unauthoritative, etc.
Even though He came to earth the first time as meek and gentle, He will return the second full of fury toward rebellious mankind!

"is come" (elthen) - An Ingressive Aorist pointing to the beginning or starting point of an event (cp. "elthen" in Rev.19:7 - speaking of the Church's impending (about to begin) marriage and Mark. 14:41 - speaking of Christ's impending (about to begin) crucifixion). The GREAT AND TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD **BEGINS** AT THIS POINT OF HUMAN HISTORY!

"Who shall be able to stand" - Who will hold their ground when God pours out His fury? Obvious answer - No one!
Who will proudly boast then? Who will belittle God's power then? Who will degrade God's sovereignty then? Who will diminish God's holiness, righteousness, and justice then?
Who will mock God's hatred for sin then?

***** The loosing of the Sixth Seal (v.12-17) is the exact point in History when the one of the greatest events in History will occur: Namely, the RAPTURE!**

Proofs that the Rapture will begin at the loosing of the "Sixth Seal":

1. **The RAPTURE and the DAY OF THE LORD occur at the same time**
(I Thess.4:17 = Rapture; I Thess. 5:2 = Day of the Lord)

2. **The beginning of the DAY OF THE LORD will be evident by cosmic disturbances in the Sun & Moon** (Joel 2:31 - *"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, BEFORE the great and the terrible day of the LORD come"* [compare Acts 2:20])

3. **The Lord Jesus in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 also described these cosmic disturbances as occurring at the same time as His second coming for the RAPTURE** (Matthew 24:29-31; Luke 21:25-28,36)

4. **Although Revelation chapter 6 does not specifically state the Rapture, it's timing here is evident for the following reasons:**
   a. The dreadful signs that occur at the 6th. seal are linked to the rapture elsewhere (Mt.24:29-31; Luke 21:25-28; I Thess 4 & 5)
   b. The saints described in Heaven in the next chapter (7:9-17) came out of the Great Tribulation (v.14) because of the Lord Jesus' "SALVATION" (v.10). This word "salvation" in this eschatological context is most likely the same way Paul uses the term in an eschatological context in I Thessalonians 5:8,9 which means deliverance by means of rapture.
   c. The church is not mentioned in the chapters that follow (7-18) evidently because of her removal prior to the events mentioned in those chapters.

Most **Pre-Tribulational Rapturists believe that the "DAY OF THE LORD" begins with Seal #1**. They hold that God's wrath is poured out beginning with the opening of the first seal. Therefore, they believe that the church is raptured prior to the first seal.

Does the Day of God's wrath include the first five seals?

NO. Here is Proof:

(1) While Christ is sovereign over the events of the first five seals (since He opens each one), the nature of the events that transpire indicate the results of man's sin and wrath, not God's.

(2) During the five seals, God uses natural (earthly) causes to accomplish His purpose; whereas beginning with the sixth seal and continuing through the trumpet and bowl judgments, God uses supernatural causes to judge.

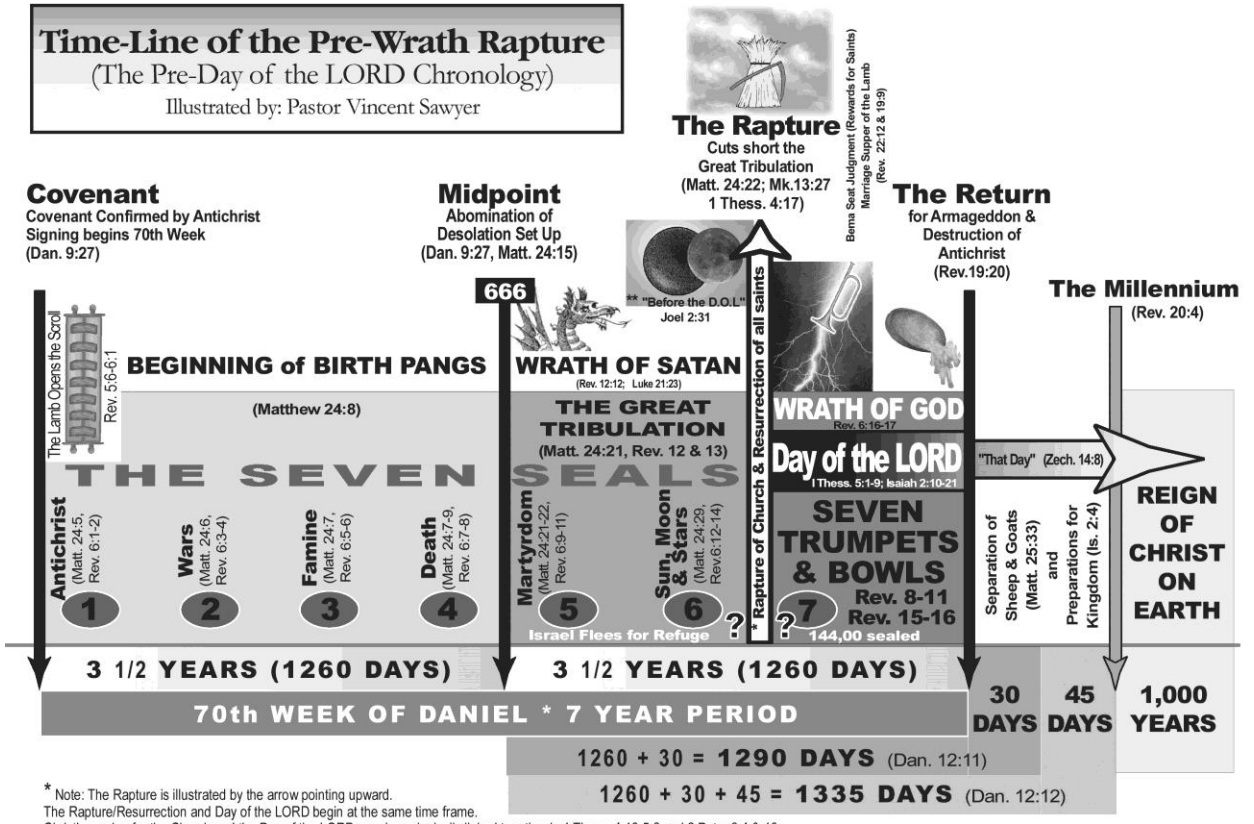
* (3) The fifth seal could not be God's wrath since it describes the martyrdom of God's faithful saints. *[Would God pour out His wrath on His children?]*

[Note: In Luke 21:23 the reference to "*wrath* upon this (Jewish) people" is NOT God's wrath upon them but SATAN's wrath (Rev.12:12,17).]

(4) The word "wrath" is not used in the first five seals.

* (5) The question asked by the martyred "souls under the altar" (*"How long until you avenge our blood"* - Rev. 6:10) indicates that God's judicial wrath on His enemies had not yet begun (God answers their prayer in 8:3).

(6) The sign of God's wrath is said to begin in Rev. 6:17, and the outpouring of God's wrath begins in 8:7.



"PROTECTION FROM GOD'S WRATH"
Revelation 7:1-17

INTRODUCTION: Time-line of Future Events in the final 7 years

After revealing in rapid-fire succession the consecutive events of trouble & tribulation to befall planet earth (chapter 6), God gives us a breather--a sigh of relief--a glimpse of hope in chapter 7 before the outpouring of His wrath in Chapters 8 and following.

A Practical Key Truth -- *God is a God who protects His people before He pours out His wrath!

I. The Sealing of 144,000 Jews (v.1-8)

V. 1
"After these things" = After John saw the events of the first 6 seals, he now sees events that occur between the 6th. and the 7th. seal.

"Holding the four winds" - stopping the winds implies a lull (calm) before the storm (Wiersbe, p. 590). A "heavenly hush before the Hellish horror"

This calm corresponds with the suspense indicated by the silence in heaven that occurs when the 7th seal is opened (8:1).

V. 2
"The seal of the living God" -
"seal" = an emblem or mark of ownership and security (permanence).
In Roman times, a seal referred to the impression made with a signet ring.

V. 3 - 8
"till we have sealed" - now four angels join the angel from the east to seal God's servants

"the servants of our God"

1. Who are the 144,000?

ANSWER: They are Jews (not Jehovah's Witnesses; nor a spiritual representation of the church). Proof:

a. V. 4 - "of all the tribes of the children of Israel"
b. v. 5-8 - the specific tribes are listed
c. God promised to redeem a remnant of the people of Israel in the last days *"when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in"* (Romans 11:25-ff) (See the O.T. prophets - Zech. 12:8-14, 13:9; Ezek. 20:33-44, 34:13-17, 36:25-29; Jer. 31:1-2; Is. 59:9-15, 43:1-7, 11:11-12:6)

2. How do the 144,000 come to Christ?

a. When Christ returns at the Rapture His coming will be visible to the eyes of all the world. (Matthew 24:30; cp. Rev.6:16; I Peter 4:13)

b. Multitudes of Jews will "look" on Him whom they have pierced as He returns (Zech. 12:10)

c. They will at that time repent in genuine sorrow for their sin and former rejecting of Christ (Zech. 12:10-14).

d. They will call upon the Lord at that time and be saved (Joel 2:31-32)

e. These 144,000 sealed Israelites are called *"firstfruits unto God"* (Rev. 14:4-f). Being "firstfruits" they are the first of the people who will be redeemed after the Rapture occurs. These people will be among the first people in mortal bodies to enter the Millennial kingdom.

3. When does this sealing occur?

a. After the 6th seal is loosed (Rev. 6:12-17), but before the 1st. Trumpet Judgement (Rev.7:3 cp. 8:7)

b. Immediately after the rapture has occurred.
"When the church is raptured, the 144,000 will not be taken with the saints because they will not as yet have been brought into a saving relationship with their Messiah, Jesus Christ" (Van Kampen The Sign p.302)

4. How could God preserve the Tribes through the centuries from mixing through intermarriage?

ANSWER: In the Law, the tribes were commanded by God to marry only those within that tribe (Num. 36:6-13).
Even with the destruction of many genealogical records at 70 A.D., the Jewish race like no other race has diligently kept itself isolated & insulated from much intermarriage with other races. The nation of Israel (its preservation despite Satan's numerous attempts to wipe it out) is a miracle that is mind-boggling.

5. Why is the tribe of Dan missing?

Dan is evidently replaced by the tribe of *"Manasses"* who was not a son of Jacob but the first born of Joseph (Gen. 41:51).

This tribe is missing perhaps because the tribe of Dan was guilty of leading the nation of Israel into idolatry on many occasions (Lev. 24:11; Judg. 18; I Ki. 12:28, 29) (Ryrie) In Deut. 29:18-21, God said He would blot out the name of any idolatrous man or tribe.

NOTE: Dan is the only tribe missing in the record of the genealogical tables of the tribes of Israel given in I Chron. 2:3-9:44.

While Dan is not sealed (Rev. 7), it must not be thought that this tribe will be made extinct. On the contrary, God's grace will extend to Dan, as evident by the fact that Dan heads up the list in the division of the land in the Millennial kingdom (Ezek. 48:1-2).

V. 3
"Sealed . . . in their foreheads" - contrast this mark with the mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16-18).

"Seal of the living God" - in contrast to the false, spiritually dead god, the Antichrist (II Th.2:4), who will seal those who serve him with his mark - 666 (Rev. 13).

Compare Rev. 14:1-5 - the mark identified the 144,000 with God the Father
(cp. Rev. 3:12 - to the overcoming saint, Jesus said: "I will write upon him the name of my God.")
In Rev. 22:4, John describes God's servants in the New Jerusalem as having "his name . . . in their foreheads."

What is the purpose for the 144,000 being sealed with such a mark?

Answer: PROTECTION

Protection from the plagues that the four angels (v. 1-3a) will unleash upon the earth
Protection from the "trumpet" and "bowl" Judgements.

Other examples of protective marks:

1. Mark on Cain (Gen. 4:15)
2. Mark on those who wept over the sin of Jerusalem (Ezek. 9:2-5)

The seal does not necessarily have to be visible. Evidently it is not! NOTE: the seal is not put on their foreheads but "in" their foreheads.

Most likely a seal will be placed on them which physical eyes cannot see; but visible to the eyes of the spirit world (God, angels, demons, etc.)

Just as God protected Noah from the flood, Israel from the plagues of Egypt, and Rahab and her household in Jericho, so will He protect His elect 144,000 (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

SEE: Rev. 9:4 - when the fifth trumpet sounds, only the redeemed 144,000 will be protected from the five-month torment inflicted upon the unbelieving world by the demonic locust-like army.

SEE Isaiah 43:1-7 for God's supernatural protection of His 144,000 elect.

144,000 Jews protected ("saved out of") during Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:5-**7**).

[Cp. Rev. 12:6 - the imagery of a "woman" (representing redeemed Israel) flees into the wilderness and is supernaturally protected by God during the last 3 1-2 years of the Tribulation (v. 14-17)]

Practical Application:

Nothing can happen to God's elect today unless God allows it.
God sets a protective hedge around us today like He will do in the future with His 144,000. We as believers today have been sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13).

"...the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His..." (II Tim. 2:19).

When God puts His label on someone, it means "hands off" to those who would seek to ruin God's property.
"If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Never forget that God is in sovereign control of His property (those who belong to Him).

II. The Salvation of multitudes of raptured saints (vv.9-17)

A. The Scope of Salvation: *"All nations. . ."* (v. 9)

"A great multitude which no man could number" - God knows the number, but no man would be able to count the multitudes that God will redeem prior to and during the Great Tribulation; These multitudes will be raptured immediately after the Great Tribulation is cut short for the Elect's sake (Mt. 24:22, 29).

"Nations" - God saves a remnant from all countries
"Kindreds" - God saves a remnant from all families
"People" - God saves a remnant from all cultures
"Tongues" - God saves a remnant from all languages

Note: We need a global outlook. Christ died for the sins of the world (I Jn. 2:2) (cp. Rev. 5:9). We are to go into all the world (Mk. 16:15).

"Stood before . . . the Lamb" - They ***"stand"*** before the Lamb because they have resurrected spiritual bodies. They are also said to have ***"hands"*** (v.9) again indicating that these are not in the same disembodied state as the *"souls under the altar"* (Rev. 6:9)
However, included among these who are clothed in "white robes" are those resurrected martyrs who were killed during the Tribulation (cp. "white robes" - 6:11).
Note: Jesus described the betrayal and slaughter to occur during the Trib. (Mt. 24:9, 10).

"Palms in their hands" - reminiscent of the rejoicing that occurred during the 7-day feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:40)
"Palms" denote victory and rejoicing.
(cp. Jn. 12:13 - Christ's Triumphal entry into Jerusalem on "Palm Sunday")

B. The Source of Salvation: *"God . . . Lamb"* (v. 10-12)

V. 10
"Salvation to our God. . . and unto the Lamb" - this means that salvation belongs to God the Father and God the Son. The LORD is the source of salvation.

"Salvation" = Deliverance; Rescue.
The salvation they have just immediately experienced is the deliverance of the rapture.

I Thess. 5:8 - *"The hope of salvation"*
I Thess. 5:9 - *"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"*
Rom. 13:11 - *"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"*
I Peter 1:5 - *"Who are kept by they power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

V. 11
The shout of praise from the grateful saints (v. 10) tips off or incites the praise of the angelic realm (cp. 5:11).
The believers are praising God for what He has done for them (salvation); and the angelic realm in response falls down and says a big, hearty "Amen"! (v. 12)

V. 12
". . . be unto our God" = belongs to God. God is the source (the well spring) of all blessing . . . glory . . . wisdom, etc.

C. The Means of Salvation: *"The blood of the Lamb"* (v. 13-14)

v. 13

"What are these ... whence came they" - The identity of these people is very important since an elder in Heaven, who knows who they are, poses a question to draw our attention to who they are.

v. 14

"Great tribulation" = lit. "The Great Tribulation"

"Came out" - "The ones coming out" - They were the ones who were coming out via Martyrdom (Rev.6:6-11) and now Rapture.
All of whom would have received resurrected bodies at the point of the rapture (I Cor. 15:58-f; I Thess.4; Rev.20:4-9).

"Washed their robes" - Man's only responsibility is the yield himself; Christ's finished work is that which does the actual cleaning.
The hymn writer said: "And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains."

"White in the blood" = whitened in the blood
The shed blood of Christ is God's bleach for the soul!
Ps. 51:7 - *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."*
Normally, when a garment is washed, it is washed using pure, clear water as the cleansing agent.
The saints garment, however, is paradoxically made white by the shed blood of Christ!
Hymn "There is Power in the Blood"

D. The Rewards of Salvation: (v. 15-17)

1. Service (v. 15)

"Therefore" - Because of their cleansing (v. 14), they, like the Old Testament priests, can now serve God acceptably and continually ("day and night") in his temple [cp. Leviticus 8:30, where Aaron and His sons had the blood of the burnt offering sprinkled onto their garments so that they could be consecrated to perform priestly service (chap. 9)]

2. Satisfaction (v. 16)

"Hunger and thirst" - results of the famine and food rationing to occur during the Tribulation (cp. Rev. 6:5, 6)
"Sun" = The sun which will scorch men during the Day of the Lord (Rev. 16:8), will also be especially hot during the times of famine (Mt.24:7; Rev.6:5,6) and during the 3 1/5 years in which there will be no rain (Rev.11:6).

3. Sufficiency (v. 17)

"Lamb. . . in the midst of the throne" - NOTE: the oneness and intimate relationship between the lamb (Christ) and the throne sitter (v. 15 - the Father).
"The Lamb" is the "good Shepherd" described in Ps. 23:1-2.
Rev. 21:6 - Jesus said, "It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."
"Wipe away all tears" -
"Tears" = singular in Greek. God is concerned about every tear that is shed for righteousness sake! Every single tear shed because of hardship and Antichrist's persecution during the Great Tribulation will be wiped away.
Isaiah prophesied of this: "He will swallow up death in victory *(this occurs at the rapture - I Cor.15:54)*; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces" (Is. 25:8). SEE Rev. 21:4

"TRUMPETS OF WRATH"
Revelation 8-9

INTRODUCTION:

8:1

"Silence in Heaven" = the calm before the storm; "the heavenly hush before the hellish horror."
The silence depicts suspense and anticipation as all of Heaven awaits the fulfillment of the Day of the Lord's wrath. As the final seal (the seventh seal) is opened, the scroll will now be opened, and it's contents fulfilled.

The silence, no doubt, is a cessation of the praise described in 7:10-12.
Even the cherubim, of whom it is said, *"They rest not day and night saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty"* (4:8) now are silent . . . something unusual, something of tremendous importance, must be about to take place. (J.B. Smith, p. 137).

**This silence is a fulfillment of Zephaniah 1:7 which declares: *"Hold thy peace at the presence of the LORD God: for the day of the LORD is at hand"* (note also Zeph.1:14-18, esp. v. 16 *"a day of the trumpet"*).

8:2

"Seven trumpets"
The blowing of a trumpet often served as a warning of impending judgment (SEE Jer. 4:5, 19, 21; 6:1; cp. Hos. 5:8; Amos 3:6, SEE Zeph. 1:14-2:3 *v. 16).

The 7 trumpet judgments involve the first state of God's out-poured wrath, whereas
the 7 bowl (vial) judgments describe the final stage of God's out-poured wrath (15:1).

The 7 trumpets serve as a final warning and foreshadowing of what immediately follows.
NOTE: The parallels between the 7 trumpets and 7 vials (bowls) [The major difference between the trumpets and the vials is the intensity and extensiveness of the judgments]

For example:
The trumpets describe partial destruction ("the third part" - 7:7-12; "not kill them" - 9:5; "slay the third part of men" - 9:15) whereas the vials describe total destruction.

Trumpet #1 -	1/3 burning (8:7)
Vial #1 -	*Sores on all with the mark (16:2)*
Trumpet #2 -	1/3 sea becomes blood (8:8)
	1/3 sea life dies (8:9)
Vial #2 -	*All sea becomes blood (16:3)*
Trumpet #3 -	1/3 of fresh water smitten (8:10)
Vial #3 - All fresh water smitten (16:4)	
Trumpet #4 -	1/3 of sun darkened (8:12)
Vial #4 - Sun scorches men with fire (16:8)	
Trumpet #5 -	Torment for five months (9:10)
Vial #5 - Intense torment (16:10-11)	
Trumpet #6 -	1/3 men killed (9:15)
Vial #6 - Armageddon (16:16)	
Trumpet #7 -	"Thy wrath is come" (11:18)
Vial #7 - "It is done" (16:17)	

8:3

"Golden censer . . . Golden altar" -

"Censer" - a decorative vessel used for burning incense
"Gold" - symbolic of purity
"Altar" - the reality of what the O.T. golden altar of incense represented

In Exodus 30:1-10, the altar of incense stood in front of the curtain that shut off the Holy of Holies (it was outside the Holy of Holies and incense was to burn morning and evening). The composition of the incense was precise (Ex. 30:34-38) (cp. sacrilege of Nadab & Abihu - Ex. 10:1-3).

NOTE: the connection between burning incense and prayer (Lk. 1:10).

8:4

"Incense...with the prayers" - The incense and the prayers would ascend up to God and remind Him of what His saints suffered during the Tribulation (Rev. 6:9-11).
God never forgets the prayers of the righteous. All of the torment that God's people will face during the Tribulation will cause them to ask God not to let it continue; to not allow the wickedness of men to go unpunished. One day God will answer those prayers.

8:5

"Fire of the altar" - a reference to burning coals from off of the altar (cp. Lev. 16:12; Is. 6:6)
"Voices" - loud sounds

"Thunderings and lightenings . . . an earthquake" = are all signs of impending doom (cp. the same occurs as the seventh vial is poured out - 16:17-18).
The powerful <u>sound</u> of voices, thunderings, lightnings & an earthquake break the silence of verse 1.

Thunders are mute rumblings of nature which tell of the <u>approaching</u> storm.
Lightnings perhaps suggests the <u>rapidity</u> with which the judgements will strike the earth.
The earth quakes as if to shudder at the outrages of her inhabitants. (Smith, p. 139)

8:6

As the 7 angels sound their trumpets, <u>supernatural</u> judgments occur.

The <u>unusual</u> nature of the judgments (EX: hail, fire mixed with blood - v. 7, etc.) is to prove to man that <u>God</u> is now judging (in contrast to the first five "seals" which are the natural results of man's sin). These judgments are <u>not</u> the result of man (we are not to interpret these judgments as being the result of nuclear wars or natural catastrophes) but are the direct intervention of God during "the day of the Lord."

A Practical Key Truth -- ** The future trumpet judgments serve as a warning to repent today!

I. Trumpet # 1 - The <u>earth</u> will be severely damaged (8:7)

"Trees and grass" burned. Previously, God (through an angel) told four other angels not to hurt the earth, sea, or trees, until the 144,000 Jews were sealed (7:2-3).

Now they are sealed and protected from suffering the effects of what follows.

Note: Although the 144,000 Jews are the only people God specifies as being sealed, the 144,000 are not necessarily the only people on earth who will be sealed; Other Jews and Gentiles will evidently be sealed also so as to live through the horrors of the Day of the LORD, and to inherit the Millennial Kingdom (Is.60:14-16).

Imagine the effect this judgment will have on the earth!
The coolish effect of grass will be removed and the oxygen supplied by 1/3 of the trees is stopped.
Much of the earth will quickly become a dry, dusty waste land or desert.

II. Trumpet # 2 - The sea life will be greatly diminished (8:8-9)

8:8

"Mountain burning with fire" - God prophecies that the destroying mountain of Babylon will be burnt and rolled down from its loftiness (Is. 51:25)

This mountain , however, seems to be figurative of something else: ***"AS IT WERE a great mountain"***

"The sea became blood" - Why blood?

ANSWER: Bloody water is payback for innocent blood shed (Rev. 16:4-6).

8:9

1/3 of sea life dies because of the bloody waters. Imagine the putrefying odor of rotting sea life floating on the surface of bloody seas and covering the shores of beaches.

"Ships...destroyed" - they are destroyed by the force of the submerging "mountain" as it violently shakes the waves.

III. Trumpet # 3 - The water supply will be limited (8:10-11)

8:10

Whereas v. 8-9 described God's judgment upon the ocean, now He unveils His judgment upon the fresh water.

8:11

"Wormwood" = a bitter plant common to Palestine.

When people have no water to drink, rather than die of thirst, they force down water unfit for human consumption and die as a result.

Contrast this with the bitter waters at Marah which were sweetened. If God could sweeten the bitter (undrinkable), He can in reverse make bitter (undrinkable) the sweet water.

IV. Trumpet # 4 - The daylight will be drastically reduced (8:12-13)

8:12

A day will still last 24 hours since the orbiting rotation of the earth around the sun does not change, but the amount of sunlight and moonlight will be drastically reduced (Amos 8:9 - *"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day."*).

Can you imagine it getting dark by 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.?

Note: The "Sun" which was temporarily & totally darkened and the "moon" which was temporarily & totally altered in its color at the 6th. seal (Rev.6:12) will return to 2/3rds of their light. Not all of the stars fell unto the earth at the 6th. seal, so that 1/3 of the stars which remained will be darkened at the 4th. Trumpet.

8:13

Whereas the first four trumpet judgments describe what happens to the material universe and earth, the last 3 (also called *"woes"*) describe what happens to the people remaining on the earth.

"Woe" - an exclamation of warning, a threat of despair.

The angel is saying: "Look out! Get ready! You have had it!"

V. Trumpet # 5 - The torment will be unbearable (9:1-12)

9:1
"A star fall from heaven" (cp. 8:10)

A reference to an intelligent angelic being (cp. v. 2 - ***"He"***)
The word ***"star"*** is used of angelic creatures elsewhere in Scripture (cp. Rev. 1:20; Job 38:7).
This one who has the key is evidently a good angel who casts Satan into this same pit for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3).

"Bottomless pit" - an abyss where demons are kept.
The demons feared this pit (Lk. 8:31); many of whom are presently chained in darkness there *"reserved unto judgment"* (II Pet. 2:4).

Note: The Antichrist will be killed, descend into this pit and ascend out of it at the mid-point of the final 7 years (Rev. 11:7, 17:8).

9:2
The saying "Where there is smoke, there is fire" certainly applies here (cp. 9:17, 18; 18:9, 18; 19:3).

9:3
"Locusts" = their location (from the pit), power (like scorpions - v. 3, 5), and description reveals them to be something other than literal locust (cp. v. 7-9).

They are clearly demons. For this occasion, God allows them a time of freedom and a power to inflict injury on those who rejected God.

9:4
Normally, locusts devour plant life, but these creatures, being demonic, will torture people.

Among those who are sealed are the 144,000 redeemed Israelites (Rev. 7). God sets apart and protects His own.

9:5
"It was given them" (cp. v. 4 - "It was commanded them") - God is in ultimate control. Even the demons obey Him; they can do nothing unless it is "given them."

Why ***"five months"***? Five months may be the only time remaining until the "Day of the LORD's wrath" is over; Also it is interesting that the duration of 5 months alludes to the normal life span of the locust.

"Scorpion" - a nocturnal creature that looks like a combination of a spider and a crab. It has a tail that it curls over its back in position to strike at its prey and to inject its poison (venom).

The sting of a scorpion affects one's central nervous system and causes severe pain and often fatality.

9:6
The pain inflicted by the demonic locust army is so severe that people will wish to die to escape it, but will not be able to.
For five months, they will be in intense agony and no doctor will have a remedy!
Today, suicide is a "way out," but then it will not be!

9:7-10
SEE Joel 2:1-11 which describes these creatures and their destruction in "the day of the Lord."

9:11
"Contrary to ordinary locusts (Prov. 30:27), these have a king over them" (Smith, p 145).

This ***"king"*** over them is apparently not the angel that opened the pit, but their leader - no doubt a reference to Satan, who fits the description of "destroyer" ("Abaddon"; "Apollyon" - cp. Is. 14:17).

VI. Trumpet # 6 - The <u>death toll</u> will be massive (9:13-19)

9:15

God has <u>everything planned out</u> right to the hour of a particular day, and day in a particular month, and month in a particular year.
9:16

The phrase ***"I heard the number"*** stresses the fact that the 200,000,000 figure is literal, not figurative.

9:17
"They are demon-possessed, hideous monstrosities."

CONCLUSION: 9:20-21

9:20
"Repented not" = they would not change their mind (shows the hardness of the human heart)

"Worship devils" = "The gods whom men worship become agencies of their own torment. Similarly, the gods of Egypt- the Nile, frogs, lice, flies, etc., were turned into plagues upon their worshippers." (Smith, p. 142).

9:21
One's <u>religious</u> life has a direct bearing on his <u>moral</u> life.
Who you worship affects how you behave! As Paul said: Because of idolatry, *"God gave them over to a reprobate mind"* (Rom. 1).

"Murders" - a reference to those who were martyred for Christ's sake;

"Sorceries" - drug use and other potions. From the Greek word, we derive our English "pharmacies" (drug store).

Today, while one's heart is <u>tender</u>, is the day of salvation! (II Cor. 6:2).
In the Day of the LORD, it will be too late to repent (Rev. 22:11) for those who have not been sealed by God.

"GOD'S MESSAGE OF DOOM"
Revelation 10

A Practical Key Truth -- ** We need a greater appreciation for the importance and seriousness of God's Word.

I. GOD HAS MORE TRUTH TO REVEAL IN THE FUTURE (v. 1-4)

10:1
"Another mighty angel" - this angel, being called "mighty" (strong) has some characteristics that are like that of his Lord, Jesus Christ [compare his face (Rev. 1:16), and feet (Rev. 1:15)].

NOTE: However, this being is not Christ, but is an angel like the previous angels John saw. Hence, the phrase "another angel" - "another of the same kind" (Greek = allos).

Note also that this "angel" praises Christ (10:6).

10:2
This ***"little book"*** is no doubt:

--more revelation from God

--more details to fill in the specifics of God's judgments yet to come.
(such details are not for us today, but in the future God will unveil them - cp. v. 3 & 4 - ***"seal up...write them not"*** cp. Daniel 12:4, 9).

"Right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth" - By standing on both the sea and earth this angel certainly has supernatural power over both.

By implication, the judgments in that little book perhaps involve both the earth (dry land - Rev.16:1) and sea (ocean & fresh water - Rev.16:3-4).

10:3
"Lion roareth" - In a context describing God's dealings with Israel, God said through the prophet Amos, *"The Lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"* (Amos 3:5).

10:3-4
"Seal up" - just as scrolls were sealed that no one could see the contents written inside (cp. Rev. 5:1-4), no one knows the contents of what the 7 thunders uttered.

For us today, God has revealed what He will do in the future by the 7 seals, 7 trumpets, and 7 bowls. Let us be satisfied with the revelation God has revealed to us in His Word, rather than speculating about what He has not explained regarding the future (Deut.29:29).

The canon of Scripture is closed & complete for us today. However, in the future "Tribulation" period, God has more revelation to unveil, and signs to authenticate it.

The revelation of the 7 thunders is yet to come!

II. GOD'S MESSAGE WILL CERTAINLY BE FULFILLED (v. 5-7)

10:5-6

"Sware by him that liveth for ever and ever"

This mighty angel takes an oath, calling on the Creator to be his witness that ***"there should be time no longer"*** - Meaning: "No more delay." No more time for mankind to repent (cp. 9:20, 21).The time for God's full fury is about to be fulfilled (cp. 15:1; 16:17).

When the seventh angel blows his trumpet, the final judgments are poured out on earth in rapid-fire succession, Christ will return to the earth for Armageddon, and the end of the final 7 years of the times of the Gentiles will come.

10:7

What is the ***"mystery"***?

Two views:

1) The Church removed at the "last trump"

The Church is called a mystery (Eph. 3:3-7, 5:32; Rev. 1:20), and the Church is raptured at the "last trump" (I Cor. 15:51-52; cp. Rev. 11:15).

The difficulty with this view is that God never revealed the mystery of the Church or the rapture to the O.T. prophets - if the word "prophets" indeed refers to O.T. prophets.

Also, if the time immediately preceding the rapture is as Jesus described it in Matthew 24:36-39, there is no way the church will be raptured after experiencing all of the horrors of the first 6 trumpet judgements. Those days in no way correspond to the days of Noah before the flood.

***2) Mystery Babylon destroyed** (Rev. 16:17-19; 17:5-7)

The phrase ***"the mystery of God"*** means "the mystery foretold by God" (Is. 13:1-20; Jer. 50-51) not a "mystery about God."

The word ***"finished"*** means "brought to an end." - Certainly mystery Babylon will be brought to a violent end (Rev. 16:17-19).

III. GOD'S MESSAGE WILL NOT ALWAYS BE WELCOMED (v. 8-11)

(His Word is not always easily digested)

10:8

Why is the little book "***open***?"

Because its events are about to be fulfilled in the last days when its message is proclaimed.

10:9-10

SEE Ezek. 2:8 - 3:4

Ezekiel eats a book descriptive of judgment, which is sweet to his taste.

10:10

Cp. Jer. 15:16-18 - *"Thy Words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart . . . I sat alone because of Thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual . . . ?"*

Sweet words with a bitter message.

God's Word is often easy to eat, but hard to swallow and digest.

Truth is always good, even though its message may be undesirable.

EX: The truth about hell is a precious doctrine (because it comes from God and all of His truth is precious); however, it is not a truth that everyone wants to hear or believe.

A faithful pastor must proclaim "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), which includes truth about life and death (II Cor. 2:14-17); good and evil; heaven and hell; future glory and future judgment.
We must not dilute the message to please the listeners (II Tim. 4:1-5).

Noah preached an unwelcome message (II Pet. 2:5).
Elijah " (I Ki. 18:17)
Ezekiel " (Ezek. 3:7-9).
Isaiah " (Is. 6:9-11).
Jeremiah " (Jer. 20:8-9).
Micaiah " (I Ki. 22:8, 14).
Stephen " (Acts 7:54-60).
Paul " (Acts 13:46, 14:19;I Cor.9:16)

10:10

Just as the book was bitter to John's belly, so will the judgments be to those who experience them!

The Bible describes how those who experience the wrath of the Day of the LORD will bend over and place their hands over their stomachs because of the pain caused by fear (Is.13:8; *Jer. 30:6)

10:11

"Thou must prophesy again . . ." = God via the angel is speaking to the Apostle John.

Could John be one of the two witnesses (Rev.11)? Will John be resurrected to preach before Christ returns (cp. John 21:22, 23)? Evidently not.

NOTE: The word ***"again"*** is the Greek preposition "epi" which can be translated "concerning" or "about." Meaning: "John, you have more prophesying to write and give about people, nations, etc. in the rest of the book of Revelation."

"GOD'S MESSENGERS OF DOOM"
Revelation 11

A Practical Key Truth -- ** We need a greater appreciation for those who faithfully proclaim God's Word.

I. GOD ALWAYS HAS A <u>MESSENGER</u> ("<u>Witness</u>") (v. 1-4)

11:1-2

Apparently when the Antichrist makes a peace treaty (covenant) with Israel at the beginning of the 70th. "week" of years (Dan. 9:27), he will allow the Jews to rebuild their Temple, but will allow the outside court to remain the property of the Arabs.

11:2b

Midway through the final 7 years, the Antichrist breaks the peace treaty, sets himself up to be worshipped (II Th.2:4), desecrates the Temple (Dan. 9:27; Mt. 24:15), persecutes Israel (Mt. 24:16; Rev. 12:6). At this time, paganism will trample the holy city (Jerusalem [Is. 52:1] - which will be turned into a "Sodom and Egypt" - 11:8).

"42 months" = the last 3 1-2 years of the Tribulation.

11:3

Who are God's two end-time witnesses?

Views:

1) John the Apostle + ? (Rev. 10:11; Jn. 21:22-23)
2) Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel (<u>Zech. 4:1-14</u>) (or someone like them)
3) Moses & Elijah (on Mt. of Transfiguration)
4) Enoch & Elijah (who both never died) (Mal. 4:5)

***Note: Elijah is prophesied to return <u>before</u> the Day of the Lord (Mal.4:5)

Do these two witnesses minister during the <u>first half</u> or <u>second half</u> of the Tribulation?

****Proofs for <u>first</u> half:*

1) Their being slain is linked with the Antichrist's resurrection, which occurs at mid-Trib. (11:7)
2) The reference to "months" (11:2), in contrast to "day" (11:3) seems to imply a different time period.
3) These two witnesses ("olive trees") will function like Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel, who witnessed the second O.T. Temple being built (compare Rev. 11:4 with Zech. 4). The temple will evidently be rebuilt during the <u>first</u> half of the Tribulation.
4) It is utterly unthinkable that people will be sending each other gifts (11:10) at the end of the Tribulation. (At the end of the 70th. Week the Bowl Judgments are being poured out, Christ descends to the Earth, and the AntiChrist is destroyed)

Proofs for <u>second</u> half:

1) This account falls in between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments, which occur in the second half. (Note however, Chapter 11 is a parenthetical, nullifying chronological sequence).
2) All other references to time (3 1-2 years) are references to the second half of the Trib. -the Time of Jacob's Trouble (cp. 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5).
3) Even though the Antichrist (who kills them) rises from the dead mid-way though the Trib., Rev. 11:7 does not necessarily teach that as the time period he kills them.
4) Dan. 12:11 teaches an additional 30 days extending past the 7 years, which would account for their 3 1/2 days living in the streets. (However, it is impossible that Christ would allow this, if He returns immediately after the 70th. Week is complete)

11:3
"1260 days" = 3 1-2 years according to Jewish reckoning of 360 days to a year.
"Sackcloth" - clothes worn as a sign of mourning (cp. Gen. 38:34).

11:4
"Two olive trees, and two candlesticks" (lampstands): Olive trees supply oil for the lampstands which shines out the light in the midst of darkness. Who is represented by these?
SEE: Zech. 4:9-14. Just as Joshua and Zerubbabel witnessed the Spirit of God's power in seeing the completion of the Temple, in the last days two mighty witnesses will yet arise when the Temple is rebuilt and will prophesy of coming doom & destruction (hence the "sackcloth") (Rev. 11:1, 4).

II. GOD AUTHENTICATES HIS MESSENGERS (v. 5-6)

11:5
The two witnesses will have unusual power! One exhale, and it's all over!
(cp. Elijah calling down fire from heaven in O.T. - II Ki. 1:10-12).

"If any man will hurt them" - *"will"* = desire. "If anyone merely has the desire to injure the witnesses (or merely harbors the evil though of such) . . . will be destroyed" (Smith, p. 169).

11:6
Powers over rainfall (I Ki. 17:1; Ja. 5:17) and power to turn water into blood (Ex. 7:20, 21) are reminders of the powers of Elijah and Moses (NOTE: These powers will last for 3 1-2 years during the ***"days of their prophecy"*** - Elijah stopped the rain for exactly 3 1-2 years (Ja. 5:17).

III. GOD PRESERVES HIS MESSENGERS UNTIL THEIR WORK IS FINISHED (v. 7-10)

11:7
"These witnesses are (seemingly) immortal till their work is done" (Seiss).
Nothing can stop God's men until God is finished with their service.

"The beast" = the resurrected Antichrist (Rev. 13:7).

11:8
"The great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt" = Jerusalem, which will be polluted by the Antichrist.
(NOTE: When God wants something to have a spiritual [figurative] meaning, He will indicate so, as He does here.)

11:9
How could people from all around the world view these two dead witnesses? TV - via satellite. Something unheard of 100 years ago.

> God said in the O.T. Law that a dead body was not to remain out in the open beyond nightfall, because doing such would defile the land (Deut. 21:22-23; cp. Jn. 19:31).

11:10
The godless world will celebrate because now they can return to sinning in peace without some preachers telling them how to live!

Just as the goodness of God caused the Jews to send gifts to each other in Neh. 8:10 and Esther 9:19, the seeming victory of Satan will cause the world to celebrate by exchanging gifts.
Warren Wiersbe refers to this gift exchange as a "Satanic Christmas"

IV. GOD REWARDS HIS MESSENGERS (v. 11-19)

11:11
Can you imagine the shock TV viewers are in for when God's servants arise!?

11:12
NOTE: the similarity with the Rapture -
"a great voice" - "shout" (I Th. 4:16)
"come up hither" - "shall rise" (I Th. 4:16; cp. Rev.4:1)
"cloud" - "caught up in the clouds" (I Th.4:17)
The summons of these 2 witnesses to Heaven is not a cryptic reference to the Rapture, however. But it is an event which will foreshadow that great event.

11:13
"Tenth part of the city" = What city? The city previously mentioned - Jerusalem (v. 8)

11:14
Verse 14 concludes the parenthetical interjection which God placed in between the 6th. and the 7th. Trumpet judgement. Now, God goes back to the chronology of the Trumpet Judgements to occur in the Day of the Lord.

11:15
"Seventh angel sounded"
Chronologically, this 7th. Trumpet will occur at the next to the last day of the 70th. week. At the 1,259th. day of the second half of the 70th. Week. It is believed by this professor that all of the Bowl Judgements (Rev.16) will occur on day 1,260 -- the last day of the 70th. Week.

"The seventh trumpet introduces and includes the seven bowl judgments of the wrath of God revealed in chapter 16." (John Walvoord)

11:15-17
When the seventh Trumpet sounds, Jesus Christ will descend to the Earth for the Battle of Armageddon (Zech.14:3,4) and will destroy His enemies and will establish His promised, long awaited Messianic reign on this earth.

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord" - This Earth will be taken over by the Father and His Only Begotten Son.

11:18
Why are the nations ***"angry"***? (cp. Ps. 2:1-3)
1) They want their own way but will not get it
2) Their sin is coming to an end
3) Their own attempts to build a "utopia" failed
(contrast the change from "rejoicing and merry making" (v. 10) to dread and anger)

"thy wrath is come" - The deep seated anger (orge) of God which has been stored up is now being poured out in all its fullness.
"the time of the dead" - The righteous, who were dead, but raised at the rapture, will now be given their rewards based on their faithfulness while they lived. The unrighteous unsaved sinners will not be raised until the 1,000 year millennial reign is over (Rev.20:5).
"Judged...reward" - This is the anticipated judgement of the "Sheep and the Goats" described in Matthew 25.
11:19
"The Temple of God" - The true, eternal temple in Heaven, which will never see defilement!

"SATAN'S ATTEMPTS TO DESTROY GOD'S WORK"
Revelation 12

INTRODUCTION: The Meaning of the Imagery -

1. The ***"woman"*** = Israel
   "Sun and moon" = Jacob & Rachel
   "12 stars" = 12 sons of Jacob (12 tribes of Israel)
2. The ***"great red dragon"*** Satan
3. The ***"man child"*** = Christ
4. ***1,260 days*** = The last 3 1-2 years of the Tribulation

Since Lucifer's rebellion (Is. 14), he has been attempting to resist and destroy God's work.

Satan tried to resist:

1) Joshua the high priest (Zech. 3:2)
   (NOTE: This has future prophetic significance - v. 9, 10)
2) Jesus from going to the cross (Mt. 16:21-23)
3) Sergius Paulus from getting saved
   (Acts 13:4-12 *v. 10)

(Satan either works independently, or he uses people)

A Practical Key Truth -- ** Beware: Satan is attempting to destroy God's work! *(like he has tried in the past and will again in the future.)*

I. Satan's Attempt to Destroy: THE SON OF GOD (Christ) (v. 1-5)

V. 1

"There appeared" - John was caused to see with his eyes a panoramic vision of something described as "a great wonder" (lit. a great sign).

A sign is something that points to something else. A sign is not literal reality, but points to literal reality. Hence, this vision involves analogies or symbolic representations of something actual.

[NOTE: Always interpret revelation literally unless God tells us otherwise as He does here.]

"A woman" - This woman is not the Virgin Mary, nor the church, for two obvious reasons:

1) The Virgin Mary will not be persecuted in the future - this woman will be (v. 6, 13ff)
2) The church did not give birth to Christ - but Christ did proceed from Israel (Rom. 9:4, 5).

"A woman" = Israel.

Israel is often depicted as a woman in the Bible (Is. 54:5; Ezek. 16:32; Hos. 2:16) - both as the "wife" of the Lord (Jer. 31:32; Hosea), and as the "mother" of the Jewish nation (Gal. 4:26).

****SEE Gen. 37:9-11 - for the same imagery depicting Israel.**

V. 2

In Isaiah 26, Israel cries out for deliverance awaiting the arrival of the Messiah, and exclaims: *"Like as a woman with child that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD."*

V. 3

NOTE: ***"Another wonder"*** (sign). This sign is not "great" as was the first.

This sign involves a description of Satan, who is not great in terms of virtue (goodness),
but is "great" in terms of power and wickedness (v. 9).

"Great red dragon" = none other than Satan himself (SEE v. 9; cp. 20:2).

"Red" = fiery red. The word literally means the "color of fire" - it is interesting that Satan, who is destined for fire [Rev. 20:10} has the appearance of it.

"Seven heads . . . seven crowns" = indicative of the completeness of Satan's authority (cp. Satan's authority in the world - Lk. 4:6; Eph. 2:2; 6:12; I Jn. 2:15).

Why ***"10 horns"***? - a horn represents "power" or "control"
Satan has 10 horns because he will be the world ruler of the "10-horned beast" (a world government system comprising 10 kings - 17:12-13) that will reign in the Tribulation (Rev. 13:1).

V. 4
"The stars of Heaven" = angels who rebelled with Lucifer (Satan).
Angels are referred to as "stars" elsewhere in the Bible (Job 38:7; Rev. 1:20; 9:1; Dan. 8:10).

"Cast them to the earth" - SEE v. 9 - "he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."
[NOTE: Some demons are presently in hell in chains of darkness, reserved unto judgment (Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4), while other demons are free to work with Satan.]
The gruesome picture is that of a hungry cannibalistic dragon waiting in front of a pregnant woman to eat up her child as soon as it is born.
** When Christ was born, Herod the king heard about it, and being inspired by Satan sought to destroy the child (2:1-8; **16**).
V. 5
"She brought forth a man (male) child" = Christ
It is Christ who will (future) "rule all nations with a rod of iron" -
Rev. 2:27 - *"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."* SEE Psalm 2:9, Rev. 19:15.
"Caught up unto God" = The ascension of Christ.
Christ's ascension shows the failure of Satan's efforts to destroy Him.
"...And to his throne" = The exaltation of Christ at the Father's right hand)

II. Satan's Attempt to Destroy: THE PEOPLE OF GOD (Israel) (v. 6-17)

V. 6
NOTE: How God skips the time period from Christ's ascension to the Tribulation (actually to the mid-point of the 70th Week).
** Such a transition is typical of prophecy.
"The events of prophecy are seen as one would look across mountain peaks. He would see the next major event that is coming, but he would not necessarily see all that is in the valley, nor understand how much time would elapse between the major events" (Epp, Revelation, p. 179).
The woman (typifying Israel) flees at the mid-point of the Tribulation. Israel will flee because of persecution (cp. v. 13-14).
SEE Matt. 24:15-21. (*V. 16 - "Mountains")

"The wilderness" = Literally "desert." This desert is the same wilderness where Moses led O.T. Israel (cp. v. 14).
NOTE: Dan. 11:41 - Edom, Moab, & Ammon escape from Antichrist's hand. Perhaps Israel will find refuge here.
(SEE Ezek. 20:33-38 [***v. 36**]; Jer. 31:1-6 [***v. 2**])
It will be in the wilderness where God will be reconciled with Israel (SEE Hosea 2:14-16).
"A place prepared" - Just as God had a great fish "prepared" for rebellious Jonah (Jonah 1:17), He will have a place prepared for rebellious Israel. (cp. Epp, p. 185)

V. 7

"Michael" is the "archangel" (Jude 9) who stands up for Israel and defends her (Dan. 12:1). [This is not the first time there was a fight between Satan & Michael - Dan. 10:13, 21]
Though Michael respects the power of Satan (Jude 9), Satan is no match!

V. 8

Though Satan has previously fallen from Heaven (Is. 14:12; Lk. 10:18), the Devil (prior to the mid-point of the 70th Week) still does have access to Heaven.

Though Heaven is not his home, he stops in on occasion to accuse God's children (Rev. 12:10). Evil angels also report to God and are ultimately under His authority (Job 1:6, 11; I Sam. 16:14, 18:10).

A. DECEPTION (v. 9)

V. 9

"Dragon"= fierce and cruel nature (Jn. 8:44 - "a murderer from the beginning")
"Serpent"= crafty and deceitful character (Gen. 3:1 - "more subtle..." II Cor. 11:14 - "angel of light")
"Devil" = accuser, slanderer (Job 1, 2)
"Satan" = adversary (I Pet. 5:8 - "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary...")

"Which deceiveth the whole world" -

How does Satan deceive today?

--He promises salvation from sources other than Christ
--He paints a beautiful picture of sin
--He counterfeits the truth with a lie (II Th. 2:10-12)

Satan seeks to destroy God's work by lying about God's people. As he has in the past, so will he in the future "deceive the nations into thinking that the people of God are dangerous, deluded, even destructive" (Wiersbe, p. 603).

"Cast out" - thrown out like a piece of unwanted garbage

B. ACCUSATION (v. 10)

V. 10

"Salvation *(deliverance)* ***and strength"*** - will be needed by God's elect in the Tribulation.
"The kingdom of our God and the power (authority) of His Christ" is about to be fulfilled once the accuser is cast down. Just 3 1-2 years to go from this point.

"The accuser of our brethren" - Beware: Satan is an initiator of slander and gossip.

NOTE: In Genesis, he accused God to man (3:1-5)
In Job, he accused man to God (Job 1:8-11, 2:4-6; Rev. 12:10)
In Matthew, he accused the God-man (Christ) (Mt. 4:1ff)

"Satan is the accuser of the brethren; let's leave the dirty work to him" (H.A. Ironside).

C. PERSECUTION (v. 11-17)

V. 12

"Rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them" - The "Dead in Christ" (I Th.4:16).
"Woe" - the third "woe" (cp. 8:13, 9:12, 11:14).
"Wrath" - a hot anger, an explosive, eruptive heat.

Note this Wrath is not God's Wrath, but Satan's, which will be vented upon God's people via the Antichrist and his forces (Luke 21:23).

"A short time"- Satan will realize that only 3 1-2 years remain until he is bound (Rev.20:1-3)

Satan is always at his worst (even now) when he "knoweth he hath but a short time"
EX: How Satan fights the hardest just before: 1) Salvation; 2) Rededication; 3) You begin a new ministry; 4) A wedding (marriage)

V. 13

Satan failed in destroying Christ, so now he makes an all-out last-minute effort to destroy the vehicle God used to bring Christ into the world -- the nation of Israel.

Satan has always hated the Jews (EX: Moses [Ex. 1 & 2]; Holocaust - 6 million Jews killed in Germany).

Because Satan hates God, he hates God's plan and people.

"He has a special hatred for the Jewish people and has been the power behind anti-Semitism from the days of Pharaoh and Hamam (see the book of Esther) to Hitler and Stalin" (Wiersbe, p. 602-603).

Why would Satan seek to destroy Israel? ANSWER: Because God is going to redeem a remnant of Israel at the end of the coming Tribulation and Satan knows it!

Though many say: *"God is finished with Israel"* and say: *"The church is the Israel of God"* (Amillennialists) - God's Word teaches that God will turn back to His chosen nation and will save a remnant according to grace under the New Testament Covenant (SEE Rom. 11:11-12, 23, 25-31).

Why would Satan seek to destroy Israel, if that nation had no future prophetic significance? Satan will so strongly desire to destroy the nation because as the time draws near for the Messiah to return to earth to establish the promised kingdom, a Jewish remnant must be ready to receive Him and form the nucleus for the kingdom (Zech. 12:9-14:21; Rev. 1:7) (Wiersbe, p. 604).

V. 14

"Two wings of a great eagle" - Alluding to the O.T. promise - *"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings"* (Ex. 19:14; cp. Dt. 32:11, 12).

"Time** (one), **times** (plural = two), **and half a time" - Again, 3 1-2 years (cp. Dan. 7:25, 12:7). The last 3 1-2 years of the 7 year Tribulation (the second half of the "70th week" of Daniel).

V. 15

"Water" = waters of wrath (Hosea 5:10).

"As a flood" - overwhelming wrath

V. 16

Somehow the earth (whether referring to the physical land providing supernatural drainage for the water or to the people of the earth who take the brunt of Satan's blows for Israel) will protect Israel by absorbing the torrent that flows from Satan (cp. Is. 43:2, 59:19).

V. 17

"The rest of her seed" - the remnant. This remnant are saved Jews as evident by their fruits. Possibly the implication is that those Jews in the wilderness are not yet saved, but come to Christ eventually by the end of the Tribulation (Ezek. 20:33-38; Jer. 31:1ff; Zech 12:10).

CONCLUSION:

V. 11

Just as Satan will oppose the elect nation of Israel in the future, he opposes God's elect church today (Eph. 6:10ff).

The devil is out to destroy the church. But there is a source of victory!

"Overcame" = conquered

Satan is a defeated foe only by means of:

1) The blood of Christ (our only means of salvation - Rev. 7:14)
2) The Word of our testimony (our only means of sanctification - Eph. 5:26; Jn. 15:3, 17:17)
3) The sacrifice of the believer (our surrender - James 4:7; Eph. 6:10ff)

"Loved not their lives unto the death" - "He who loves his life shall lose it . . ." (Mt. 16:25)

These, who are willing to die because of their faith in Christ and His Word (cp. Rev. 1:9, 6:9, 20:4), are no doubt the martyrs described in Revelation 6:9 and 20:4.

"Greater is He that is in you than he (Satan) that is in the world" (I Jn. 4:4).

"THE COMING COUNTERFEIT"
Revelation 13

Not only does Satan desire to destroy God's work as evident in chapter 12, but he also desires to replace it (chap. 13). Satan is a master counterfeit. He is well known for his ability to imitate (EX: the counterfeit miracles in Egypt - Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7; Satan's counterfeit messengers - II Cor. 11:13-15). Satan is a deceiver (Rev. 12:9; 20:3) and a liar (Jn. 8:44). Christ warns against the counterfeit Messiahs to come (Mt. 24:21-27).

In chapter 12, God used the imagery of a ***"Woman"*** (Sun=Jacob, Moon=Rachel, 12 Stars=12 Tribes of Israel; compare: Gen.37:9-11). That imagery depicts the Jewish Race, which will be persecuted in the Tribulation period.
In chapter 13, God uses the imagery of a ***"Beast"*** (Satan's False Political System and his World Ruler--the Antichrist)

Three separate visions are described in Rev. 13 9v. 1 - *"I...saw"*; v. 3 - *"I saw"*; v. 11 - *"I beheld"*).
Three separate "beasts" are described in Rev. 13
v. 1-2 - Satan's false political system;
v. 3-10 - Satan's false Christ;
v. 11-18 - Satan's false prophet).

A Practical Key Truth -- ** Like those who will live in the future Tribulation, We must beware of Satanic counterfeits.

I. Satan's Counterfeit Kingdom (v. 1-2)

(Beast #1 - Satan's False System)

V. 1

The ***"sea"*** could be descriptive of the sea of humanity (cp. 17:15), from which the beast will arise (as in Dan. 7:2, 3, 17).
"Seven heads" = seven kingdoms (which are called "mountains" and "kings" (17:3, 7; cp. v.9-11) (cp. 12:3 - the heads will be "crowned" - indicative of kingship).

Why only 7 heads when there are ten horns and ten crowns?
The *7 heads* depict 7 kingdoms (or 7 world-wide empires)
Whereas the 10 horns & 10 crowns depict 10 future Kings who lead the 7th. Kingdom and then surrender their power to the Antichrist (Rev. 17:12,13)

"seven heads" = Of these 7, God said that *"five are fallen"* (Rev.17:10)
The 5 Anti-semitic empires, which were ruled by Satan were:
1. The Egyptian Empire
2. The Assyrian Empire
3. The Babylonian Empire
4. The Medo-Persian Empire
5. The Grecian Empire

The 6th. Empire which existed in John's Day (Rev.17:10b) was...
6. The Roman Empire

The 7th. Empire which is yet to come (Rev.17:10c) will be...
7. The Revived Roman Empire (having "10 horns" of power - Rev.7:7-8)

"Ten horns and ten crowns" = 10 kings
* All three Kings will reign in the Future. (Rev.17:12)
* Three of these kings will be uprooted by the *"Beast"* when he appears (Dan.7:8).
* All 10 will surrender their rulership to Antichrist (Rev.17:13)
* Then all 10 will have power with the Antichrist for *"one hour"* at the end of the Tribulation - (17:12), but will be destroyed by Christ - (Dan. 2:42-44; Rev.19:19-21).

Each of the "heads" (kings or emperors) had the name of ***"blasphemy"***. Evidently each one will claim to be the Christ (Messiah) as Jesus said would happen (Mt. 24:5, 24).

V. 2

The words ***"like"*** and ***"as"*** clearly indicate that the Beast is symbolic.
(Always interpret Scripture literally unless there is an obvious indication in context to do otherwise)

The ***"Beast"*** described is the same (fourth) Beast that Daniel saw in Dan. 7:7.
[SEE Daniel 7:1-11 - Note: In Daniel's prophecy, he saw four beasts that were symbolic of world powers or kingdoms -Lion = Babylon;
Bear = Medo-Persia;
Leopard = Greece; Indescribable Beast = Rome.
(These four beasts parallel the four-fold image described in Dan. 2)]

The Beast in Rev. 13:2 is singular (one) but has the appearance of three. (NOTE: the fourth beast in Dan. 7:7 will have all of the characteristics of the previous three, mentioned in Dan. 7:4-6).

John sees a beast which is a conglomeration or corporate mixing together of the qualities of the leopard (Greece), bear (Medo-Persia), and lion (Babylon), all in one beast.

The ruling power of this Beast will be the greatest ever known to man, because of Satan's (***"the dragon"***) involvement with this Beast.

This world power will have:
The conquesting speed of a leopard (EX: Greece under Alexander the Great - cp. Dan. 8:5-6);
The crushing strength of a bear (EX: Medo-Persia cp. Is. 13:17-18);
and The intimidating ferocious roar of a lion (EX: Babylon). This beast, being like lion, is said to have "great iron teeth" (Dan. 7:7).

V. 2b

The dragon gave the Beast system its:
1) ***"power"*** - its ability to rule
2) ***"seat"*** - its throne to rule
3) ***"great authority"*** - its freedom to rule

Satan's system of world conquest will go (for a while) uninterrupted, unhindered and unstoppable.

II. Satan's Counterfeit King (v. 3-10)

(Beast #2 - Satan's False Antichrist)

V. 3

"Wondered after the Beast" - the term "beast" now refers not to Satan's system but to the head of Satan's system - a man who personifies Satan's system.

Though some commentators view this reference to "beast" (and the succeeding verses - v. 4-10) to the kingdom, Scripture indicates that it is a MAN who is in view -- a man who is the representative for the kingdom: the emperor over the empire.

Proofs that the word "Beast" (in v. 3) refers to a MAN (namely the Antichrist):
1) He is killed by a sword (v. 14)
2) He is resurrected from the "bottomless pit" (17:8)
3) Personal masculine pronouns - "Him...he"
4) He speaks (v. 5-6) [a kingdom has no mouth]
5) An idol is made that bears his image (v. 14-15) How would an image be made of an empire?
6) The Beast is differentiated from his kingdom (Rev. 16:10)
7) He is the "eighth" of seven kings - 17:10,11
8) He is thrown into the Lake of Fire (19:20; 20:10)
9) Scripture prophesied of such an evil world leader (Daniel 7:1-14; 9:27; 11; Mt.24:15; II Th.2:1-8; I John 2:18)

Since Satan is a spirit being, he uses human beings to activate his program.

NOTE: The Antichrist is not Satan; he is man, controlled and empowered by Satan. The Antichrist will be Satan's "Masterpiece." (cp. II Thess. 2:1-8)

A. A False Wonder *(the resurrection of the Antichrist - v. 3)*

"One of his heads" = one of Satan's rulers (namely, the Antichrist) becomes wounded to the point of death, but will be resurrected by Satan's power (v. 4). The world will be amazed at the Antichrist's resurrection (SEE: Rev. 17:8).

"The deadly wound" - further emphasized (stressed) in Rev. 13:3, 12, 14 (a deadly stroke by the ***"sword"*** - v. 14).

"The world wondered" - the world stands back in amazement, in awe, in astonishment at the resurrection of the Antichrist.
"All the world" - Everyone except those who are saved; Note: Because everybody is doing it, believing it, following it, etc., doesn't make it right! (the broad way leads to destruction - Mt. 7:13).

B. A False Worship (*the worldwide homage to the Antichrist* - v. 4, 8)
V. 4

"They worshipped the dragon" - Satan has always desired worship (Mt. 4:9)
He has always wanted the prerogatives that belong only to God (Dt. 6:13, 10:20);
He has always wanted to be "like the Most High" (Is. 14:14).
The "dragon" is a counterfeit for God the Father, who gave power for Christ's resurrection.
The "Beast" is a counterfeit for Christ (hence, "Antichrist" - Anti = "instead of").

"Who is like unto the Beast?" - these deluded worshippers seem to come back in defiance against a statement made by God's people, who said, *"Who is like unto thee, O Lord . . ."* (Ex. 15:11) (Smith, p. 196).
As the world worships the Antichrist, they arrogantly ask:

"Who is like the Beast?" - implying He is incomparable
"Who is able to make war with him?" - implying he is unbeatable

The world has always been in search of a leader like the Antichrist. He will have the magic of Don Juan; the military clout of Adolf Hitler; the persuasiveness of Jim Jones; and the blasphemous mouth of Anton Lavey. I might also add: the blood thirsty nature of Charles Manson.

C. False Words (*the blasphemy against God* - v. 5-6)
V. 5

"Almost all dictators have risen to power by controlling people with their words" (Wiersbe, p. 605) (Ex: Hitler, Stalin, etc.)
Satan will make the Antichrist the best orator ever.

"Power was given him" Who gave him this power? -- Satan.
Who allowed him this power? -- God.

If Satan has his way, the Antichrist would reign forever!
However, since God is in ultimate control, Antichrist's reign will last for only 42 months, which is 3 1-2 years (the final half of the Tribulation).
Just as the Father gave the Son "power" (authority - Jn. 5), Satan counterfeiting the Father will give the Antichrist "power."
*Just as Christ ministered with power for 3 1-2 years, so will the counterfeit, the Antichrist.

"A mouth speaking great things" - the most astounding feature about the Antichrist to Daniel was his mouth - the totally proud, blunt, loud, blasphemous boasting of the Antichrist. SEE: Daniel 7:8, 11, 19-26.
"Blasphemies" = SEE II Th. 2:1-12. His blasphemy is elevating himself as God and claiming to be God (or "The Christ") *v. 4

> Dan. 11:37 - *"Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all."*

V. 6

NOTE: Satan's blasphemy is aimed toward Heaven. Why? Because Satan had just been permanently cast out of Heaven (Rev. 12:9).

Antichrist will blaspheme (slander):

1) God (His Person)
2) His Name (His reputation)
3) His tabernacle (His dwelling place)
4) Them that dwell in Heaven (His people)

Everything he can say to belittle God, he will. He will deceive the world into thinking that God is impotent. After all, who is in charge of the world now? The world will think: "Antichrist."

D. A False War (*the massacre of God's people* - v. 7-10)

V. 7

"It was given him" - God will allow the Antichrist to kill His saints (believers). This martyrdom will occur when the sixth Seal is opened (Rev. 6:9-11).

The Antichrist will *"wear out the saints"* (Dan. 7:25).

The Antichrist will even overcome and kill God's renowned two witnesses - they will be the first ones on his "hit list."

Rev. 11:7 - *"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and killed them."*

*"**Power** (authority) **was given him over all kindreds** (people of every family) **and tongues** (people of every language) **and nations** (people of every country)."*

V. 7b

NOTE: Since Antichrist has authority over **all** kindreds, and tongues, and nations, any passage describing the Antichrist's conflict with other kings must occur in the first half of the Tribulation, (such as Dan. 7:8, 24; 11:44-44). It is in the first half that there will be "wars and rumors of wars" (Mt. 24:6) (cp. Smith, p. 199).

V. 8

"All . . . upon the earth shall worship Him."

In every major world kingdom since Babylon, Satan has tried to get the world to bow to his ruler (with Babylon, it was to Nebuchadnezzar - Dan. 3; with Medo-Persia, it was to Darius - Dan. 6:7; with Greece, it was to Antiochus Epiphanes - Dan. 11:21-35; and with Rome, it was to the Caesars).

Finally, he will succeed with the Antichrist.

NOTE: The ***"all"*** is qualified. All will worship except those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Is your name written?

Some might ask, "What's wrong with a little misplaced worship?" -- Read Rev. 14:9-11 to find out.

How will the world worship the Antichrist?

--By bowing before an idol bearing his resemblance (v. 15)

--By taking his mark (v. 16-18)

v. 9-10

These are words of encouragement to those who reject worshipping the Antichrist and face martyrdom for it.

They will reap exactly what they have sown (Ga. 6:7)! Pay Day, some day!

V. 10

It may appear that believers are on the wrong end of the stick; therefore, God reminds them to keep in mind that "all that goes around comes around."

Remembering this will provide ***"patience"*** (endurance) and sustain ***"faith"*** on the part of the saints.

III. Satan's Counterfeit Miracle Worker (v. 11-18)

(Beast #3 - Satan's False Prophet)

V. 11

"Another beast" = another of the same kind (allos) as the one previously mentioned (he will be like the Antichrist).

This beast rises up out of the earth whereas the beast system and its emperor were said to arise from the sea (v. 1).

"Two horns like a lamb" = symbolic of this beast's religious facade.

He will appear, no doubt, as meek as was the "Lamb of God" Jesus Christ at His first coming. (Jn. 1:29; I Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:6)

Don't be deceived by those who "look" religious. The test is not how they appear; but we test them by what they say.

"He spake as a dragon" - the False Prophet speaks like his father, the devil (cp. Rev. 12:9, 13:4-5). Just as Satan ("the dragon") will put blasphemy into the mouth of the Antichrist, so he will with the false prophet. Since Satan is a liar and the Father of it (Jn. 8:44), nothing but falsehood will proceed from the False Prophet's mouth.

V. 12

"Exerciseth all the power" = authority.

Satan will give this man the same world-wide authority as the Antichrist has ("the first beast").

"The first beast" - "first" can refer to time (meaning the previously mentioned beast), or to rank (meaning the Antichrist will be the chief or "head honcho").

This view (first in rank) fits the context of verse 12, since the worship will be directed toward the first beast. Whereas the Antichrist will be primarily a "political leader," the False Prophet will be a "religious leader."

"Before him" - not a time indicating word. But it refers to the False Prophet exercising his authority in front of, in the presence of (lit. "in the eyes of") the Antichrist. [the same word is used in v. 13 & 14 and translated "in the sight of"].

"Causeth the earth" = makes the earth ... to worship the first beast (the Antichrist).

The False Prophet, counterfeiting the ministry of the Holy Spirit (whose task it is to promote Jesus Christ - Jn. 16:13, 14), will promote the Antichrist.

Most pseudo-miracle workers today attract attention to themselves. This one, however, will have credibility because of his miracle-working power, but will draw men's attention to the Antichrist, not himself.

A. He will produce false miracles (v. 13-15)

1. Deceptive wonders (signs) (v. 13-14)

V. 13

"Doeth" - present tense indicating habitual and continual action.

"Great wonders" - great signs (a sign is an indicator that points to something. These signs will deceive the world into thinking that the False Prophet is legitimate).

"Fire...from Heaven" -

1) a counterfeit of Elijah (on Mt. Carmel - I Ki. 18:38-39) (and in destruction of his enemies - II Ki. 1:10, 12).
2) A counterfeit of the two witnesses who have similar power (Rev.11:5-6).

Interesting note:

During the first 3 1-2 years of the Tribulation, God had two miracle workers [the world, however, was not interested in their powers (11:10)]. Now in the last 3 1-2 years, Satan has two, as if to say: "So you thought those two prophets of God were something; wait till you see mine!"

"In the sight of men" - Seeing is not always believing.
Just because you see something (experience something) does not mean it is from God.
"True miracles were meant to confirm (validate, vindicate, authenticate), not deceive" (Smith, p. 203).

V. 14
This deception will be world-wide (no doubt the miracles will be broadcast via satellite).

This is the deception mentioned in Rev. 12:9, where Satan is said to deceive "the whole world"; and II Thes. 2:9-12.

Why are the wondrous signs (miracles) done "in the sight of the beast"? Evidently, it will appear to the world that the False Prophet is getting his miracle-working power from the Antichrist (who will claim to be God - II Th. 2:4). Hence, the image is built in honor of the Antichrist and not the False Prophet.

"They should make" - the earth dwellers.

The False Prophet will hire the best metal workers, the finest sculpturists, the most brilliant of scientists and artists to erect probably the most amazing replica of man (or any life form) ever constructed.

Robotic technology is very advanced today!

"An image" = an idol; a replica, in honor of the Antichrist ("to the Beast"), bearing the appearance of the Antichrist ("of the Beast - v. 15).
NOTE: This is a direct violation of the second commandment (Ex. 20:4-5). It is wrong no matter how authentic the signs were which gave backing to such an effort.

2. Deceptive idolatry (v. 15)

V. 15
Such idolatry is not new. Satan also inspired Nebuchadnezzar to have an image erected (evidently in human form) and worship enforced (Dan. 3).

"He had power" = lit. he was given power (by Satan).
"To give life" - life = "pneuma" - spirit or breath.
Though some think that the image will be computerized and hence receive its life mechanically, the fact that Satan will be issuing the power to energize it, and the fact that it will breath air and appear to be alive (living) seem to indicate that it will be demonically controlled.

This idol will be so amazing that it will have two natural features that only man has:

1) The image will have speaking ability

2) The image will have knowing ability
(it will know who has the mark and who does not)

B. He will promote a false mark (v. 16-18)

V. 16

Just as everything else about the Antichrist has been a counterfeit for the reality, so will his mark be.

Satan will imitate the mark that God places upon His servants (Rev. 14:1; cp. Rev. 3:12, 7:3). Both marks identify you with the name of whom you worship.

"He causeth all" - the False Prophet will force everyone on earth to receive a mark.

This piece of identification will be forced upon all regardless of:

1) Title (***"small and great"*** - Everyone from the blue collar worker to the President or Pope)
2) Economic status (***"rich and poor"*** - everyone from the filthy rich to the beggar)
3) Rank (***"free or bond"*** - everyone from the liberated to the slaves)

"A Mark" - A brand. Evidently this is a permanent mark, put on ("epi") the right hand or on their forehead.

The option may be given for cosmetic reasons (for looks), functional reasons (forehead & hand are easy places to scan) or as a means to distinguish two types or classes of people (EX: a means to differentiate between those who are "engaged in intellectual pursuits and those who labor with their hands" - Smith, p. 205).

V. 17

Satan's one-world economy will be tied together and organized by a common mark.

--No one will buy (no one will purchase food, clothes, gas, medicine, etc. without it)

--No one will sell (no one will operate a business without it)

> Whereas American Express travelers checks have the slogan "Don't leave home without it" - the mark of the Beast will in reality say, "You don't live without it!"

Contemporary methods of uniting people and programs (primarily for economic reasons) by the use of social security numbers, credits cards, debit cards, etc., are merely man's initial attempts at economic unity and control.

The mark will involve both the Antichrist's name and number. The connection between the ***"name"*** and ***"Number"*** of the Beast could support "the ancient custom of giving to letters of the alphabet a numerical value" (Smith, p. 206).

> Thus, the spelling of the Antichrist's name may be the mathematical equivalent of 666.

V. 18

"Here is wisdom" (the ability to perceive). "understanding" (the ability to reason).

"Wisdom and understanding" - possibly alluding to Daniel 12:10 - "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

"Count" = lit. "to count with pebbles" to add up or calculate (cp. Lk. 14:28).

The "beast" is clearly identified as a "man"

--Why the number 6? (Man was created on the sixth day)

--Why a 3-digit 6? (possibly a representation for the Satanic trinity)

Three truths every Christian must remember to avoid being deceived:

1. **Seeing is not believing**
   (a mirage looks like water but it is not)
2. **Satan has power to perform the miraculous** (he can do the supernatural)
   (Lk. 4:5; Mt. 24:24; Mk. 5:4; II Th. 2:9)
3. **Our only authority is the Bible**
   Our authority is not experiential in nature (just because you can see it, feel it, speak it [ex. tongues] etc. does not mean it is from God).
   a. God's true prophets (apostles) prophesied with 100% accuracy (anything less demanded stoning - Deut. 18:20-22)
   b. Miracles (even undeniable ones) do not authenticate someone if their message is contrary to the Word of God - Deut. 13:1-3. Sometimes a convincing miracle (that is not from God) is a test of your love for God and your loyalty to His Word.

"FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS!"
Revelation 14:1-20

INTRODUCTION:
Note: The frequency of the world "voice" in chapter 14 (v. 2, 7, 9, 13, 15, 18).
Heaven is not silent in the Last Days!

A Practical Key Truth -- ** What God has to say about the future should instruct us in the present!

I. God's End-Time REDEEMING (v. 1-5)

A. The redeemed stand with the Lamb (v. 1)

After describing the world-wide worship of Antichrist during the Tribulation, one might wonder, "Who will be saved? Will everyone receive the mark of the Beast?" It is to this question that God speaks in the beginning of chapter 14. Yes, some will be redeemed!

The 144,000 are Jews who are sealed by God in the Tribulation after the 6th. Seal (Rev. 7:1-8).

"A Lamb" = Jesus Christ is referred to as a "Lamb" 26 times in the book of Revelation. This title emphasizes Christ's bloodshed and sacrificial work for the redemption of men (cp. 5:6, 12; 7:14; 12:11)

"Mount Sion" = a reference to the city of Jerusalem, where Messiah will reign during the Millennium.

After God judges those who conspire against Him, He will set His Son--the King--upon His holy hill of Zion (Ps. 2:6; SEE Isaiah 2:1-4).

"His Father's name written" = SEE Rev. 3:12, 22:4.

"Written" - perfect tense, meaning the name was written and remains written.

God, in 14:1, contrasts those who have Satan's mark (specifically, the name of the Antichrist - 13:16-18) with those who have God's mark (the name of God on their foreheads - 14:1-5).

B. The redeemed sing a new song (v. 2-3)

V. 2

This voice is no doubt Christ's (cp. 1:15), who in an awesome way demands attention to the new song of His redeemed.

V. 3

God puts a ***"new song"*** into the heart of all His redeemed. SEE Ps. 40:1-3 (cp. Ps. 33:3, 96:1, 144:9, 149:1; Is. 42:10). Similarly, as the 24 Elders sang a "new song" whose lyrics involved the "redemption: of the Lamb (Rev. 5:9), the 144,000 sing a "new song"with no doubt a similar theme. Yet it contains distinctive elements that could not be sung by anyone else.

"No man could learn" - the phrase "no man" indicates that there are other men (people) to populate the future kingdom (church age saints, etc.) besides the 144,000. Therefore, the number 144,000 cannot be representative of all the redeemed as some interpreters say.

Just as everyone's salvation means something special to them (that is, each of us appreciates a certain specific aspect of Christ's redeeming work), so the 144,000 will sing a special song that expresses their unreproduceable feelings about what Christ has done for them.

The redeemed 144,000 sing their new song in front of (***"before"***) God (***"the throne"***), and in front of the four living creatures that encompass the throne, and in front of the Elders who encircle the living creatures. What an audience to give ear to their songs of praise!

C. The redeemed are <u>separated</u> from sin (v. 4-5)

V. 4

"Not defiled with women" - the 144,000 evidently are <u>men</u> (male gender). They are not defiled in a sexual sense. Meaning: They are pure. They did not live in fornication and adultery like the world will in the last days.

Note: The Lord is <u>not</u> teaching that sex in marriage defiles; indeed, it does not (Heb. 13:4 - "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

"They are virgins" - 2 views:

1) Literally - unmarried, celibates

2) Metaphorically - spiritual virgins, separated only unto Christ their Groom
(Example: II Cor. 11:2 - "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.")

SEE: Jer. 30:24-31:1-6, 21 - In the last days a remnant of Israel will be saved, and called "virgin."

"They...follow the Lamb" - they will follow the one they are married to -- Christ. True sheep follow their Shepherd (Jn. 10:27).

The 144,000 will be ***"first fruits"*** - the first to be harvested among national Israel during the "Day of the Lord" after the rapture (Joel 2:32, Zech. 12:10-14). Other mortal Gentiles and Jews will be separated from the unbelievers ("goats") after Armageddon (Mt.25).

V. 5

"No guile" = no deceitfulness or falsehood comes from their lips. They are sincere and truthful in their speech. Truthfulness is a mark of the believer, and will be of Israel when God redeems a remnant in the Tribulation (Zeph. 3:12-14 - *"I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem."*

"Without fault" - without blemish. It is the LORD who <u>made</u> them this way (Eph. 5:27), and it is the LORD who <u>keeps</u> them this way (Jude 24).

II. God's End-Time <u>WARNING</u> (v. 6-13)

A. The first angel delivers:
God's worldwide <u>call</u> to repentance (v. 6-7)
("Fear God. . . give glory. . . worship Him")

V. 6

God gives one final call; one last chance for the entire world to hear the Gospel before His full fury (wrath) is poured out (chap. 15ff).

* This is the only recorded instance of an angel proclaiming the Gospel.
God today uses men (believers) to preach the Gospel (Mk. 16:15).

"Every nation, and kindred (tribe), and tongue (language), and people" - the whole world will have the chance to either accept or reject the Gospel before the end comes. *Mt. 24:14 - "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."*

God is so longsuffering and gracious to give the world such a last chance, via an angel.

V. 7

The angel loudly heralds out a trio of commands (imperatives):

1) ***"Fear God"***
2) ***"Give glory to Him"***
3) ***"Worship Him"***

Such imperatives are the basic elements of the everlasting Gospel. In every age (dispensation), people needed to recognize and be willing to submit themselves to these basic injunctions before they would be ready to receive further revelation (specific details) of God's plan of salvation.

Cornelius "feared God" (Acts 10:2) before he trusted in Peter's message of Christ.

Lydia worshipped the true God (Acts 16:14) before she found Christ by the witness of Paul.

1) To fear God is to stand in awe of Him. To give Him the respect and reverence due Him (In contrast to the pagan world which will stand in awe of Antichrist (13:3).
2) To glorify God is to give Him the credit and attention He deserves. Shine the spotlight on Him [in contrast to the lost world which will glorify Antichrist - 13:4b, 14].
3) To worship God is to fall down before Him with humble adoration and honor [in contrast to the deceived world which will worship Antichrist (13:4) and His image (13:15)]

NOTE the motivation for "fearing" and "glorifying" God is the fact that He is judge. - ". . . For (because) the hour of His judgment is come. . ."

The incentive for "worshipping" God is the fact that He is creator. Man is to worship the Creator of Heaven (the sky with its sun, moon, stars), earth, sea, and fountains of waters.

God's bowls of judgment are poured out upon the Sea (16:3), fountains of waters (16:14), sun (16:8), and earth (16:18-21) because of man's refusal to worship.

B. The second angel delivers: God's worldwide announcement of retribution (v. 8)

("Babylon is fallen!")

"Babylon" - an end-time religious and commercial center (Rev. 17 & 18).

"Babylon is fallen, is fallen" - the phrase "is fallen" is repeated for emphasis.

Rev. 17 & 18 describes in detail the fall of "mystery Babylon."

"She made all nations" - she will by force cause all nations to join her. Like a prostitute, she will seek to become united to as many as she can get. Money is the motive (18:9-19). Example: The Roman Catholic Church.

C. The third angel delivers: God's worldwide plea to remain faithful (v. 9-13)

(Don't take the mark!)

V. 9

NOTE: The conjunction "and" ties the Antichrist and his image and his mark together (cp. v. 13).

All who worship the Antichrist will take His mark, and all who take His mark will worship the Antichrist.

To choose to receive the mark is to choose to worship the Antichrist.

The mark of the Beast evidently will be issued during the second half of the Tribulation after Antichrist's resurrection (Rev. 13:3) and after the image is constructed (13:15-18).

The warning against receiving the mark shows that taking the mark is a voluntary decision - a deliberate choice. No one will be forced to receive it. Nor will it be a mysterious, invisible mark that will automatically come on those who are non-elect.

Just because the mark of God on the head of the 144,000 is not literal (14:1) does not mean that the mark of Satan will not be.

God's warning is simply this: "If you take the mark you are doomed!"

For those who worship the Antichrist:

1. God warns of <u>intense</u> torment (v. 10)

Many will take the mark of the Beast so that they can eat and drink (13:17) . . . but those who do so will "drink of the wine of the wrath (hot anger) of God."

The phrase: ***"the wine of the wrath of God"*** is deliberately used in conjunction with "the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (v. 8).
All who partake of the sin of Babylon will partake of the wrath of God. You cannot drink from one without drinking from the other.

"Poured out without mixture" = undiluted, mixed with full strength.
The imagery is to wine, which in Bible days was diluted with water to weaken its strong taste.
The point is this: God's wrath will not be mixed with any mercy and grace to those who worship Antichrist. His fury will be poured out with total strength and full potency!

"The cup of His indignation" - those who worship the Antichrist will "drink" (partake of) the cup of God's <u>deep-seated anger</u>.

"He shall be tormented" - the antecedent for the word "he" is the word "any <u>man</u>" (v. 9), meaning <u>anyone</u> who worships will suffer.

"tormented" - the word means to be tortured. It describes excruciating physical pain. The word was used to describe the agony of martyrs who were tortured for their faith. The apocryphal book IV Maccabees uses the word "torment" 50 times in reference to the cruel torturing of an old man named Eleazar, his seven sons and his wife by a "tyrant" ruler named Antiochus Epiphanes (a type of the coming Antichrist - cp. Dan. 11:21-35).

Because of these Jew's refusal to eat the swine commanded by Antiochus, they were tormented by whips, stretching racks, and wheels that twisted and pulled all bones out of joint; fiery fluid was poured into the nostrils of Eleazar. Their bodies were ripped apart; their skin was ripped off; their eyes were pierced; tongues were cut out; they were boiled in cruel caldrons, cut into pieces, and burned alive (SEE IV Maccabees).
This type of agony is what is means by the word "torment."
"Tormented with fire and brimstone" - "with" = in (as in Mt. 3:11-12 - *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor and father His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.").*

"Brimstone" = the word "originally denoted fire from Heaven (cp. Lk. 17:29).
It is connected with sulphur. Places touched by lightning were called "theia," and--since lightning leaves a sulphurous smell and sulphur was used in pagan purifications--it received the name "theion" (Vines, p. 151) [cp. NIV - "burning sulphur"]

The eternal torment of the Antichrist worshippers will be that of intense burning fire and intense noxious odor.
The same type of torment experienced by Satan (Rev. 20:10) will be forever felt by those who reject Christ and accept Antichrist.

"...in the presence of the ...angels...and...the Lamb"
"Presence" - before the eyes of. While it is Christ who will command the torture of His enemies (Mt. 7:23, 25:41, 46; Rev. 20:11-15), angels will execute His command. Also, the omnipresent Christ (Ps. 139:8) with the angelic host as spectators will witness the torment of those who rejected the truth.

2. God warns of <u>eternal</u> torment (v. 11a)

No end to the torment.

The reason the smoke ascends forever is because the torment lasts forever. If the torment ceased, so would the smoke. Annihilation is not taught in Scripture!

3. God warns of <u>relentless</u> torment (v. 11b)

No <u>relief</u> from the torment; no pauses, no interruptions, no breaks, no rest periods. Rather, continual, unceasing suffering awaits the Antichrist worshippers.

"No rest day nor night" - the phrase "day nor night" does not suggest that in the Lake of Fire there is a sunrise and sunset. The words point to continuity (continual, uninterrupted, non-stop torment).

V. 12

"Patience" = endurance; an ability to remain under the pressures the Godless world will place upon believers to receive the mark.

How does the admonition in vv. 9-11 give <u>patience</u> for the saints?

1) Verses 9-11 are a strong warning which should cause any believer to utterly abhor the mark of the Beast. Such a warning will encourage believers being in the Tribulation to remain patient in light of the eternal fury to come upon the godless world.

2) Verses 9-11 will enable God's saints to endure anything, knowing that God will punish their enemies (Ryrie note - cp. Rev. 13:10).

"Better to reign with Christ forever than with Antichrist for a few short years! Better to endure persecution patiently now than to escape it and suffer throughout eternity!" (Wiersbe, p. 608)

V. 13

"Die <u>in the Lord</u>" - the qualifying phrase is important. Not all are blessed; but only those who die in the Lord (those who are one with Christ through salvation are those who die "in the Lord" - I Cor. 15:18; I Th. 4:14, 16).

Note: the contrast between the lost ("they have <u>no rest</u>" - v. 11) and the saved ("that they may <u>rest</u> - v. 13).

"Labors" - exhausting, sweat-causing labor

"Works" being the <u>evidence</u> of their faith (cp. James 2). Their works would specifically involve: Godliness in the midst of worldwide ungodliness; and courage in the midst of torments inflicted by Antichrist.

III. God's End-Time Reaping (v. 14-20)

Though some commentators view the angel's reaping (17-20) as a restatement of the Son of man's reaping (14-16), there are serious questions that must be answered:

1. What is the distinction between the two ingatherings?
2. Why does Christ harvest in verses 14-16 and an angel in vs. 17-20?
3. Why are those whom the angel reaps cast into the winepress of God's wrath, and the ones Christ reaps are not?

[NOTE: Henry Alford, the Greek N.T. IV p. 690, holds that verses 14-16 describe the harvest of the saints, while verses 17-20, the harvest of the wicked.]

A. The Son of Man reaps a harvest (v. 14-16) *(A harvest of the righteous)*

V. 14

"A white cloud" - "White" symbolic of the purity and brightness of Christ's radiant glory (cp. Mt. 17:5) (probably the shekinah cloud of glory).

"Cloud" = a cloud enveloped Christ on His ascension (Acts 1:9) and will encompass Him on His second coming. *"Behold, he cometh with clouds. . . "* (Rev. 1:7)
"Caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (I Th. 4:17).

"The Son of man" = lit. a son of man (no definite article in the Greek.
The one being identified is not a being that looks like Jesus, rather it is Jesus who looks like a Son of man (same phrase is in Rev. 1:13).
The phrase "Son of man" is a title that identifies Christ as Judge and the Resurrector of the Dead (SEE John 5:22=29) NOTE: The phrase "Son of man" is a key phrase in reference to the second coming - Mt. 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44.

"A golden crown" -
"Gold" = is indicative of the incorruptible nature of Christ's crown.
"Crown" - (Greek = "Stephanon" - singular); A victor's wreath; the crown of a conqueror.

> NOTE: When Jesus returns for the actual Battle of Armageddon, He will be wearing *"many crowns"* (Greek = "Diademata" (plural- royal, kingly crowns - Rev. 19:12). Hence, the time period described here in 14:14ff evidently precedes that of 19:12ff.

V. 15
"Another angel" - another following the three previously mentioned in this chapter (v. 6, 8, 9).
The ***"temple"*** from which the angel comes is in heaven. The Temple is where God the Father is sitting (15:8).
The implication is that the angelic messenger receives the command from the Father and brings it to the Son. The Son, Himself, said that the timing of the Rapture was unknown to all except the Father.

The angel's cry is not to be understood as an angel telling Christ what to do (in the sense of commanding Him what to do); but rather in the sense of a request. The imploring, prayerful request of a subordinate.

The angel's cry could be the "shout. . . the voice of the archangel" spoken of in I. Thess. 4:16.

"The time is come" - God has everything on an exact timetable. The word "time" literally means "hour."

"The harvest is ripe" - "ripe" - lit. was dried up
Two views:

1. The shrivelled up, withered nature of the harvest indicates that Christ is referring to unbelievers who are ready and overdue for judgment (J.B. Smith, p. 220).

* 2. The dried up (Luke 23:31), moistureless nature of the harvest indicates how the saints have been worn out by Antichrist (Dan. 7:25) and the pressures of the Tribulation. They are overdue for deliverance from their hardships.
Mt. 24:22 - *"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."*

"The earth was reaped" -
God has always removed His children before His ultimate judgment fell.
EX: Noah Lk. 17:26-27
Lot Lk. 17:28-36

I Thes. 5:9 - *"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation ("deliverance - via Rapture") by our Lord Jesus Christ"* - cp. I Th. 1:10.

God promised to keep us from His wrath, but He did not promise to keep us from the wrath of Satan or man (the Antichrist - cp. Luke 21:23).

God will harvest His children prior to the outpouring of His fury.

NOTE: The references to the wrath of God come after God's harvest has occurred (Rev. 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19). This time of wrath is called the "Day of the Lord" which occurs near the end of the Tribulation.

The phrase "Day of the Lord" is used exclusively of the end of the Tribulation (Is. 2:2-18, 13:6-13; Ezek. 7:19; Joel 1:15, 2:1-6; Amos 5:18-20; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:14-18).

Brief evidences that verses 14-16 refer to the **"Rapture"**:
(1) **"White cloud"** - corresponds to the Rapture (Mt. 24:30; I Th. 4:17) NOTE: The Rapture of the saints pictures Christ's coming in white clouds. The return for judgment pictures Christ's coming on a white horse (Rev. 19:11).
(2) **"Son of man"** = Jesus Christ (cp. Rev. 1:13) [NOTE: The phrase "Son of man" is a frequently used phrase in reference to the second coming and the resurrection of the dead (Jn. 5:26-28; Mt. 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44]
(3) **"A golden crown"** (Greek "stephanon" - singular) When Christ returns for Armageddon, He is pictured as having "many crowns" (Greek "diademata" - plural) (Rev. 19;12)
(4) **"Angel...loud voice"** = Evidently the "shout...the voice of the archangel" of the Rapture (I Th. 4:16)

B. The angel reaps a harvest (v. 17-20)
(A harvest of the wicked)

V. 18
"The altar" - the altar of burnt offering as in 6:9, 8:3a, 5; 16:7.
> The judgment about to be inflicted is evidently in response to the prayers of the saints under the altar (6:9) (Smith, p. 221)

"Fire" = symbolic of judgment

"The vine of the earth" - is probably so called in contrast with Israel, the vine of God's planting (Psalm 80:8, 14, 15; Is. 5:2-7; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 17:5-8; Hos. 10:1) (Smith, p.221).

"Fully ripe" - the grapes described are full of juice, ready to burst; depicting the fact that "the iniquity of the nations is full, and the time has come for the clock of judgment to strike" (Smith, p. 221).

V. 19
Angels are employed in the judgment of the wicked (cp. Mt. 13:39-42).
NOTE: This reference is to the judgment of the wicked who remain after Armageddon)

This gathering in verses 17-20 is <u>not</u> describing a removal of people from the earth.

Rather, this gathering is describing a gathering of the world's armies to Israel for the Battle of Armageddon (Zech. 14:1ff; Joel 3:1-3, 13; Is.63:1-6; Rev. 19:11-16).

V. 20
"The winepress was trodden" - a winepress or winevat was a mechanism made of stone into which grapes were poured. People then stepped on and crushed the grapes allowing the juice to be emitted and drained. They did the crushing with bare feet so as not to crush the seeds and make the grape juice bitter.

- Zech. 14:1ff - Christ comes to fight for Israel
- Joel 3:1-3, 9-17 (*v. 13)
- Is. 63:1-6 - the Lord Himself will trod the winepress (cp. Is. 34:1-8)

The blood will splatter upon Christ's garment (Rev. 19:11-16 *v. 13)

"Without the city" - outside the city of Jerusalem. Evidently the Valley of Jehoshaphat (the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem).

"Horse bridles" = 4 1/2 feet high. The flood will flow like a chest-deep river at certain points.

1,600 furlongs = 180-200 miles in length.

The Jordan River is not even this long! (evidently the blood will flow from Northern Palestine all the way down to Bozrah in Edom)

"THE BOWLS ARE FILLED"
Revelation 15:1-8

A Practical Key Truth -- ** God must and will punish sin!

I. The Bowls are Filled With the Wrath of God (v. 1)
(The Finality of God's Wrath)

"Seven angels" . . . "Seven last plagues" -
The number ***"seven"*** pointing to completion, marks the finality and completeness of God's judgment.
Having described the seven seals (Rev. 6) and the seven trumpet judgments (Rev. 8-11), God now unveils the seven vial judgments.

"Last Plagues" - The word "last" points to the fact that the previous plagues (EX: trumpets) occurred chronologically before (prior in time to) these plagues.
The seven trumpet judgments were a foretaste or a preparatory warning of the worst which was yet to come

(NOTE: The trumpet judgments involved 1/3 of man and the elements being affected by God's Wrath [8:7, 9, 10, 11, 12; 9:18], now the vials are total destruction.
The most severe of all judgments will be the vial judgments.

"Plagues" - that which causes injury or wounds.
"Wrath" ("thymos") - the hot, fiery, explosive fury of God
NOTE: God's wrath here is not a mere attitude of anger ("orge") but the action of anger ("thymos")
"Filled up" = finished; completed; brought to an end.
The bowl (vial)judgments are the conclusion of the Tribulation. They are the culmination of judgment upon a world that has forsaken God.
When the last vial is poured out there will come a "great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done" (Rev. 16:17). The plagues will end with the seventh vial.

Mankind may have been able to humanistically rationalize away the former plagues (EX: 7 trumpets) as being mere "freaks of nature" (not from God's hand), because their intensity was not as universal or relentless. But these plagues will not be so easily explained away.

They will recognize fully that God is the source of such judgments (SEE: Rev. 16:9, 11).

II. The Bowls are Filled But Not for the Overcomers (v. 2)
(The Freedom from God's Wrath)

Before God describes His outpouring of His wrath, He informs us about those who will not be around to experience the outpouring (they are "blessed" - Rev. 14:13).

"A sea of glass mingled (mixed) with fire" = Rev. 4:6 describes this crystal clear sea of glass being in front of God's throne.

The reference to fire could be to the seven lamps of fire (7 spirits of God) which burn in front of the throne (Rev. 4:5), or simply a visual representation of the fiery wrath of God - "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29)

"Them that had gotten the victory" - Lit. the overcomers; those who had overcome; the conquerors.

The same word is used in Rev. 2 & 3 of church saints who receive certain promises for being "overcomers" - 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21. These saints of God are described as overcomers who conquered the Beast (Antichrist), his image (idol), his mark and his number (666). No one who succumbs to the Antichrist will go to Heaven (cp. Rev. 14:9-11).

"Beast" = a wild monstrous, ferocious animal-like creature. This word describes the savage, vicious, inhuman nature of the Antichrist. (NOTE: the word "beast" in v. 7 is a different Greek word meaning "living Creature").

III. The Bowls are Filled And God is to be Feared and Glorified (v. 3-4)

(The Fairness (justification) of God's Wrath)

V. 3

"The song of Moses" = a song of deliverance

(The song is one of praise because of God's victory over Pharaoh and his army at the Red Sea - Ex. 15:1ff).

NOTE: Just as God delivered Moses and Israel via the Red Sea, He will deliver His Tribulation saints via the Rapture.

Remember: Rapture before wrath! [Note previous chapter - Rapture (14:14-16); then Wrath (14:17-19).

[NOTE: This song may also refer to Moses' song in Deut. 31:30ff (Smith, p. 224)]

"Moses the servant of God" - Servant = bond-slave.

Just as Moses was a bond-slave - totally devoted to God - so will the saints, who gain victory over Antichrist, be devoted to God. Just as Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:24-25), so a faithful remnant will refuse to identify themselves with Antichrist even if it meant pleasure on earth for a season.

"The Song of the Lamb" = a song of redemption (Rev. 5:9-10)

A. God is called "Almighty"
--Showing His ability to judge (v. 3b)

God is praised for what He does (***"Great and marvelous are Thy works..."***) The saints praise God for His power in delivering them. Such works (like the deliverance at the Red Sea) cause amazement. What God does is breath-taking. We stand in awe of what God has done.

God is called ***"almighty"*** because this aspect of God corresponds to the greatness of His works.

B. God is called "King"
--Showing His equity as Judge (v. 3c)

God is praised for how He works (***"Just and true are Thy ways"***). The saints praise God for His fairness, equity, and righteous retribution on His enemies (EX: Pharaoh and Egypt). What God does is according to righteousness and fidelity (***"just and true"***). God is called ***"king"*** because this aspect of God corresponds to the justice with which He rules, judges and conquers.

C. God is called "Holy"
--Showing His authority to judge (v. 4)

God is praised for who He is (***"Thou only art holy"***)

"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?"

The rhetorical questions demand an obvious, "No one."

Who will avoid trembling before God? No one. Who will escape glorifying His name? No one. God receives glory from even those who rebel against Him (EX: Pharaoh - Ex. 9:16; Ro. 9:17)

"Thou only art holy" - only God is independently holy.
Only God is intrinsically holy. We depend upon Him for our moral purity (our set-apartness from defilement).
"All nations shall come and worship before Thee" - SEE: Psalm 86:9-13. There is coming a day when everyone will acknowledge and do homage to the true God. For some it will be too late. However, even those will bow before Him. There is coming a day when at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those in heaven, of those on earth, of those under the earth. There is coming a day when every tongue will confess the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10-11) SEE: Isaiah 45:22-25; 66:23).

"For thy judgments are made manifest" - the reason why all nations will one day bow, is because God will one day demonstrate His sovereign holiness by judging sin.
Sometimes the only way hard-hearted man will humble himself before God is when God sends judgment.
"When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Is. 26:9)

IV. The Bowls are Filled And Ready to be Poured Out (v. 5-8)

(The Fulfillment of God's wrath anticipated)

V. 5
"The temple of the tabernacle (dwelling place) of the testimony" = the unseen Heavenly Holy of Holies is seen by John (NOTE: Rev. 11:18-19 - the Holy of Holies is opened up at the last trump just prior to the great outpouring of God's final wrath)

V. 6
The angels dressed in the garments of the O.T. High Priest come out of the Temple each carrying a plague to be dumped on the earth.

V. 7
One of the four living creatures ("beasts") who were closest in proximity to the throne of God (Rev. 4:6) evidently takes 7 golden bowls (vials) from the hand of God and delivers them to the 7 angels.

"Golden vials" = these vials (bowls) were wide shallow bowls like a deep saucer (Reinecker, p. 847).
The bowls are filled up with God's hot anger. Wrath which is not mixed (diluted) with mercy, but full-strength fury (Rev. 14:10) will be poured on the God-rejecting earth dwellers.

"Who liveth forever and ever" - in contrast to men, who are about to die via the outpouring of God's wrath, God is eternal.

V. 8
A thick cloud of ***"smoke"*** fills the Temple in heaven like that which Isaiah saw when He saw God's (specifically, Christ's) glory (Is. 6:4, Jn. 12:41).
God's glory and power emit as it were a thick cloud of smoke.
Such a cloud is reminiscent of the Shekinah glory that filled the O.T. temple, and restricted any priest from entering it (SEE I Kings 8:10-11)
"No man" = no one - no angel could enter the temple in heaven until the bowl judgments were fulfilled (completed).

"THE BOWLS ARE POURED OUT"
Revelation 16:1-21

V. 1

"I heard a great voice out of the temple" - the Apostle John heard the voice of God who alone is in the Temple during the bowl judgments (15:8). [cp. Christ's powerful voice - Rev. 1:15]
The greatness of the coming wrath of God is a sobering thought. [SEE Mt. 24:21-22]
Contemporary (modern day) afflictions (AIDS), natural and man-caused catastrophes (oil spills, etc.), battles (WW I & II), earthquakes (San Francisco), and storms (Hugo) are nothing ("child's play") compared to what is yet ahead.

"A great voice" = this chapter emphasizes the word "great," which occurs eleven times. --

"a great voice"	(v. 1, 17)
"great heat"	(v. 9)
"great river"	(v. 12)
"great day"	(v. 14)
"great earthquake"	(v. 18, twice)
"great city"	(v. 19)
"great Babylon"	(v. 19)
"great hail"	(v. 21)
"great plague"	(v. 21)

--The Bowl Judgments are certain.
The certainty of the bowl judgments is seen by the past tense verbs throughout the chapter. From John's perspective the judgments were as if they had already occurred because he is seeing a panoramic preview picture of what will for sure be fulfilled.

--The Bowl Judgments are swift.
The bowl judgments evidently occur in rapid-fire succession because:

1. Their brief descriptions suggest their speed of fulfillment.

2. Their horrible effects suggest speed of fulfillment. The major catastrophic proportions of these judgments do not allow for a great deal of time to lapse between them.

3. God prophesied of the judgment of Armageddon to be completed very quickly (actually --"in one day") (Is.29:5; Zech.3:9; 14:7; Rev.18:10,17,19).

--The Bowl Judgments are final.
The vial (bowl) judgments are the grand finale (ILLUS: fire works display) of the wrath of God.

They are called: ***"the seven last plagues"*** (15:1) because they conclude the judgment of God. The word "last" proves that the trumpet judgments come before (precede in time) the vial (bowl) judgments.

The 7 trumpet judgments involve the first state of God's out-poured wrath, whereas the 7 bowl (vial) judgments describe the final stage of God's out-poured wrath (15:1).

--The Bowl Judgments are great.

The 7 trumpets serve as a final warning and foreshadowing of what immediately follows. NOTE: The parallels between the 7 trumpets and 7 vials (bowls) [The major difference between the trumpets and the vials is the **intensity and extensiveness** of the judgments]
For example: The trumpets describe partial destruction ("the third part" - 7:7-12; "not kill them" - 9:5; "slay the third part of men" - 9:15) whereas the vials describe total destruction.

Trumpet	#1 -	1/3 burning (8:7)	
Vial	#1 -	Sores on <u>all</u> with the mark (16:2)	
Trumpet	#2 -	1/3 sea becomes blood (8:8)	1/3 sea life dies (8:9)
Vial	#2 -	All sea becomes blood (16:3)	
Trumpet	#3 -	1/3 of fresh water smitten (8:10)	
Vial	#3 -	All fresh water smitten (16:4)	
Trumpet	#4 -	1/3 of sun darkened (8:12)	
Vial	#4 -	Sun scorches men with fire (16:8)	
Trumpet	#5 -	Torment for five months (9:10)	
Vial	#5 -	Intense torment (16:10-11)	
Trumpet	#6 -	1/3 men killed (9:15)	
Vial	#6 -	Armageddon (16:16)	
Trumpet	#7 -	"Thy wrath is come" (11:18)	
Vial	#7 -	"It is done" (16:17)	

A Practical Key Truth -- * WARNING: The most severe judgment ever experienced on earth is yet ahead! Flee from the wrath to come!**

I. Bowl # 1 - Great Affliction (v. 2)

"A noisome and grievous" =
"Noisome" - lit. bad (the opposite of good); describes the harmful <u>nature</u> of the sore. An ugly, loathsome sore.
"Grievous" = lit. evil; malignant. Describes the harmful <u>effects</u> of the sore. An <u>incurable</u>, <u>painful</u> sore.
SEE verses 10 & 11 for the severity of pain caused by the sores.

"Sore" = an abscess or boil. A puss-filled, oozing, dripping, painful, inflamed sore
(SEE: Exod. 9:8-12 - sores on Egyptians. LXX "sore" = same word as Rev. 16:2)
ILLUS: Job's sores inflicted by Satan were severe but not terminal, as these will be.
Such physical suffering and affliction is limited to those who took the Antichrist's mark, or bowed to his image. Remember God's warning in Rev. 14:9-11.

II. Bowl # 2 - Great Destruction (v. 3)

"Sea" = the world's oceans; all salt water
(Cp. Rev. 8:8 - upon the blowing of the second trumpet, 1/3 of the sea became blood)
"It became <u>as</u> the blood of a dead man" = lit. "It became blood <u>as</u> of a dead man." The word "as" should be moved after the word blood. The point is <u>not</u> that the waters became <u>like</u> blood (but in fact were not) but that the waters became literal blood (cp. 8:8), not like the blood of a living person, but <u>like</u> the rotten, putrefying blood of a dead man.

"Every living soul died" = every living creature died.
"Soul" (psuche) refers to a species that has life. Technically all animate creatures have a "soul" (or life principle), but only man has a spirit (pneuma).
NOTE: Such a judgment will <u>not</u> be the result of acid rain, oil spills, or any other human or natural disaster. This judgment will clearly be the finger of God (SEE: the first plague on Egypt - Exod. 7:14-21). Everything in the sea will die as blood fills its gills and respiratory system, robbing the life-giving oxygen supply. Every shark, whale, squid, octopus, clam, every sort of fish, etc., will die.
Can you imagine the stench and disease that will accompany such a judgment? The shore lines of the world will be lined with billions of rotting, stinking fish. The coastal breezes will blow this toxic odor inland.

III. Bowl # 3 - Great Thirst (v. 4-7)

V. 4
Rivers and fountains (springs) feed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs with fresh water. Therefore, when these water supplies are smitten, every body of water on earth will be polluted.

V. 5
"Thou art righteous" - lest anyone should question the fairness (equity or justice) of God; the Angel declares that God has every right to judge in such a way.
Who dares to question the actions of God.
When puny, pea-brained man questions the veracity of God, he does not realize who he is bringing into trial.
Should anyone think to question God's fairness in meting out such judgments, they had better remember who God is!

1) God is ***"Lord"*** - as the sovereign ruler and master over all - who can question His dealings with His creation?

2) God is "eternal" - ***"which art, and wast and shall be"*** - God, unlike man, was not "born yesterday," as the saying goes. He has been around for eternity; He knows the score; He has kept the records; and He knows that the world is worthy of such judgment.

V. 6
God's fairness (righteousness) in judging the world in such a bloody manner is seen by the fact that the people living during this time are guilty of bloodshed.

"<u>They</u> shed the blood..." - those who cooperated with Antichrist in opposing and killing God's people. Those tied in with the escatological "Mother of harlots" - Rev. 17:5-6, 18:24.

"The blood of saints" = believers living in the Tribulation.

"Prophets" - such as God's two witnesses (Rev. 11:7-10).

"Blood to drink" = Is. 49:26 - *"And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Savior and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob."*

"For they are worthy"
"Worthy" - to balance the scales; the godless world will measure up to such a judgment.

V. 7
"I heard another <u>out of the altar</u>" - a reference to the martyrs themselves (Rev. 6:9 - "Souls under the altar"). Those martyred echo back a confirming reply: "Even so" - or Yes it is exactly as the Angel said - "You are right to do what you do."

God's penal judgments are <u>true</u> (God, unlike our present court system, does not condemn any innocent person).

God's penal judgments are <u>righteous</u> (for God to judge unrighteously would be for God to commit sin - an impossibility)(SEE: Rev. 19:1-2, 11)

IV. Bowl # 4 - Great Burning (v. 8-9)

V. 8

Psalm 121:6 says, *"The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night."* This verse is perplexing (since the moon never smote anyone with any injury). However, when compared with Isaiah 30:26 it makes sense. Isaiah 30:26 foretells how the moon will be as the sun and the sun will shine 7 times more intensely.

Throughout history, God has restrained the sun from such an intense scorching flame. He has kept the earth far enough away from the sun that the earth does not melt, and close enough that the earth does not completely freeze.

One day, however, God will evidently either move the earth somewhat closer to the sun, or He will supernaturally turn the sun's thermometer up 7 times hotter so that the scorching heat becomes unbearable.

"Scorch" = to intensely burn. No mere sunburn, but a scorching foretaste of the "lake of fire."

V. 9

"Power over these plagues"

"Power" = authority (Christ has this authority - Mt. 28-19).

All God has to do is say the word and the Angel would withdraw his bowl.

There will be no agnostics or atheists when God interrupts the present course of nature.

The ungodly will know that such torments are not mere coincidence or natural catastrophes, but that God is behind it.

However, despite such judgment, rather than asking God for relief from the scorching heat, men will blaspheme His name (v. 9) and His person (v. 11).

Three times in chapter 16 men choose to blaspheme God because of the plagues, rather than repent (v. 9, 11, 21).

V. Bowl # 5 - Great Darkness (v. 10-11)

V. 10

"The seat of the Beast" = the throne of the Antichrist.

This bowl is aimed specifically at the Antichrist and his kingdom.

"Darkness" = cp. the darkness that swept across Egypt for 3 days during the ninth plague (Ex. 10:21-29).

It was described as "darkness which may be felt" (v. 21) (an eerie, pitch-black darkness).

"They gnawed their tongues for pain" - indicative of the intensity of the pain felt. When pain becomes unbearable, in an attempt to brace themselves, man automatically grinds his teeth together.

This is why in the old days, before anaesthesia, when someone would perform surgery, they would have the patient "bite a bullet" - so as not to bite his tongue or grown his teeth down to nothing during the operation.

Such gnawing of the tongue is merely a foretaste of the eternal torments of hell and the lake of fire, which will be places characterized by "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 24:51, 25:30).

* The darkness actually intensifies their pains as their senses are now more keenly focused on their agony.

Since they will see nothing with their eyes, there will be less distractions to take their minds off of their pains.

As a blind man has a keener sense of touch, due to his not being able to see, so the Antichrist and his unbelieving followers will more keenly be aware of the misery they feel.

Even the "great" Antichrist--the self-proclaimed (II Th. 2:4) and world-acclaimed (Rev. 13:4, 12) "god" will suffer as a mere mortal, since this is all he is.

"Blasphemed the God of heaven" - they will recognize that God is the source of such judgment. Blasphemy often occurs among the ungodly when pain strikes. EX: People take His name in vain and use fool language when undergoing pain.

V. 11

"Repented not" - repentance will be impossible for those who worship Antichrist (cp.Rev.14:9-11).

VI. Bowl # 6 - Great Battle (v. 12-16)

V. 12

The drying up of the Euphrates (Is. 11:15) will allow tanks, artillery, and soldiers to enter Palestine from the eastern world.

"The kings of the east" lit. "the kings of the rising of the sun" (the great armies of the Orient")

Japan today is called the "Land of the rising sun."

V. 13

"Like frogs" - the false lies will leap forth from the lips of the Satanic trinity.

1)	The dragon...	=	1)	Satan
2)	The Beast...	=	2)	Antichrist
3)	False Prophet	=	3)	religious promoter of the Antichrist

Satan's trinity - Satan, who always wanted to be like God (Is. 14:14) will duplicate in corrupt fashion the Trinity. [Cp. 13:4, 19:20, 20:2, 10]

V. 14

"Working miracles" = doing signs. Beware of lying wonders (SEE: II Thes. 2:9-12). Test the spirits today (I Jn. 4:1).

"To gather them" - This gathering will evidently occur <u>prior to</u> the Bowls, since the Bowls will prevent anyone from doing much of anything, except worrying about their intense agony. The world, no doubt instigated by Satan, will equate the plagues of God with God's people, the Jews. Since they cannot strike out against God Himself, they will against God's people. One final attempt to destroy the Jew will be made. [SEE Zechariah 12:3-4; 14:1-5, 12]

V. 15

An interjected admonition to be ready for the Rapture so as to not face the Bowl judgments.

Christ's coming as a thief is a reference to His coming for judgment (Rev. 20:11-16). He will come for His saints and then come down for Armageddon. Christ will return "from the wedding" (Luke 12:36). This wedding (Rev. 19:7) occurs before Christ's return to rescue Israel and fight her battle (19:11-21).

V. 16

"He gathered them" - a reference to <u>God</u>.

Cp. v. 14 - "Spirits of devils...to gather them."

The point is: God will allow demons to accomplish His purpose.

VII. Bowl # 7 - Great Earthquake & Hailstorm (v. 17-21)

V. 18

"A great earthquake" = SEE Rev. 6:12

v. 19

"The great city" - evidently Jerusalem (Rev. 11:8 - Jerusalem is called "great")

"and great Babylon" - <u>religious</u> (Rev. 17) and <u>commercial</u> Babylon (Rev. 18).

V. 20

When an island sinks, a tremendous tidal wave occurs as the water seeks to level itself, to fill the space of the missing body of land.

V. 21

"Talent" - anywhere from 60 lbs to over 100 lbs.

The out-pouring of God's bowl judgments teach us truth about God and man:

A. The Truth About

1. God <u>hates</u> and must punish sin (v. 1)

"The wrath of God" - "Wrath" = the intensely hot fury of God; the explosive anger of God. God hates sin, as evident by His anger toward it.

2. God is <u>right</u> to punish sin (v. 5-7)

Gal. 6:7 - "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." God would not give the world such a judgment if it were not worthy of it.

God's Law of Retribution:
--Deut. 19:21 - *"And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."* This law was applied under the O.T. theocracy - Mt. 5:38.
--Prov. 26:27 - *"Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein; and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him."* (cp. Prov. 28:10; Eccles. 10:8)
--EX: Haman's gallows (Esther)

3. God <u>never</u> <u>forgets</u> to punish sin (v. 19)

B. The Truth About

"<u>They repented not to give Him glory</u>." This phrase shows:

1. Man has a stubborn, proud, hard-hearted nature (v. 9)

Some people would rather get burned than to admit the error of their way. Men would rather suffer and take God's name in vain, than to repent of sin.
They refuse to repent because such repentance would give God glory -- and God's glory is the last thing unsaved people want to be part of.
Whereas God's people want God to be glorified (I Cor. 10:31; Rev. 5:13), the lost do not want Him to be glorified (EX: Herod, Acts 12:23).

2. Man's repentance brings glory to God (v. 9b)

Whenever someone repents of sin, God is glorified.
How does repentance give God glory?
1) When someone repents, they are admitting: "God, you were right, I was wrong."
2) When someone repents, they are humbling themselves and elevating the holiness of God.
Every time you repent, you are glorifying God.
For a Christian to repent of wrong words, thoughts, motives, and deeds is not a shame. Rather, it would glorify God. It is a shame NOT to repent.
To not repent is to refuse to glorify God.

"THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS"
(Satan's Religious System)
Revelation 17:1-18

INTRODUCTION: Who is the "Mother of Harlots?" (v. 5)

A warning to beware of "wolves in sheeps' clothing" and of Satan's ministers appearing as "ministers of righteousness" (II Cor. 11:13-15). Chapters 17 & 18 are not a continuation of Revelation 16 as far as the chronological development of the book is concerned, but are rather an amplification of what is going to take place in the final great judgment of God on earth (Epp, p. 281).

Evidence that "Mystery Babylon" in Rev. 17 is a RELIGIOUS SYSTEM:

1) She is called a "whore" (v. 1) and a "harlot" (v. 5).
2) In the O.T. and in prophetic language, the analogy of a whore or prostitute denoted religious apostasy. EX: religious apostasy of Israel in O.T. - Ezek. 16:6-8, 15, 25-32, 35-38, 40-42 (cp. Jer. 3:1, 6, 8; the book of Hosea) *SEE: Rev. 2:20-24 - "Jezebel's" doctrine and fornication

The theme of Rev. 17 involves the judgment of Mystery Babylon.

The reference to "mystery" (17:5, 7) indicates that the Babylon in view was not the same Babylon known in the O.T. but was a system and a city hidden from man's understanding, but now is being revealed.

NOTE:	*Rev. 17* -	*The system of mystery Babylon*	
	Rev. 18 -	The city of mystery Babylon	
	Rev. 17 -	*A religious system*	*(ecclesiastical Babylon)*
	Rev. 18 -	An economic system	(commercial and political Babylon)

The distinction between the Babylons is implied by the phrase "after these things" (18:1).

Evidence that "Mystery Babylon" in Rev. 17 is a reference to ROME:

1) Some view the reference to the woman sitting on "seven mountains" (v. 9) as evidence that John is speaking about Rome, which is called the City that sits on "7 hills."
2) The most conclusive evidence is verse 18, where John is told that the woman represents that "***great city which reigneth*** (*present tense*, during the time of John) *over the kings of the earth*." --This only refers to **Rome**. NOTE: The Roman Empire was the fourth and final in Daniel's visions - Dan. 2:40-45; 7:19-28; 8:21-25.
3) Many other evidences are given throughout the context of chapter 17 that this harlot actually describes the Roman Catholic system. These proofs will be unfolded in the points to follow.
4) According to Catholicism, the name "Babylon was a synonym for Rome" (RCC, St. Joseph Edition of the Bible, "Confraternity version" Catholic Book Publishing Co. NY, p.274)

There is evidence that mystery Babylon in Rev. 17 will be the ROMAN CATHOLIC Institution.

Because Satan had failed to stop Christianity (via the persecution of the Caesars), he figured he would set up a phony "christian" church and deceive the world into thinking it was real Christianity.

1) Rome's (RCC's) parallels with the ancient Babylon mystery religion:
   a) **Mary worship** is traced back to ancient Babylon's worship of Semiramis.
   b) **Saint worship** stems back to Babylonian worship of gods and goddesses who "had at one time been living heroes on earth, but were now on a higher plane" (p. 31).
   c) The **mitre** (shaped like a fish head with its jaw's head) worn on the head of the pope came from the Babylonian fish god named "Dagon" (p. 84-85).
   d) The idea of **confessing sins to a priest** does not come from the Bible, but from Babylon (as a matter of fact, the only evidences about the Babylonian concepts of right and wrong come from recorded confessions) (p.120).
   e) The springtime observance of **"Lent"** (and the 40-day sacred Lenten fast) comes from ancient Babylon. Tammuz supposedly died and was resurrected in the spring because of the weeping of his wife Ishtar ("Easter"). Hislop points out that forty days--a day for each year Tammuz had lived on earth--were set aside to "weep for Tammuz" (Ezek. 8:14). In olden times these forty days were observed with weeping, fasting, and self-chastisement" (p. 147).
2) No other religious system has two powers, both political and religious (the Catholic Church and the Mother of Harlots is both -v. 2).
3) No other religious system in the world officially calls itself "Mother" (The RCC and the Harlot are called "Mother" - v. 5).
4) Men such as Wycliffe, Calvin, Wesley, Finney, Moody, Spurgeon, etc., believed that the RCC is the Mother of Harlots.

Beware of the marks of an apostate religion:

I. Satan's Religious System is WORLD-WIDE (v. 1, 15)

(Ecumenical)

V. 1

"Sitteth upon many waters" (v. 1) - Cp. v. 15 for God's interpretation.

> ***"Peoples' and multitudes, and nations, and tongues"*** - words describing the world-wide influence of mystery Babylon.

Just as O.T. Babel was man's attempt at world unity (Gen. 11:1-4), so will mystery Babylon be.

The word *"catholic"* means "universal" and describes the world-wide quest of this denomination.

A one-world church is the desire of Satan. Among his main tools at present are the Pope of Rome and the World Council of Churches.

Satan's religious system in Rev. 17 is called the ***"mother of Harlots"*** because from her were born all other pagan, pseudo Christian religions; and to her were related all other false forms of Christianity.

In the last days, many professing (but not possessing) the faith will depart from it and will be deluded into following Romanish doctrine (SEE: I Tim. 4:1-3).

> The unity of the Spirit of God (Eph. 4:3) binds true believers together.
>
> The world, however, does not have such unity; so the present-day ecumenical movement is man's attempt at man-made unity.

Biblical unity only comes from God (Jn. 17:21, 22) (not some Pope).

Biblical unity is only produced via the Spirit (Eph. 4:3) (not some ecclesiastical system).

Biblical unity is only protected via peace (Eph. 4:3) (true unity cannot be forced via oppression).

Biblical unity is only based on God's truth (Eph. 4:4-5) (not "pseudo love").

> God does not measure the greatness of a church by its size or popularity but by its fidelity to the truth (I Tim. 3:15) [According to Jesus, large size is indicative of falsehood - Mt.7:13]

II. Satan's Religious System is POLITICAL (v. 2-3, 8-14)

SEE Columbia, June 1990 - "Pope plays key role on world stage." Pope is called a "world leader."

A. She enters into union with the world's kings (v. 2)

The whore has an unholy alliance with the nations (rulers) of the world.

The Roman Catholic Church was the catalyst for starting the European Economic Community (a formation of a common market to have a one-world economy).

The first meeting of the EEC was called at the invitation of the RCC and held at the Vatican (Zion's Fire, Jan. 1990, p. 5).

B. She will use the Beast (Satan's political system and man) to accomplish her goal of world domination (v. 3, 8-14).

V. 3

"A woman sit" - The Harlot's power is so great the Beast allows her to ride him (as in the past, so in the future).

The Harlot will use the Beast to gain world-wide status as the state religion.

As such, the apostate church will receive financial and political help as well as military protection (cp. Epp, p. 305).

Baptists, historically, have believed in the separation of church and state [i.e. a state-run church]

"Scarlet-coloured Beast" - so called because of its identification with the red dragon, Satan (Rev. 12:3), which opposed Israel via the 7 kingdoms represented by the 7 heads.
NOTE: Satan is described as having seven heads and ten horns (12:3).

"Full of names of blasphemy" - SEE Satan's system with the identical description (Rev. 13:1).
"Blasphemy" - points to each kingdom's claim of divine, total authoritative power and rule over Israel and the world. . . when only God reigns over all!
"Seven heads and ten horns" (same description in Rev. 13:1).

"Seven heads" =	7 world powers
"ten horns" =	10-fold confederacy of nations in the Last Days to be destroyed by Christ (Rev. 17:14; Dan. 2:40-44 - *"feet"* with ten toes smashed by Christ at His second coming).

V. 8
A clear reference to the Antichrist, who will be wounded unto death, but will be resurrected at the mid-point of the Trib. (Rev. 13:3-4).
V. 9
"Seven mountains" - In prophetic language, a mountain is descriptive of a world power or kingdom. (SEE Dan. 2:35; Jer. 51:25; cp. Is. 2:2, 41:15; Hab. 3:6; Ps. 68:15, 16).
These seven mountains describe 7 successive world powers.
[1) Egypt; 2) Assyria; 3) Babylon; 4) Medo-persia; 5) Greece; 6) Rome; 7) Revived Rome]

V. 10
"And there are seven kings" - the word "there" is not in the Greek. God is identifying the seven mountains (v. 9) with seven kings (or kingdoms) (v. 10).
"Seven kings" = seven kingdoms (each king represented a kingdom - Example: Dan. 2:37-39).

"Five are fallen"	1.	Egypt
	2.	Assyria
	3.	Babylon
	4.	Medo-Persia
	5.	Greece
"One is"	6.	Rome (the world power in John's day)
"The other is yet to be".	7.	The revived Roman Empire, personified by the Antichrist.

V. 11
The Antichrist is ***"of the seven"*** (from the seven), since he is identified with and comes from the revived Roman empire, but he is called the eighth because he will be reigning with the seventh kingdom, be killed, and then rise again to (in a sense) be the ***"eighth"***.

III. Satan's Religious System is WEALTHY (v. 4a)

"***Purple and scarlet*** are the colors of Roman imperialism and of the RCC. Her riches are almost indescribable." (Epp, p. 306).
Because of the Catholic system's tremendous wealth, the Vatican can sway the economy of the world.
God does not measure the greatness of a church by its material wealth (Rev. 3:17), but by its spiritual riches (Rev. 2:9 - like the church at Smyrna).

IV. Satan's Religious System is WICKED (v. 4b-5)

"Golden cup" - Jer. 51:7 - "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad." A cup full of idolatry and lies (is indicative of a false gospel - works religion with externals but nothing real inside).

Many Doctrinal errors & heresies abound in Roman Catholicism.

The contents of which cup deceived the world (got the world spiritually drunk and ***"mad"***).

V. Satan's Religious System is a MURDERER (v. 6)

"I wondered with great admiration" - lit. "I was amazed with great amazement."

Why was John so shocked to see what he saw? ANSWER: Because he saw a religious system that professed to know Christ, murder those who belong to Christ.

In the Middle Ages (Dark Ages) the Roman Catholic Inquisition persecuted and martyred multitudes who rose up in protest against the Catholic system.

"Many were those noble souls who rejected the false claims of the Pope, looking instead to the Lord Jesus for salvation and truth. These were called "heretics" and were bitterly persecuted by the RCC" (Woodrow, p. 105).

A few documented examples of RCC persecutions:

1. "Ad Extrpanda" issue by Pope Innocent IV in 1252. This document stated that heretics were to be "crushed like venomous snakes." It formally approved the use of torture." (Woodrow, p. 105).
2. Inquisitions in the Netherlands - 21 Protestants hung on a tree (Woodrow, p. 107).
3. At Lavaur in 1211 - 100,000 Albigenses (protestants) were killed and burned (p. 108).
4. 10,000 Huguenots were killed in the bloody massacre in Paris on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572 (p. 108).

   (SEE Babylon Mystery Religion, Woodrow, p. 105-109).

   Cp. the martyr's cry (Rev. 6:10).

VI. Satan's Religious System will be JUDGED (v. 16-17)

Evidently, Babylon's religious system is destroyed at the end of the first 3 1/2 years (when Antichrist receives full power), whereas the city of Babylon is not destroyed until at the end of the second 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation.

Rev. 17 - The "Harlot" (Babylonian religious system) is destroyed by 10 kings (v. 16).

Rev. 18 - The literal city called "Babylon the Great" is destroyed directly by God (18:20).

V. 16

The words ***"desolate...naked...eat...burn"*** all show the completeness of her annihilation (Ryrie, p. 104).

Satan's false ministers will come to an end that shall be "according to their works" (II Cor. 11:15).

V. 17

Rather than a system being the object of worship, Satan ultimately wants his "man" to be the object of worship.

God, in fulfilling His plan (and prophetic word) will allow the 10 kings (10-fold confederacy of nations) to destroy the Harlot (the Roman Catholic eccumenical system) and give all authority to the Antichrist.

"God hath put in their hearts" - God is sovereign! (cp. Prov. 21:1). God is in ultimate control! He will perform His will (desired and ordained plan).

CONCLUSION: **What is our response to the false Roman Catholic system today?**

1) Beware of her deception
2) Come out of her - Rev. 18:4; II Cor. 6 (ecumenical evangelism is wrong).
3) Pray for those who are in Satan's false system (they are in bondage, deceived ["drunk"]

"SATAN'S MATERIALISTIC CITY" (Part 1)
Revelation 18:1-8

Two things blind people and bind people:
1) False Religion
2) Materialism (money)

God shows the outcome of both in sequential order in Revelation 17 & 18!

* Whereas Revelation 17 describes God's destruction of Satan's religious system (a "Mystery Babylon" system that began at Babel), Rev. 18 unfolds God's destruction of Satan's materialistic system.
* Whereas God used the 10 kings (pictured by the "10 horns" - 17:16) to destroy religious mystery Babylon (17:16-17), God will Himself destroy commercial (materialistic) Babylon; and the kings of the earth shall weep and mourn her destruction (18:8-9).
* This fact is strong proof that the woman identified as "Mystery Babylon" in Rev. 17 is a different aspect of the Babylonian system.
* It is important to note, that while the 10 kings destroy the "harlot religious system" (17:16-17), they mourn and weep when "Materialistic Babylon" crumbles (18:9).
* The fall of the "harlot religious system" (Rev. 17) occurs near the middle of the Tribulation (when all worship and world-control is given to the Antichrist - II Thes. 2:4; Rev. 17:13, 17).
* In contrast, the fall of "Satan's commercial Babylon" occurs near the end of the Tribulation in "the Day of the Lord"; just prior to Armageddon (Rev. 19:17-21).

A Practical Key Truth --
***** God's destruction of "materialistic Babylon" should teach us NOT to LAY UP for ourselves "TREASURES on earth"! (Mt.6:19)**

I. God's ANNOUNCEMENT of the FALL of materialistic Babylon (v. 1-3)

V. 1

"After these things" - this phrase may indicate a slight transition both in time and subject matter.

The Angel described is evidently the same angel that John spoke of earlier (10:1-3). That angel bearing a similar description announced the future "mystery" of God being finished (10:7), and now the same Angel is declaring the fulfillment of God's destruction of "mystery Babylon."

V. 2

The words ***"great"*** and ***"fallen"*** indicate the height from which Babylon will be thrown down.

In the eyes of the world this Satanic system seemed impeccable and insurmountable, but God will alone be shown to be "great" in the end. *("The bigger they are, the harder they fall")*

It is possible that the reference to "Babylon" is to a literal city that will be rebuilt, where O.T. Babylon existed:

*****Proofs for a literal city:

1. Babylon is called a literal "city" ("great city" - 18:10, 18)
2. Babylon is described as a literal city
   a. She is a hub for commerce (trade) (18:11, 15)
   b. The detailed list of merchandise (18:12-13) points to a literal city.
   c. The ships and sailors will be able to stand "afar off" and see the burning of the city (18:15, 17-19)
   d. She is described as a place of business and industry (v. 22)

*****Possible proofs for a rebuilt city of Babylon:

1. O.T. Babylon was never literally destroyed the way God said Babylon would be
   (Jer. 51:63; Rev. 18:21 - when O.T. Babylon fell, the city was not destroyed by the Medes and Persians, but taken over - Dan. 5:30-6:1).
2. O.T. Babylon was inhabited; however, God said when Babylon was destroyed it would never be inhabited again (Is. 13:19-22; Jer. 51:24-26, 61-64)

3. The destruction of Babylon was to happen in "the Day of the Lord" (Is. 13:6, 9-11) prior to Israel's millennial rest (Is. 14:1-6)
4. The stones of destroyed Babylon will not be able to be reused which has not been the case of the ruins of historical Babylon (Jer. 51:26, 64; Rev. 18:21)
5. The Israelites according to prophecy were told to flee out of Babylon before its destruction, but no time historically has Israel ("My people") fled out of Babylon (Jer. 51:45; Rev. 18:4)
6. The location of O.T. Babylon is a prime location for a rebuilt city.
   The city, located just north of the Persian gulf, is situated in the midst of the main source for the world's oil supply.
   Everything will be in favor of the rapid growth of Babylon. It holds a unique position on the face of the earth, and is the most suitable position which a world empire, such as the Antichrist's, could choose for his seat of government . . . the land around the site is immensely fertile and with proper irrigation and cultivation will be capable of supporting a high population (Marr Murray, Bible Prophecies and the Plain Man, London: Hadder and Sloughton, 1915, p. 272).

*****Possible proofs for the USA's NYC being Babylon:

1. Several New World order globalist organizations exist in NYC whose primary purpose is global unity. These new world order organizations include:

   a. The Council on Foreign Relations
   (The CFR includes "most of the top leaders in government, business, education, labor, the military, the media, and banking…(this) most powerful clique in these elitist groups have one objective in common—they want to bring about the surrender of the sovereignty and the national independence of the United States" Former CFR member Rear Admiral Chester Ward, cited by Gary H. Kah, En Route to Global Occupation, p. 32)

   The CFR wants to bring about…
   a world banking monopoly
   a new international order [which] may be responsible to world aspirations for peace [and] for social and economic change
   On February 17, 1950, CFR member James Warburg, testifying before he Senate Foreign Relations Committee, stated, "We shall have world government whether or not you like it—by conquest or consent."
   (Kah, p.33)

   b. The United Nations
   A modern day "Tower of Babel" founded in 1945 in NYC and situated on land "graciously" donated by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (American soil which was given over to an international cause), the UN is totally devoted to the concept of achieving a new system of world government.

   c. The Trilateral Commission
   An organization dedicated to the new world order is composed of leaders from the world's three economic superpowers-North America, Western Europe, and Japan. Hence, the term "trilateral." (Kah, p.46)

2. NYC is most obviously the financial capital of the world (with the power of wall street and the NY stock exchange)
   The city described in Revelation 18 is noted for it's wealth

3. NYC is the major trading city in the world (with the world trade towers looming over south Manhattan)
   The city described in Revelation 18 is noted for it's trade with other nations (Rev.18:3,15)

4. NYC fits the description of a city lavished with wealth (both in money and material goods) (Rev.18:16)

5. NYC is a city which when destroyed by God, can be seen from the ocean waters as Revelation 18:17-19 indicates.

V. 2

The words ***"habitation"*** and ***"hold"*** indicate that materialistic Babylon will be a prison house for demons and every unclean (impure) spirit.
In other words, Babylon along with Satan and his cohorts (demons) will sink together into hell (SEE: Isaiah 14:4-23).

V. 3

"For all nations" (v. 3)...***"The kings of the earth . . ."*** (v. 9)
The fact that the world's rulers had part in Babylon's material goods is indicative of the Common Market that will exist in the last days.
[Today, in 1995, with the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the unification of Europe, and the development of the E.E.C. (The European Common Market, we see trade opening up, a one world economy in the making, and the prospective fulfillment of Rev. 18 around the corner!]

II. God's WARNING to FLEE materialistic Babylon (v. 4)

God's command is always ***"come out"*** of the world's system and be different! (Rom. 12:2; II Cor. 6:14-17; I Jn. 2:15-17).

God gives 2 reasons in Rev. 18:4 as to why we should "come out." --

1) Those who don't come out share in the guilt
   "That ye be not partakers (co-sharers; joint participants) ***in her sins"***
   Even though you may not be directly involved in corruption - if you are associated with it, God holds you accountable.
2) Those who don't come out will share the penalty (judgment)
   "That ye receive not of her plagues"

God's appeal to flee out of "Babylon" prior to judgment is reminiscent of Lot's fleeing from Sodom before its destruction (Gen. 19:12-17).

III. God's REASONS for JUDGING materialistic Babylon (v. 5-8)

V. 5

God never forgets about man's sin.
Payday someday!
(the only forgotten sin is the forgiven sin)

V. 6

"Reward" - the angel calls on God to "give back" to her as she gave to others.
"Whatever is sown will be reaped" (Gal. 6:7).

"Double unto her" - the appeal is to go a step above causing her to reap to the same extent as she sowed. But to give her 2 times the judgment her works earned.
In other words, "Spare the mercy and unload a double whammy!"

"The cup" - no doubt the same cup filled with abominations and filthiness described in 17:4.

V. 7
Pride is often associated with material wealth. Such self-security and independence will not last forever! Don't ever glorify yourself. God hates such arrogancy.

Four truths can be learned about pride:

1) Pride comes from the heart - ***"She saith in her heart"*** (Mark. 7:21, 22)

2) Pride boasts of position - ***"I sit a queen"*** (I am high, lofty, above all).

3) Pride boasts of provision - ***"I ...am no widow"***
A widow is someone left all alone, with no husband; hence, this "harlot system" had all the "men" and income she needed.
She thought, I will never be abandoned by my lovers nor forsaken by those who provide for me."

4) Pride boasts of preservation or protection - ***"I...shall see not sorrow."***
Pride gives one a false sense of security for the future. She says, "Nothing will ever change for me."

V. 8
Just like O.T. Babylon was proud and judged for it, so will eschatalogical Babylon be (SEE: Jeremiah 50:29-34).

"...In one day" - the destruction of material Babylon will not be a process, but she will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorreh in one day (Is. 13:19ff).
In one day, Material Babylon will be stripped of those things she boasted in (namely, life, happiness, and food).
"Death" - corresponds to "I am no widow" (v. 7)
"Mourning" - corresponds to "shall see no sorrow"
"Famine" - corresponds to "lived deliciously"

"Burned with fire" - when God judged the earth the first time, it was with water (the flood); when God judges the second time, it will be by fire.
[SEE II Peter 3:10-13 - When we realize what is in store for this world, it will change:

1. Our present lifestyles ("holy conversation" - v. 11) and
2. Our morals ("godliness" as opposed to worldliness) and
3. Our plans for the future (planning our future with eternity in mind [v. 12-13]).

"SATAN'S MATERIALISTIC CITY" (Part 2)
Revelation 18:9-24

Much anguish (emotional torment) is caused by lost wealth in this world.
A point of emphasis in verses 9-24 is that of the misery (suffering, agony, grief, heartache, regret, and torment) caused by lost (destroyed) wealth.

V. 9 - ***"Bewail"*** = to cry with tears or other expressions of grief.
"Lament" = to beat or smite oneself as an expression of sorrow (EX: "Beating the breast" - Mk. 11:8
V. 11 - ***"Mourn"*** - to mourn for the dead
V. 15 - ***"Weeping and wailing"***
v. 18 - ***"Cried"*** - to cry out loud.. to scream
V. 19 - ***"Cast dust"*** a sign of mourning ("cried, weeping and wailing - present tense, showing continual weeping)

A Practical Key Truth -- * God's destruction of "materialistic Babylon" should warn us NOT to "TRUST in uncertain riches" (I Tim. 6:17).**

I. Babylon's materialistic splendor shall vanish VIOLENTLY (v. 9-10, 21)

("...smoke...torment...judgment...")

V. 9

"The kings of the earth" = apparently including the same kings illustrated by the ten horns (17:12-16, 17).

Whereas the 10 kings of the earth destroy the false religious Babylon (Rev. 17); they now weep and wail when economic Babylon is destroyed by God.

"Committed fornication and lived deliciously with her" - whereas the harlot religion in Rev. 17 used the 10 kings (involved in the Beast system), now the kings are described as having used the harlot city.

V. 10

"Standing afar off" - because of the fear of the torment of burning Babylon, no one will dare get close. The world's greatness and might is only temporary

II. Babylon's materialistic splendor shall vanish TOTALLY (v. 11-14)

("No man buyeth their merchandise any more...v. 11;
"Thou shalt find them no more at all" v. 14)

V. 11

"Merchants" - those who bought from Babylon and resold items elsewhere around the world.

"Merchandise" - cargo; those goods which are loaded on ships and exported.

V. 12

Everything from ***"gold"*** (the most precious of metals) to the ***"souls of men"*** (the most precious of God's creation) were the acquisitions of Babylon.

V. 12-13
NOTE: The spectrum of goods to be stripped from the lustful clutches of materialistic Babylon:

1. Ornamental materials (jewelry materials)
   ("gold...silver...pearls")

2. Clothing materials
   ("fine linen...silk...scarlet")

3. Building materials
   ("wood...brass...iron...marble")

4. Cosmetic materials
   ("cinnamon...odors...ointments...frankincense")

5. Food
   ("wine...oil...flour...wheat...beasts...sheep")

6. Transportation
   ("horses and chariots")

7. Labor
   ("slaves...souls of men")

V. 14
"Are departed from thee" - to go away; to pass away

"Dainty and goodly" -
"Dainty" = that which is expensive (an appeal to the palate - rich, dainty food)
"Goodly" = that which shines (an appeal to the eye)
"Thou shalt find them no more at all" -
God invites us to true, lasting abundance that will never fail (Isaiah 55:1-3).

III. Babylon's materialistic splendor shall vanish QUICKLY (v. 15-19)

("For in one hour so great riches is come to nought" v. 17;
"...For in one hour is she made desolate" v. 19)

V. 16
The attire of a harlot
(Ladies, your attire is described in I Peter 3:3-4)
V. 17
"...come to naught"
Riches are called "uncertain" (I Tim. 6:17) because they have a way of taking wings and flying away!
V. 18
The economic status of "Babylon" will be incomparable to any other city ever.
V. 19
"Desolate" - she who boasted "I am no widow..." (v. 7) is now stripped of everything she took security in. Beware of pride!

IV. Babylon's materialistic splendor shall vanish JUSTLY (v. 20, 23b-24)

("God hath avenged you on her" v. 20;
"in her was found the blood of prophets..." v. 24)

V. 20

The destruction of Babylon is a reason for rejoicing because God is repaying her for how she treated God's people.

Babylon is reaping for what she has sown (cp. 18:6; Gal. 6:7).

V. Babylon's materialistic splendor shall vanish PERMANENTLY (v. 22-23a)

("no more at all...no more at all...")

V. 22-23

NOTE: the spectrum of judgment:

1. No more entertainment (***"harpers..musicians..pipers..trumpeters"***)
2. No more employment (***"craftsman...millstone"***)
3. No more night life (***"the light of a candle"*** - depicts night life)
4. No more happiness (***"the voice of the bridegroom...bride"***)

Just as "Babylon's" wealth and prosperity will be destroyed never to be replaced, so those who die without Christ will lose all (Mk. 8:36), only to be desolate for ETERNITY! (Luke 16:19-26)

CONCLUSION:

SEE: I Timothy 6:6-11, 17-18

"PRAISE HIM"
("Allelujah")
Revelation 19:1-10

INTRODUCTION: The word ***"Alleluia"*** does not occur anywhere else in the entire N.T. [The word appears extensively in the O.T. - Psalms. (EX: 104-150 at the beginning or at the end of the Psalm; in Psalm 146 - 150 it appears at both the beginning and the end]
The word ***"Alleluia"*** is the key-note of Revelation 19:1-10 as it occurs 4 times (v. 1, 3, 4, 6)
"Alleluia" - means "Praise ye Jah" or "You praise Jehovah" (actually an imperative)
The greek word is a transliteration of the Hebrew
The Hebrew word "Hallelujah" ("Praise the Lord") means to praise God verbally (out loud - Ps. 149:1); to sing praise (Ezra 3:11) or to play instruments to praise Him (Psalm 150).

V. 5
Those appealed to to praise God are:
1. ***"All ye"***
2. ***"His Servants"***
3. ***"ye that fear Him"***
4. ***"both small and great"*** (all classes)

If you are a servant of God and if you fear Him, regardless of your status, you are to praise Him! (v. 5)
Note the wide spectrum of individuals who give God praise:

V. 1 - ***"Much people"***	(raptured saints)
V. 4 - ***"four and twenty elders"***	(privileged saints)
V. 4 - ***"four beasts"***	(living creatures)
V. 5 - ***"A voice"***	(singular)
V. 6 - ***"A voice of a great multitude"***	(evidently angels)

A Practical Key Truth -- * Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great.**

Three reasons to praise Him:

I. Praise Him for who He is (v. 1)

"*After these things"* - after the judgment of religious (Rev. 17), and materialistic (Rev. 18) Babylon. It is unusual to think of praise following judgment, but this is the case in Rev. 19. If you belong to Jesus Christ, you can already know what you will be saying in the future. Your words are described in v. 1-2.

"A great voice of much people" - this grand choir will include all who have been raptured and resurrected by Jesus Christ.

A. He is Savior

"Salvation . . . unto the Lord" -
This phrase means that salvation belongs to God. He is the sole source of it.
Jesus is salvation - Mt. 1:21; Acts 4:12.
A proof of the deity of Christ: If Jesus was not God, He could not be Savior because "Salvation [belongs] unto the Lord our God"!
Is. 43:11 - *"I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior"*

Jesus Christ is repeatedly called **"Savior"** in the Bible. Here are a few examples:

1. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior" (Lk. 2:11)
2. "Jesus is the Christ, the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20)
3. "He is the Savior of the Body" (Eph. 5:23)
4. "We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).
5. "Appearing of our great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13)
6. "The Holy Ghost has been shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:6)
7. "...the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:11)
8. "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (I Jn. 4:14).

B. He is Glory

"Glory" - has two ideas:

1. to be "heavy" - the Hebrew word has this meaning.
   II Cor. 4:17 - *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"*
   God is respectable! He is truly important.
2. To "shine" - Luke 2:9; Acts 22:11; Rom. 9:4; II Cor. 3:7; Ja. 2:1
   EX: Shekinah glory - Ex. 16:10; 25:22
   All attention belongs to God! All brilliance is His! The spotlight is to be on God!

C. He is Honor

"Honor" = that which has great value; God is honorable and He is the sole source of honor. Nothing is valuable outside of God allowing (or making) it to be so.

D. He is Power

"Power" - describes God's ability

II. Praise Him for what He does (v. 2-4)

The same words ***"true and righteous"*** are tied together in describing God's judgment in turning fresh water into blood (Rev. 16:7).

God is worthy of praise because:

A. What He does is according to truth

No one will be judged who is unworthy to be. God could never condemn an innocent person. He will not slip up (err) in judgment (EX: of O.T. priests who "stumbled in judgment" [Isaiah 28:7-8])

B. What He does is according to righteousness

1. Because God is righteous, His law of *"sowing and reaping"* is inescapable (v. 2) (cp. Gal. 6:7)
2. Because God is righteous, eternal torment is not unreasonable.

The reason why *"her smoke rose up for ever and ever"* is because her torment will last forever and ever in the lake of fire (SEE Rev. 14:11; Rev. 20:15, 21;8).

"Amen" = "Truly"; "So be it"; "it is true" The four living creatures agree with the statements made previously.

III. Praise Him for <u>what He will do</u> (v. 6-10)

A. Hallelujah for the <u>kingdom to come</u> (v. 6)

"Omnipotent" - all powerful

"Reigneth" - It is Jesus Christ who will rule and reign (Rev. 20:4, 6).

No longer will Antichrist reign.
No longer will injustice rule
No longer will sin prevail.
No longer will the curse be found.

The coming kingdom should be that which we desire so intently that it's a prayer request (Mt. 6:10).

B. Hallelujah for the <u>wedding to come</u> (v. 7-10)

"Give honor to Him" - just as the Father of a groom was honored along with the groom at a Jewish wedding, so will God the Father and the Son be honored at the wedding to come.

Basic teachings of the metaphor - the "Bride of Christ":

1)	Election:	The Father chose a Bride for His Son (Jn. 6:37,39,44, 65).
2)	Engagement:	The downpayment of the Holy Spirit has been given to all believers with a promise of Christ's return to receive His purchased possession (Eph. 1:13-14).
3)	Rapture:	The Son is coming back to receive only His Bride unto Himself (Mt. 25:1-13).
4)	Wedding:	Eternity with Christ (Rev. 19:7-9, 21:9).

"His wife hath made herself ready" = she has beautified herself (with righteous living while on earth).

This verse is not talking about "working" to gain a relationship with the Groom; but working to look pleasing to the Groom.

The marriage of the Lamb (and the "marriage supper") occur chronologically <u>before</u> Christ's second coming to the earth for Armageddon since the Saints' clothed in "fine linen, clean and white" fits the exact description of those who return with Christ (v. 14).

"Clean" = her <u>purity</u> (II Cor. 11:2 - *"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.").*

"White" = her <u>brightness</u>

"For fine linen is the righteousness of saints" - throughout eternity we will wear a garment that will reflect the righteous deeds that we did while we lived on earth.

"Righteousness" = lit. righteous acts or deeds.

"The good works of believers will <u>constitute the wedding garment</u> when the congregation of the faithful are joined to Him in marriage" (Ryrie Study Bible).

Beware of how you live because you are sewing a wedding dress by everything you do.

Our good works do not save us, but do determine rewards to be received in heaven

(I Cor. 3) (Even a cup of cold water in the name of Jesus will be rewarded).

V. 9

"Blessed (happy) are they who are called (invited) unto the marriage supper of the Lamb (Jesus Christ)"

They are blessed, truly blessed, in contrast to those who will be the victims of a supper at Armageddon (Rev. 19:17).

V. 10

John falls down in front of someone in heaven. Who is it?

Probably one of the twenty-four elders (cp. 5:5). Some say an "angel"; however, the evidence seems to favor a "redeemed saint"

Proof:

1. ***"I am thy fellowservant"*** = "a slave together with you"
2. ***"Of thy brethren"*** = shows relationship
3. ***"Have the testimony of Jesus"*** = I hold the same testimony as you; I like you, am a witness of what Jesus did for me.

To worship anyone or anything other than God is idolatry and a violation of the first and second commandment (Ex. 20).

NOTE: Jesus, however, accepts worship -

Ps. 2:8, 12; Mt. 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 28:9, 17; Jn. 9:35, 38; 20:28 & 29; Lk. 24:51-52.

Even by angels - Heb. 1:6

And by all men - Phil. 2:10

"THE WARRIOR ON THE WHITE HORSE"
Revelation 19:11-21

INTRODUCTION: Most people today have a lopsided, distorted, unbalanced view of Jesus Christ. They only see one side of His character: his humility, gentleness, meekness, love, sacrifice, etc., as the "Lamb of God" in His first coming.

Jesus came the first time to cleanse . . .
He will come the second time to conquer

Jesus came the first time to save . . .
He will come the second time to condemn

Jesus came the first time as a sacrifice . . .
He will come the second time as a warrior

Jesus came the first time in subjection to Caesar. . .
He will come the second time to rule and reign

Jesus came the first time as a Lamb (silent - Acts 8:32; and obedient unto death);
However, He comes the second time as a Lion.

Isaiah 31:4 describes the Lord Jesus coming back to fight for Mount Zion, like a Lion. A multitude will come out to fight Him, like a group of shepherds fighting against one Lion.
Is. 31:4 - *"For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof."*

Interestingly, the context of Rev. 19:11-21 does not specifically name the warrior as Jesus Christ. However, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, He can be no other!
It is typical of the book of Revelation to use pictures, descriptions and titles of Christ (EX: Lamb, Son of man, etc.) rather than plainly stating His name "Jesus."
Such references hide Christ's identity from those who refuse to believe, and unveils it to those who are saved and know God's Word.

NOTE: The theme of Rev. 19:11-21 involves judgment (specifically, the Battle of Armageddon).

In unfolding this theme, several names of the Judge--Jesus Christ, are revealed in connection with His acts of judgment:

1. ***"Faithful and True"*** (v. 11)
2. ***"A name written which no man knew"*** (v. 12)
3. ***"The Word of God"*** (v. 13)
4. ***"King of Kings and Lord of Lords"*** (v. 16)

We can learn about the "other side" of Jesus Christ by seeing the significance of His names in this context of judgment.

A Practical Key Truth -- * We need to see "the other side of Jesus" - when He comes a second time for judgment.**

I. The Warrior on the White Horse Will Conquer with JUSTICE (v. 11-12)

(His Name is: "FAITHFUL AND TRUE")

V. 11

"Heaven opened" = the Judge, Jesus Christ, who has been standing in front of the door [James 5:9 - *"the judge standeth before the door"*] is now about to return to earth.

"A white horse" - not to be confused with the rider on the white horse in Rev. 6:2. The Antichrist depicted in 6:2, being a counterfeit for Christ, also will ride a white horse.

"Faithful" - Jesus does what He says He will do.

"True"- Jesus is Truth (Jn. 14:6). Pilot in questioning Jesus by saying "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:38) did not realize he was standing in the presence of Truth.

All truth must be tested by a standard, and there is no standard beyond Jesus Christ. He is the perfect and ultimate source and standard of truth.

It is said of Jesus that He was "full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14); "grace and truth came by jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17). "The truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21). Jesus is so true, He is called "the Amen, the faithful and true witness" (Rev. 3:14).

"He doth judge" - Jesus is the only Judge (Jn. 5:22 - "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" - cp. Ps. 2:12, 50:4-6; Acts 10:42; Rom. 2:16).

"In righteousness He doth judge and make war" - Jesus being as His name describes "Faithful and true", is perfectly just (right) in how He judges and whom He judges.

Much judgment (EX: Supreme Court) has not been according to righteousness; most wars planned and fought by man have been based on greed not righteousness.

"Righteousness" is an extension of Christ's holiness. Righteousness is holiness in action - "transitive holiness." Jesus is called "the holy one and the just" (Acts 3:14). He is the "just one" (Acts 7:52, 22:14).

Some people say:

--"God is too loving to send anyone to hell"

. . . Such people forget that God is a God of justice

--"God would never destroy masses of humanity"

. . . Such people forget the flood (II Pet. 3:3-7)

Christ is righteous in judging men - SEE Rom. 2:5-11

Evidences of fair (just) judgment:

1. **It is according to works (v. 7-8)**
   (works don't lie)
2. **It will be impartial (v. 9-11)**
   (no favoritism on Judgment day)

V. 12

"His eyes were as a flame of fire" - same description as Rev. 1:14

Such a description shows Christ to have infinite knowledge, as His piercing eyes can clearly see through that which man attempts to hide, against vindicating Christ's righteousness in judgment (Heb. 4:13 - *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."*).

"Many crowns" -

"Crown" = kingly crown (diadamata = Eng. "diadem"); Christ is coming as King (v. 16) and to reign (Rev. 20:4-6). Note: At the rapture, Christ is pictured as wearing one crown (stephanos) (Rev. 14:14)

"Many" = the plurality of crowns shows the extent of Christ's coming reign. It will not be one group of people but all. Hymn: "Crown Him With Many Crowns"

"A name written, that no man knew, but He Himself" - Evidently, the new name (Rev. 3:12) that will characterize Christ as He comes to conquer and rule.

II. The Warrior on the White Horse Will Conquer with <u>POWER</u> (v. 13-15)

(His Name is: "THE WORD OF GOD")

V. 13

"Clothed in a vesture dipped in blood" - Christ's garments will be splattered as it were with blood as He treads "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (v. 15).

*SEE Isaiah 63:1-6

Christ will judge <u>alone</u>; He will need no help from any man or angel.

"The Word of God" - a phrase used only by John.

John 1:1 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

John 1:14 - "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

I Jn. 1:1 - "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life."

I Jn. 5:7 - "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

He who is called the ***"<u>Word</u>"*** of God will judge via His <u>mouth</u> (v. 15, 21).

He who simply "spoke" the world into existence (cp. Col. 1:16 with Heb. 11:3) will "speak" this present Age out of existence. The "Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2) is the author and finisher of the world.

V. 14

"The armies which were in heaven followed him" -

Who are these armies?

1. Their description gives them away - they are the *"**Bride*** of Christ" - NOTE: ***"clothed in fine linen, white and clean"*** - cp. **<u>v. 8</u>**
2. They are saints of Christ, according to I Thes. 3:13 - *"...at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ <u>with</u> all His saints."*
3. They are those who will be resurrected to rule and reign with Christ for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4-6)

V. 15

"Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword" (see V. 21).

The connection between Christ's mouth and a sword again points to the awesome power of His <u>Word</u>. His <u>Word</u> is sharper than any two-edged <u>sword</u> (Heb. 4:12).

We today, would be wise to utilize such a weapon in doing <u>spiritual</u> battle - "The Sword of the Spirit" - Eph. 6:17.

"He shall rule them with a rod of iron" -

"Them" = the nations

"Rod of Iron" = a phrase appearing in Rev. 2:27, 12:5. Such a domination will be a fulfillment of <u>Psalm 2</u> (READ Ps. 2)

"Treadeth the winepress" - Christ will step on the "grapes of wrath" and when He does, the blood will flow for 200 miles and at certain heights of 4 1/2 feet (SEE Rev. 14:19-20)

The bloodshed of Armageddon will be astounding (SEE Is. 34:1-8).

Armageddon will not be won by nuclear warfare, man-made missiles, tanks, or artillery, but by the <u>word</u> of Jesus Christ!

Nor will it be a long, drawn out battle (EX: WW I or II) but will begin and end suddenly (Is. 29:5; Zech. 3:9).

The bodies of those destroyed by Christ will melt instantly, by "fire and by His sword" (Is. 66:16).

"...Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth" (Zech.14:12).

III. The Warrior on the White Horse Will Conquer with AUTHORITY (v. 16-21)

(His Name is: "KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS")

V. 16

Jesus is not merely "king" (not a king among many).

He is ***"king of kings"***.

The accusation written above the cross of Jesus ("This is Jesus the king of the Jews") was actually an understatement. He is king of all.

Jesus is not merely "lord" but ***"Lord of Lords"*** - identifying Him as Jehovah God! (Zech. 14:9 - *"And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one."*)

Rev. 17:14 - *"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."*

As King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ will one day have *"all things ... subdued unto Him."* (I Cor. 15:28)

The Bible says that Jesus Christ *"is able even to subdue all things unto Himself"* (Phil. 3:21).

A. The "KING OF KINGS" will subdue all of the world's kings, captains, mighty men, and armies (v. 17-18, 21)

V. 17

"An angel standing in the sun" - Angels, being spirit beings, are not affected by the elements that would destroy mortal man.

"Gather yourselves" - indicative of a centralized location for the slaughter. The location for the gathering of the world's armies will be Armageddon (the Valley of Megiddo, or Jezreel Valley - Rev. 16:16 - *"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."*

The specific location for the actual slaughter will be the Valley of Jehoshaphat (the Kidron valley, east of Jerusalem, Joel 3:1-21; cp. Jer. 7:31-34 - the Hinnom Valley, a valley of slaughter).

The world's kings and lords (rulers) become supper for the birds of the air when the King returns.

The birds are summoned (possibly by Gabriel) to ***"the supper of the great God."***

This is the second supper mentioned in this chapter. I would rather "sup" with Jesus (Rev. 3:20) at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9) than to be the supper for the vultures at Armageddon.

Regardless of ... rank (***"kings...captains...mighty men"***),
status (***"free and bond"***), and
stature (***"small and great"***) ...
all the ungodly will be slaughtered.

V. 21

"The remnant" - the rest of Christ's enemies are killed physically and will await judgment day for final sentencing (Rev. 20:11-15).

B. The "LORD OF LORDS" will destroy the world's lords - Antichrist and the False Prophet (v. 19-20)

V. 19

"The beast" = the Antichrist

"The kings" = the 10 kings - Rev. 17:12-14 (Dan. 2:44 - pictured as "ten toes")

"Their armies" = those who have been deceived by demonic forces to battle Christ and His people (Rev. 16:13-14)

The Antichrist along with the world's kings will have their most sophisticated modern missiles (warheads, etc.) pointed at the Son of God, actually thinking that they will destroy Him.

"To make war against Him (Jesus Christ)". What a vain, futile, and foolish attempt!

Such futility is instigated by Satan, whose attack has always been against Christ and His children.

The ***"Beast"*** (Antichrist) and the ***"False Prophet"*** will by-pass ***"death and Hell"*** and will go immediately into the ***"Lake of fire"***. They will be the very first human occupants of the Lake of fire.

The rest of unbelieving souls (Rev. 20:15) and the Devil will be cast into this eternal lake of torment 1,000 years later (Rev. 20:10)

"THE FUTURE MILLENNIUM"
Revelation 20:1-10

"For many centuries, man has dreamed of a "Golden Age," a "utopia" in which the human race will be free from war, sickness, and even death. Men have tried to achieve this goal on their own and have failed." (Wiersbe, p. 620)

Chapter 20 is like the calm after the storm. This chapter is the second main section of Revelation -

1) Tribulation (ch. 4 - 19)
2) Millennium & New Jerusalem (ch. 20 - 22)

The phrase ***"thousand years"*** occurs 6 times in only 10 verses (v. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7).
God does not waste words. He is emphasizing a point. The point is that there is coming a <u>thousand year</u> kingdom (which is merely the <u>first stage</u> of Christ's <u>eternal</u> kingdom).

The Greek word ***"thousand"*** is "chilioi" which always refers to a <u>literal</u> thousand years. It is <u>never figurative</u> in the N.T. (II Pet. 3:8; Rev. 11:3, 12:6, 14:20, 20:2-7).
Our English word "Millennium" is the Latin translation of "chillioi" ["Mille" meaning "thousand" and *"annum"* meaning "years"] Note: Christ's kingdom will be eternal (Ezek. 37:24-28; Dan. 2:44); the Millennium is simply the <u>first stage</u> of His eternal Kingdom.

The time period <u>after</u> the 70th week but <u>before</u> the initiation of the Millennial Kingdom.

After the 1,260 days of the second half of the 70th week, Daniel 12:11-12 describes two additional blocks of time.

1,260 days (Rev.12:6) 30 45
1,290 days (Dan.12:11)
1,335 days (Dan.12:12)

1. The additional **<u>30</u> days** apparently involve:
   a. The **<u>REGATHERING</u>** of Israel to Jerusalem (Is. 11:11-12, 15-16; Ezek. 20:37-38)
      Note: All nations (Gentiles) will also be gathered (Mt. 25:32; Joel 3:1-2)
   b. A time of **<u>JUDGMENT</u>** for those still living (but not raptured) after the Tribulation [Note the chronology of Mt. 25:1-13 [Rapture] and Mt. 25:14-46 [Judgment])
      1) The **<u>Nature</u>** of this Judgment
         This judgment involves the separation of the sheep (God's people redeemed after the Rapture) from the goats (the unsaved) (Mt. 25:31-46)
      2) The **<u>consequences</u>** of this Judgment
         a) The <u>saved</u> are accepted into the Millennial Kingdom in mortal bodies (Mt. 25:31-40)
         b) The <u>unsaved</u> are rejected, and are slain, to await resurrection unto damnation (Ezek. 20;37; Mt. 25:41-46)
         No unsaved person will enter the Millennial Kingdom.
2. The additional **<u>45</u> days** (which transpire before the Millennium) apparently involve:
   a. The **<u>leveling</u>** of Palestine's **<u>topography</u>** (Is. 35; Is. 40:4-5; Zech. 14:10; Is. 26:15)
   b. The **<u>building</u>** of the Millennial **<u>Temple</u>** in Jerusalem (Ezek. 40-48)
   c. The **<u>purifying</u>** of the earth and **<u>preparing</u>** for the Kingdom
      1) Weapons will be beaten into farming tools (Is. 2:4)
      2) Jerusalem will become a source for <u>fresh</u> (good, drinkable) <u>water</u> from the Dead Sea and Mediterranean Sea (Zech. 14:8)
   d. The **<u>binding</u>** of Satan will conclude this time period just prior to the 1,000 year Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-3; Ezek. 28:13-19; Is. 14:4-17).

During the Millennium, "all outward sources of temptation must be removed so that man will demonstrate what he (really) is apart from Satanic influence" (Pentecost, p. 477)
The depravity of mortal man will be evident, as his only source of temptation will be *"the flesh"* (not the world system or the devil)

3 Views of the Millennium:

1. **Post-Millennialism** - (social gospel view) Man through social reform will usher in a utopian period of peace on earth, after which time Christ will return
2. **A-Millennialism** - (covenant theology view) There is no 1,000 year kingdom. The 1,000 years of Rev. 20:1-7 are only figurative. They symbolize the time period from the cross until the imminent return of Christ. The "Millennium" refers to the church age of Christ's present rule from Heaven. At the cross Jesus defeated Satan and the Devil has been bound ever since.

This view which must employ an allegorical interpretation of Prophecy actually alters the literal meaning of words & phrases. This "spiritualizing" of the Bible strips the Scriptures of actual, literal meaning, generally discards rules of grammar and context, and imposes virtually any "hidden mystic" meaning into the Sacred Text. As someone has said: *"if the plain sense makes good sense, seek no other sense or you will have non-sense."*

A-Millennialism has it's roots in...

Greek Philosophy, Ancient Gnosticism or more specifically in "Neo-Platonic Mysticism"
(This Satanic philosophy taught that anything which was physical (material) was evil)
Origen (185-254 A.D. - A Greek Philosopher who introduced the allegorical & typological method of interpreting Scripture; For example, he rejected the idea of a physical resurrection)

Dionysius (Died 264 A.D. - Due to his influence, the Greek church rejected Premillenialism)

Jerome (345-420 A.D.) and **Ambrose** (339-397 A.D.) brought New Alexandrian Theology to the West.

Augustine (354-430 A.D. - Baptized by Ambrose, then became the Bishop of Hippo) Augustine changed from a Premillennialist by developing his new view known as Amillennialism.
"In his book, *The City of God*, he became the first person to teach the idea that the organized Catholic (universal) Church is the Messianic Kingdom, and that the Millennium began with the first coming of Christ" (Israel My Glory, Oct. 1986, citing Harnack, "Millennium," XVI, 317)

The **Roman Catholic Church** maintained Augustine's amillennial view throughout the Middle Ages.

The **Lutheran, Reformed** and **Anglican reformers** maintained Amillennialism and still teach it today.

* 3. **Pre-Millennialism** - (dispensational view) Christ will literally return for judgment and then will establish the promised, long-awaited Messianic Kingdom.

Proofs for the literal establishment of the Millennial Kingdom:
a. The Scriptures **teach** it (Rev. 20:1-7)
b. God **detailed** it (Is. 11, etc. See: page 117)
c. Christ **promised** it (Mt. 26:29)
d. The Apostles **expected** it (Acts 1:6-7)
e. Creation **awaits** it (Rom. 8:19-22)
f. We are expected to **pray** for it to come (Mt. 6:10)
(This implies that it hasn't come yet)

The early Church preached Premillennialism
The Epistle of Barnabas (120 A.D.) (Chapter 15)
Justin Martyr (100 -165 A.D.) Dialogue with Trypho, Chpt.80 & 81
Irenaeus (178 A.D.) Against Heresies, Book V, chpt. 33, section 3, I, 562-63
Tertullian (160-220 A.D.) Against Marcion, Book III, chpt. 25
Lactantius (240-320 A.D.) The Divine Institutes, Book VII, chpt.14
(The above cited from Israel My Glory, August, 1986 p.23-25.)

A Practical Key Truth -- * Utopia is yet ahead!**

I. Before the Millennium, SATAN IS REMOVED (v. 1-3)

The **A**millennialist - Augustine said the "abyss" is not a literal location or place, but rather refers to the deep wicked hearts of unbelievers. He said that the binding and shutting up of Satan in the abyss "means his being more unable to seduce the Church." Augustine was convinced that this binding of Satan in the abyss is a reality during this present church Age. (Augustine, *The City of God*, Book XX, chpt.7, p.722 & chpt.8, p.723)

If Satan is bound today as some claim:

--Why do we need armor to defend ourselves against him? (Eph. 6:10ff)
--Why are we told to resist the devil? (Jms. 4:7)
--Why are we told to be aware of his tempting power? (I Cor. 7:5)
--Why should we be aware of his devices? (II Cor. 2:11)
--How did he fill Ananias and Saphira's heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? (Acts 5:3)
--How did he hinder Paul? (I Th. 2:18)
--How does he have such control that he can send "messengers" to buffet God's people? (EX: Paul - II Cor.11:7)
--How will he give the Antichrist his seat and his authority? (Rev. 13:2; II Th. 2:9-10)

Today, Satan is busy blinding men's eyes to the truth (II Cor. 4:4). He is busy opposing God's people (Rev. 2:10).
Satan has not been chained yet! Rather, he is "alive and well on planet earth" today.
I Pet. 5:8 - *"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"*
"If Satan is bound today, it must be with a terribly long chain!" (Dr. James M. Gray)
Before the Kingdom begins, Satan will be bound
(SEE Is. 14:7-17).

V. 1
"An Angel" - possibly God will give "Michael the Archangel" the honors (the deserved privilege) to bind Satan, especially since it has been Michael warring against him previously (Rev. 12:7; Jude 9; Dan. 12:1)
"The key" - a key is no doubt given to the angel by Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:18).
"The bottomless pit" - this is a reference to hell (a "prison house" of torment for the unbelieving dead and fallen angels - cp. II Peter 2:4).

--This pit is the abode of demons (Lk. 8:31; Rev. 9:1ff)
--This pit emits smoke (indicating a place of burning) (Rev. 9:2)
--This pit is that which the Antichrist will descend into when he is killed and ascend out of when resurrected (Rev. 11:7).

The "bottomless pit" stands in sharp contrast to the "Lake of fire." (19:20; 20:10).

"A great chain" = not a physical chain, since Satan is a spirit-being; Satan will be literally bound up by this powerful chain.

God does not want us to miss the identification of the one to be bound, so He calls him:

1. ***"The dragon"*** - indicating the fierce nature of Satan (Rev. 12:3ff)
2. ***"That old serpent"*** the crafty nature of Satan (Gen. 3)
3. ***"the Devil"*** - the accusing character of Satan ("dia bolos" = to place in between" . . . he is one who divides the brethren)
4. ***"Satan"*** - the opposing character of Satan (He is the adversary (or enemy) of God and Christ, as well as the believer.

Satan, like an apprehended criminal, will be:

1)	***"laid hold"*** of	(grabbed and taken into custody)
2)	***"bound"***	(hand cuffed)
3)	***"cast"***	(hurled into prison)
4)	***"shut him up"***	(locked up)
5)	***"set a seal"***	(securely restricted)
6)	***"loosed"***	(freed temporarily before final sentencing)

V. 3
"A seal" - indicative of security. Satan will be securely bound for 1,000 years.
"The purpose of sealing the entrance to a prison was to prevent any attempt at escape or rescue to pass unobserved" (Reinecker, citing Swete, p. 857).

"That he should deceive the nations no more" - Satan will be bound and sealed with the result that he will NOT deceive (lead astray) the nations any more until the 1,000 years are ended.
"And after that he must be loosed" = Why a must? Answer: to fulfill prophecy. The destruction of Gog and Magog according to Ezek. 38-39 will be fulfilled as God has said.

II. During the Millennium, SAINTS REIGN (v. 4-6)

V. 4
"I saw thrones and they that sat upon them"
Rev. 3:21 - *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."*

--The 12 apostles will judge the 12 tribes of Israel during the Millennium (Mt. 19:27-28).
--The saints of God will also judge the world (I Cor. 6:2) and angels (v. 3)

"The souls of them" = A specific group in addition to the "throne sitters" just mentioned. These include the "souls under the altar" who were beheaded during the opening of the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11).

"Beheaded" - reference is to the Roman form of execution by cutting one's head off with a double-edge ax blade.

Those beheaded are those who will be martyred during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 13:15, 16)

Why will they be executed?

1. Because of ("dia") their ***"witness of Jesus"***
   (They will have an undeniable testimony)

2. Because of ("dia") the ***"Word of God"***
   (They will cling to the written Word of God)

These are people who will not bend (on their convictions), break (God's Word) or bow (To the Antichrist), when the most intense pressure in history is turned on.
They would rather die than switch allegiance.

"Mark upon their <u>foreheads</u> or in their <u>hands</u>" - the option between "forehead" and "hand" shows the mark to be a <u>literal</u> mark (an actual branding or implantation upon the skin).

"They lived" - they came to life again (They were resurrected after the Tribulation, but before the Millennium)

> [Note: The Allegorist, Augustine wrongly interpreted the first resurrection "not as a future bodily resurrection" but as "the present spiritual resurrection of the soul which takes place at the new birth." (*<u>The City of God</u>*, Book XX, chpt.6, p.717; cited by <u>Israel My Glory</u>, Oct., 1986, p.29]

"They . . . reigned" - in order to rule or reign, there must be <u>subjects</u> to rule over. Who are the subjects over which we will govern?

> Answer: Those Jews and Gentiles who <u>live through</u> the Tribulation and trust Christ for salvation (SEE: Is. 4:2-4).

Jesus promised such a reign to the church of Thyatira: *"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father."* (Rev. 2:26-27)

Throughout history, God's children have been the subjects of rulers, despotically dominated, often unfairly treated, many times the victims of injustice, etc. . . . One day, however, they will rule.

In a spiritual sense, we are presently "more than conquerors," but one day in a physical sense, we will rule and reign with Christ in a utopian society. The best is yet to come for God's people.

V. 5

"The rest of the dead" = the <u>unbelieving</u> dead. They will not be resurrected until after the Millennium, only to appear before Christ for eternal sentencing at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

"This is the first resurrection" = referring to those who live and reign (v. 4).

The Bible teaches <u>2 major resurrections</u>:

> John 5:29 - *"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*
>
> Dan. 12:2 - *"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."*

These two resurrections are differentiated by <u>subjects</u> and <u>time</u>.

> NOTE: the resurrection of the "just" is <u>distinguished</u> (Luke 14:14 - *"And thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."*).
>
> NOTE: the difference in <u>time</u> (a 1,000 year difference) between the two resurrections (Rev. 20:5)**.**

Most Pretribulationists say that the first resurrection occurs "<u>in stages</u>"

1) Christ
2) those that arose after Christ did (Mt. 27:52-53)
3) Rapture of Church
4) Two witnesses
5) Resurrection of O.T. saints

NOTE: While Scripture does describe some unique [out of the norm] resurrections (EX: Lazarus), the Bible is very specific when speaking about the <u>general</u> resurrection of the saints

I Cor. 15:23,24 - *"But every man in his own order:*
<u>Christ</u> the firstfruits;
afterward _<u>they</u> that are Christ's <u>at his coming</u>;
Then cometh _<u>the end (last)</u> when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom..."

Important Note: If the "**first resurrection**" is indeed **"<u>first</u>"** and if this resurrection will include tribulation martyrs (v. 4), then **the Rapture <u>cannot</u> be pretribulational** (since the Rapture and resurrection occur at the same time - I Cor. 15:51-52; I Th. 4:16-17).

V. 6

The ***"second death"*** means eternal doom to multitudes involved in the second resurrection (Rev. 20;11-15).

To be raised in the second resurrection means to stand before the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev.20:11-15).

In which Resurrection will you arise? If you are "in Christ" you will be raised at the first resurrection (I Th. 4:16).

Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die [spiritually & eternally]." (Jn. 11:25-26).*

"They shall be priests of God" - In the Millennium, there will be a temple (Ezek. 40 - 43), temple ministers (Ezek. 44 - 45:17), and animal sacrifices (Ezek. 45:18 - 46).

[NOTE: The animal sacrifices will NOT be efficacious to forgive sin, but memorials of what Christ did on Calvary]

III. After the Millennium, SINNERS REVOLT (v. 7-10)

What is God's purpose for the Millennium?

To demonstrate the **depravity** of man.

Even with Satan bound, with a perfect environment, man will have an unbelieving heart.

". . . as in every age, He [Christ] will not compel them to believe with their hearts. Consequently, there will be many living (born during kingdom) who have never turned to Christ for salvation, though they have obeyed Him as head of the government. These will seize on the chance to give expression to the rebellion of their hearts, when Satan arises to be their leader in this last revolt." (Ryrie, p. 116).

V. 7

Why would Satan be loosed? To fulfill Scripture, namely, Ezek. 38-39. This is why verse 4 says that ***"he must be loosed a little season"***

As if Satan did not learn his lesson when he (via the Antichrist and the world's armies) tried to conquer Christ and his armies at Armageddon (19:19-21), he will again attempt a vain conquest at the end of the Millennium (v. 7-10).

V. 8

Satan will deceive the people of ***"God and Magog"*** into thinking that Israel will be vulnerable and conquerable (SEE: Ezek. 38:10-19).

V. 9

"The beloved city" = Jerusalem (Mt. Zion - Ps. 87:2).

"Fire came down" - specifically, "fire and brimstone" (Ezek. 38:22); the same way Jesus destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (Rev. 19:24).

V. 10

"The devil . . . was cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone" - Satan was the reason why the Lake of Fire was created (Mt. 25:41 - *"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."*).

One day he is going to go to his home, where he belongs.

"The Beast & False Prophet" have been burning for 1,000 years prior to Satan's final doom (cp. Rev. 19:20).

"Tormented day and night forever and ever" -

"Day and night" = relentless torment (no breaks or seasons of solace)

"For ever and ever" = eternal torment (no end)

*The same torment is in store for the beast worshippers (Rev. 14:10-11)

*The same torment is in store for everyone who rejects Christ (Jn. 3:36; Rev. 21:8).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM
(in general)

The 1,000 year Kingdom will be a time of:

1. **Justice & peace** (Is. 2:1-4, 9:6-7; Micah 4:1-5)
2. **Storms & rain** (Is. 4:6; Zech. 14:18-19)
3. **Christ's sovereign reign on the throne of David** (Is. 9:6-7, 11:1-5, 10; Rev.20:4-7; Zech. 14:9; Haggai 2:7;)
4. **No violence or destruction** (Is. 11:6-10)
   (Even all carnivorous animals will be harmless)
5. **Rest for Israel** (Is. 14:3; 7-8)
6. **Holiness & righteousness** (Is. 32:1-5; Zech. 8:3, 14:20;)
   (Everything (even bells on horses) will be holy) (Zech. 14)
7. **Evil will no longer be called good** (Is. 32:5)
8. **Spiritual blessing** (Is. 32:15-19)
9. **The desert will blossom as a rose** (Is. 35:1)
10. **Renovated land and desert** (Is. 40:3,4; Is. 35:1-8)
11. **The glory of the LORD will be revealed** (Is. 40:5)
12. **Gentile & Jewish inhabitance** (Is. 60:14-16)
13. **Peace, spirituality, & prosperity** (Is. 60:17-20; Micah 4:4-8; Joel 2:18-27)
14. **Longevity of mortal life** (Is. 65:20; Zech. 8:4)
15. **Rejuvenated water** (Ezek. 47:1-12)
    (The Dead Sea will be fresh water filled with fish - Ezek. 47:1-12; Zech. 14:8)
16. **Jerusalem will be exalted and nations will flow into it** (Mic. 4:1-2)
17. **Believers reigning with Christ** (Rev. 20:4-7; Obad. 21)
18. **No external temptation or deception** (Rev. 20:1-3)
19. **Worship via a new temple** (Haggai 2:7-8; Ezek. 40)
    (sacrifices will be memorials of Christ's finished work)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM
(specifically related to ISRAEL)

For ISRAEL, the 1,000 year Kingdom will be a time of:

1. **Unity** (among the tribes of Israel) (Is. 11:13; Ezek. 37:15-22; Jer. 3:19)
2. **Comfort & joy** (Is. 12:1-6; 40:1ff)
3. **Rest** (Is. 14:3, 7-8)
4. **Respect** (by other nations) (Is. 60:14-16; Zech. 8:23;)
5. **Much land** (Obad. 19-20)

"THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT"
Revelation 20:11-15

The most dreadful or terrifying time in history will be the Great White Throne Judgment!

A Practical Key Truth -- ***The coming Great White Throne Judgment should provoke you to <u>fear God</u>!

Five reasons why God is to be feared:

I. The <u>JUDGE</u> on the Great White Throne Points to a <u>HOLY</u> Judgment (v. 11)

(***"From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away . . ."***)

"A great white throne" -

"Great" - reflects the <u>importance</u> of the judgment. "It is a great throne, not merely in size, but because of the <u>great issues</u> involved" (Smith, p. 278).
This will be the greatest, most severe judgment of all time. Unbelievers will one day stand before the supreme "<u>Supreme</u> Court."

"White" - Reflects the <u>purity</u> of the judgment, the righteousness of the judgment (Rev. 19:11).
This will be a <u>holy</u> judgment by a holy God (Is. 6)

"I saw . . . Him that sat on it" -

The One John saw was none other than <u>Jesus Christ</u>.

Proofs:

1) God the Father being "spirit" (Jn. 4:24) cannot be seen (Jn. 1:18). John could <u>see</u> the One on the throne. He saw Jesus, who is the "image of the invisible God."
2) God the Father will judge no one; Jesus Christ will do all of the judging (Jn. 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42; Rom. 2:16; II Tim. 4:1; Jms. 5:9; I Pet. 4:5).
   Jn. 5:22 - "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."
   Acts 10:42 - "And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead."
   Rom. 2:16 - "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."
   It is "the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead." (II Tim. 4:1).
3) Ezekiel saw One sitting on a throne who had "the appearance of a man above upon it" - This is Jesus Christ! (Ezek. 1:26-28)

"From whose face the earth and heaven fled away" -

"Fled" = to run away in haste (Eng. "fugitive")

"Earth and heaven" = the two places that have been defiled by the presence of sin.

Earth - the sin of <u>man</u>
Heaven - the sin of <u>fallen angels</u> ["The heavens are not clean in His sight" - Job 15:15]

"There was found <u>no place</u> for them" - God's spotless glory (21:23) will be inhibited by nothing. There will be no room for this present "cosmos" in the new heaven & earth.
After the Millennium (20:1-10), this world, as we know it, will exist no more because God is going to create a "new heaven and a new earth" (21:1).

II. The SUBJECTS before the Great White Throne Point to an IMPARTIAL Judgment (v. 12a; v. 13a) *("the dead, small and great")*

V. 12a

"And I saw the dead" - the phrase "and I saw" (cp. v. 11) indicates a sequential vision to that of verse 11.

In other words, after the earth and heaven are disposed of, now comes the sentencing of man.

As the sequence of creation [1) earth (Gen. 1:2); 2) Heaven ("sky" - Gen. 1:8); 3) man (Gen. 1:27)], so will be the sequence of condemnation ["earth and heaven" (v. 11), then man (v. 12)].

"Dead . . . stand" - This is the second resurrection, in contrast to the "first" (Rev. 20:5-6) Just as the resurrection of the just was literal, so will be the resurrection of the unjust (Jn. 5:29; Dan. 12:2).

"*Small and great"* - Everyone who was not part of the "first resurrection" (20:5,6). . .

From the lowest to the highest
From the weakest to the mightiest
From the poorest to the wealthiest
From the most unknown to the most well-known

Everyone from pauper to prince, from common citizen to king, from pagan laity to pagan clergy. All without Christ will one day stand before Him for judgment.

On Judgment day, a pygmy will stand beside a president;
a drug dealer beside a doctor
a parishioner next to a pope

Everyone will stand naked before God - stripped of fame, wealth, power, and influence.

"Stand before God" - If Jesus is Judge (Jn. 5:22), then Jesus is God! Another proof of His deity. [NOTE: the phrase "before God" - critical and majority text reads "before the throne"]

V. 13a

"Gave up . . . delivered up" - same word in the Greek _"didomi") meaning to give or hand over.

"The sea" = the ocean depths where bodies of the dead have sunk and decayed without a proper burial. Not one dead body will remain unresurrected, or lost from God's sight or memory, regardless of where they lie.

"Death" = the grave; the place of decayed bodies of the lost (a reference to where the physical part of man goes).

"The body without the spirit is dead" (Jms. 2:26)

The word ***"death"*** when used in conjunction with the word ***"hell"*** has this meaning: "Death" refers to the physical aspect of departing this life, and "hell" refers to the spiritual aspect of departing this life.

Rev. 6:8a - *"And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."*

It is death which claims the body and it is hell (hades) which claims the soul (Ryrie,p. 117)

"Hell" = The place of the departed spirits of the lost (a reference to where the spiritual part of man goes)

A place of spiritual suffering and torment (Lk. 16:23-31).

*By joining "death" to "hell", John is implying that both body and spirit will stand before God in judgment (v. 13), and both body and spirit will be thrown into the Lake of fire (v. 14) [cp. Rev. 19:20 - the Antichrist and False Prophet were thrown into the Lake of fire with both body and spirit ("alive"); cp. Mt. 10:28 - ". . . fear Him (God) which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna (place of fire)"]

"Every man" - Not one sinner will escape Judgment Day (God will not be bought off or bribed either).

There is no respect of persons with God (SEE Rom. 2:3-6, 9, 11)

III. The EVIDENCE of the Great White Throne Points to an HONEST Judgment (v. 12b)

("The books were opened")

"The books (plural) were opened: and another book (singular)"

At least three books will be opened on Judgment Day. What are they?

1. **The BIBLE** (the greek word "book" - "bibliov" from which we derive our English "Bible")
--the Law of Moses will be opened (Jn. 5:45 - *"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust."*
--The Gospels of Jesus will be opened (Jn. 12:48 - *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him int he last day."*
--The Epistles of Paul will be opened (Rom. 2:16 - *"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*
*Can you give a Bible answer for your salvation? Do you know a verse that would prove that you have eternal life?

2. **The BOOK ABOUT YOUR LIFE**
[This book includes a record of your ***"works"*** (v. 12b-13)]
The book that has recorded everything you ever did; everything you ever said; everything you ever thought.
In other words, God will one day open a book that has recorded every "work" (v. 12b-13) or deed you ever did or intended to do.
The omniscient God knows all and remembers all.

1) He knows the hearts of all people
--I Sam. 16:7 - "the Lord looketh on the heart"
--Job 42:2 - "no thought can be withholden from thee"
--Psalm 44:21 - "He knoweth the secrets of the heart"
--Ezek. 11:5 - "I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them"

2) He knows the actions of all people
Job testified: *"he knoweth the way that I take"* (Job 23:10)
David said, *"All my ways are before thee"* (Ps. 119:168)
Solomon declared, *"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He pondereth all his goings."*
God knew when Cain slew Abel; Sarah laughed in her tent; Achan stole the garment, silver, and gold; David committed adultery.

3. **The BOOK OF LIFE** (cp. v. 15)
This book contains only the names of the redeemed - also called the *"Lamb's Book of Life"*
To the faithful believer Jesus promises: *"I will not blot out his name out of the book of life"* (Rev. 3:5)
To the unbeliever God warns: *"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* (Rev. 13:8)

"Those things which were written" - (perfect passive - that which has been written by God in the past and remains (stands) written)

The sentence of the Judge is not arbitrary; it rests upon written evidence (the importance of written revelation in God's Word will one day be revealed).

IV. The VERDICT from the Great White Throne Points to a FAIR Judgment (v. 12c; v. 13b)

(Guilty - ***"according to their works"***)

"Judged . . . According to their works" (v. 12, 13)

Question: If someone's eternal destiny is determined upon death, based on whether or not they have trusted Jesus Christ, why a judgment, why do they stand trial?

Answer:

1) To demonstrate their worthiness of torment (to vindicate God's holiness or righteousness)
   "Works" are undeniable evidence of unbelief (cp. Rev. 21:8 for a list of the doomed)
2) To determine the degree of torment
   a. Those who clearly knew God's will but didn't do it will be held accountable and will endure a greater punishment throughout eternity. It is serious to sin against light!
      1) Luke 12:47-48 ("many stripes")
      2) Luke 20:47 - "Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation."
      3) Matthew 11:22, 23 - "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon . . . It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom"
      4) II Pet. 2:21 - "For it had been better for them not to have known the way . . ."
      5) Example: Judas
   b. The more wicked one lives, the more intensely he will suffer throughout eternity.

"Were judged" - this judgment, like all the prophecies in Revelation, is stated in the past tense, showing not only John's perspective of the event, but also the certainty of the judgment (Heb. 9:27).

V. The SENTENCING by the Great White Throne Points to a FINAL Judgment (v. 14-15)

("The lake of fire")

"The White Throne Judgment will be nothing like our modern court cases. At the White Throne, there will be a Judge but no jury, a prosecution but no defense, a sentence but no appeal" (Wiersbe, p. 621). It will be final!

"The ungodly shall not stand in the Judgment . . . the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps. 1:5-6)

There will be no hope for the ungodly in the day of Judgment. They will have no firm ground to stand on, no foundation or anchor like the believer has (I Cor. 3:11; Heb. 6:19).

V. 14

"Hell . . . cast into the Lake of fire"

"hell" is not the "Lake of fire," but is the preliminary penalty leading to the "Lake of fire." They are two different places.

Hell is like a local jail (temporary judgment) to await trial (Ex: Rikers Island)

The Lake of Fire is like the State Penitentiary (permanent judgment) after being sentenced

"This is the second death" - second death because it follows the ungodly receiving a physical body at the second resurrection.

Those involved in the first resurrection will not face the second death (Rev. 20:6).

If you have been "born again," you need not fear this "second death" (SEE Jn. 3)

God's equation: If you are born twice, you will only die once (that is, if you are not raptured). However, if you are born only once, you will die twice.

V. 15

"Whosoever was not found" - the phrase (used also of Enoch - Heb. 11:6) implies that a search was made, but no trace was found (Smith, p. 280).

"Whosoever" = no exceptions. No one makes last minute reservations after death.

This "whosoever" is the most dreadful in all the Bible. However, the most blessed "whosoever" is in - John 3:16, Rom. 10:13, Rev. 22:17

"THE DELIGHTS OF NEW JERUSALEM"
Revelation 21:1-8

A Practical Key Truth -- ***Keep your eyes on your future inheritance!

"New Heaven and a new earth"
God promises to "create" (bara) new heavens (sky and outer space) and a new earth (Is. 65:17); and to "make" (asa) them to "remain" (forever) (Is. 66:22).
The word "create" normally means to create something out of nothing, as God did with the first heavens and earth (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3).

The O.T. describes the earth as "abiding forever"

Eccl. 1:4 - "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever."
Ps. 119:90 - "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth."
Ps. 104:5 - "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever."

Question: God on the one hand says that He will make a new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1), and on the other hand He says that the present earth will remain forever.
How can God, make a new one, yet keep the existing one? Answer: He will totally ("from scratch") create a brand new earth, and He will remove (not destroy or annihilate) this present globe, and replace it with a new earth.

God will renovate, remodel or reconstruct the earth's surface (via fire - II Pet. 3:10-13) for the millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:1-10; Is. 40:3-4).
However, God will remove and replace the existing earth for the eternal state.

Proofs that this present globe (earth) will be removed (geographically) to make way for the new earth.

1) Rev. 21:1 - "Passed away" (aperchomai - cp.18:14; 21:4) - to go away; to depart (NOTE: God never says that the earth will annihilate into nothingness but that it will go away).
2) Rev. 20:11 - "Fled away" - to run away (in distance)
3) Jesus promise: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mt. 24:35; cp. Mk. 13:31: Lk. 21:33; Mt. 5:18). "Pass away" = to go away
4) Heb. 4:26 - 28 - "...the removing of those things that are shaken..."
"Removing" = metatithemi - Meta = to change; "tithemi" = position (where something is placed. Hence the earth will have a change of location. It will be removed beyond view (Is. 65:17); it will be a useless uninhabited planet, perhaps light years removed from the new creation.

"There was no more sea" - three-fourths of our earth's surface is made up of water; not so in the new earth. What is significant about this phrase? **Answer:** Throughout history the sea has formed a natural boundary that separated or divided people from each other. There will be no division in the new earth! Note: In the Millennium there will be a sea (Ezek.47:1,8-12).

The future city of Jerusalem will be...

I. A NEW City (v. 1, 2, 5)

V. 1
To match the ***"new heaven and a new earth"*** (v.1), God will create a new capital city. This new city will require a new heaven (sky & space) because its height will be over 1,300 miles higher than the present ozone layer which surrounds our earth.
(Present "heaven" (sky): Ozone layer = Mile 9; Dust Belt = Mile 50; Meteors = Mile 100)
v. 2
"New Jerusalem" - "New" (Kainos) = New in quality; The new Jerusalem will be totally different from old Jerusalem.
V. 5
"I make all things new" - Just as God does for the Christian (II Cor. 5:17 - *"...All things become new"*), He will do for creation.

II. A HOLY City (v. 2a)

"And I John saw . . ." - Throughout Revelation, John usually said "I saw..." For the first time since John's introduction in Rev. 1:9, he includes a reference to himself. Why? John is ecstatic at what he is seeing. He is saying with inexpressible excitement - I with my very eyes beheld something that no man has ever seen.

John is joyfully overwhelmed with what he is experiencing with his very eyes (SEE the same expression "I John" and his reaction in 22:8). "Probably John was so overwhelmed at what he was seeing and learning that he forgot momentarily to write" (v. 5 - cp. 14:3, 19:9) (Ryrie, p. 119).

"The Holy City" (cp. 21:10) - the set apart city; the city of spotless purity. A city like no other. A city "whose builder and maker is God!" (cp. Heb. 11:10).

Jesus Christ has been preparing such a dwelling place since His ascension (Jn. 14:2). In this city there will be no defilement or sinful people (21:27).

"Coming down from God" - only God can create a perfect city. Man's attempts have been utter failures. There will be no corruption in that city!

III. A BEAUTIFUL City (v. 2b)

"Prepared" = to make ready - "I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn. 14:2)

"Adorned" = Greek "Kosmeo" (Eng. cosmetics) - to make orderly; to put in order; to decorate; to make beautiful or attractive.

In Bible days, Jewish custom was as follows: "In preparation for the marriage and the arrival of the groom the bride was bathed and oiled, perfumed, her hair fixed, and was adorned with her wedding garment" (Reinecker, p. 859).

"As a bride adorned for her husband" -

To think that God loves us so much that he has prepared a dwelling place for us so beautiful that it will satisfy every aspiration, and will surpass every imagination we ever had. This heavenly city will be the sum total of our every heart's desire and then some. More beautiful than the most majestic mountain. More sparkling than the water of the freshest spring or most invigorating water fall. More serene than the most calm and most peaceful lakes. More clean than the most remote land in the world. The heavenly city will be the most beautiful sight we ever set eyes on. The sight had such an impact on John that he spends two chapters (Rev. 21:1-22:5) and a total of 32 verses describing it.

IV. A GOD - INDWELT City (v. 3)

"Tabernacle" - a dwelling place where everyone is under the same roof.

We will forever be in the direct presence of God.

The heavenly city will be a place of intimate closeness to God

(***"He will dwell with them"*** (like Adam had before the fall).

The heavenly city will be a place of abiding relationship with God

(***"They shall be his people"***)

The heavenly city will be a place of personal fellowship with God

(***"God himself shall be with them"*** - the presence of God the Father will be our joy forever - Ps. 16:11).

V. A JOY-FILLED City (v. 4-5)

"No more death" - "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:26).

[NOTE: According to I Cor. 15:23-26, the order of resurrections is as follows:

1) First, Christ's
2) Then, that of believers at His coming (I Th. 4:13-18)
3) And finally, the resurrection at the end of the millennial kingdom (Ryrie Study Bible)

Death will exist during the Millennial Kingdom (though man's life span will be prolonged - Is. 65:20). Death will be no more in the eternal new Jerusalem.

"Shall wipe away all tears" - lit. every tear (singular) - God is concerned about each individual tear that is shed for righteousness sake . Tears shed in the tribulation will be wiped away by the hand of God (Rev. 7:17).

Tears, sorrow, and crying are usually the results of death and pain. Because death and pain will be no more, neither will the expressions of such exist. As the prophet said, *"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces"* (Is. 25:8).
"Crying" - Ps. 30:5 - *"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"*
For the believer, crying is temporary - it is joy that will be eternal!

"The former things are passed away" - Those that inhabit the new heavenly city will not even remember the former life on earth. God says: "...And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Is. 65:17).

V. 5
"These words are true and faithful"
"True" - God's promises about the future are not lies. This is one thing God can never do (Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2)
"Faithful" - God's promises about the future are true and worthy of your faith (trust). Without a doubt, He will certainly do all that He has promised. God's guarantee of eternal life is something you can rest upon.

VI. A RESTRICTED City (v. 6-8)

A. Those who WILL be there (v. 6-7)

1. The Thirsty (v. 6)

"It is done" - lit. "They (God's promises) have come to be reality" - perfect tense God's promises are so certain, that He speaks of them as having already been fulfilled (much like the believer's glorification - Rom. 8:30).
God who is not bound by time (II Pet. 3:8) sees the future as accurately as the past and present.

"I am Alpha and Omega" - (first and last letters in the Greek alphabet) - God's promise that "it is done" finds its basis in who He is. He is the beginning and the end of all things. He is the originator and concluder; the initiator and the completer; the origin and the final goal of all things; the "author and finisher." (Heb. 12:2)
"Alpha and Omega" - describes none other than Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:8)

"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely"

--***"I will give"*** -	the source of salvation is Jesus Christ (Jn.10:28)
--***"Unto him that is athirst"***	the recipient of salvation is the sinner who sees his need (Rev. 22:17; Jn. 4:13-14).
--***"The water of life"*** -	the means of salvation (just as water is essential to physical life, Christ's spiritual water is essential to eternal life)
--***"Freely"*** -	the cost of salvation - no charge (Rev. 22:17) *Is. 55:1 - "Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."*

2. The Overcomers (v. 7)

"He that overcometh" - similar phrase, repeated to each of the seven churches (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21)

"Overcome" = to conquer or be victorious ("we are more than conquerors" - Rom. 8:37)

NOTE: The believer's "overcoming" is not what saves him (salvation is not the result of works - Titus 3:5; Eph 2:8-9).

Overcoming is not the root of salvation, but the fruit of salvation
Overcoming is not the reason why we are saved but the result of salvation.
Overcoming is not the entrance into salvation but the evidence of salvation.
Overcoming is not the way to purchase salvation but it is the proof of salvation.

"Shall inherit all things" - Our inheritance is every aspect of the new heaven and new earth. We inherit because of Christ. He owns all and we are His wife (v. 9); therefore we inherit what is His via our union with Him (I Pet. 1:3-5).

We may not own anything in this life, but in the next, we will own it all with Christ!

"I will be his God" - a reference to the One who is the "Alpha and Omega" (v. 6) - namely, Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:8). Another evidence of Christ's deity.

B. Those who will NOT be there (v. 8)

"But" - introduces a contrast
Those with God's salvation (v. 7) are now contrasted with those without it.
Those who "overcome" (v. 7) are now distinguished from those who did not
(SEE 21:26, 27 for similar contrast).

"Fearful" - the cowardly. Those afraid of man rather than God. Those who would not take a stand for Christ when the pressure was put on. Those who "draw back unto perdition" (Heb. 10:39).
During the Tribulation, the pressure will be the greatest for men to deny Christ (Warning: Mt. 10:32-33).

"Unbelieving" - those who refused to believe God's Word and trust Christ for salvation

--atheists (who said there was no God)
--agnostics (who said you could not know for sure)
--hypocrites (who gave false professions of faith)

"Abominable" (perfect passive) - those who were polluted, defiled, or made detestable. Those who let the devil saturate their lives with the monstrous and unnatural vices of heathendom (Reinecker, citing Swete, p. 860). Those who were so sinful that their lives stunk with rottenness.

"Murderers" - those who take the life of innocent people (EX: abortion)

"Whoremongers" - pornos - those involved in premarital sex, and other forms of sexual immorality.

"Sorcerers" - Greek - pharmakois (Eng. pharmacy) - One who mixes and uses drugs, which were used in witchcraft or magic practices.

"Idolaters" - those who live for that which is not God. Those who worship things (whatever they may be) [Immediate reference would be the worship of the image made in honor of Antichrist - Rev. 13:14-15; 14:9-11]

"All liars" - all whose lives are characterized by that which is false. Those who don't tell the truth and don't live the truth, in order to deceive.

"Shall have their part" - in contrast with the inheritance of the righteous (v. 7); the inheritance of the unrighteous will be the Lake of fire.

"Fire and brimstone" - fire mixed with stinking sulphur

"The second death" - second because the unrighteous will be resurrected out of hell to stand before the Great White Throne Judgment, to be sentenced to die again, this time eternally - in the lake of fire (cp.Rev.20:14-15).

"THE SPLENDOR OF NEW JERUSALEM"
Revelation 21:9 - 22:5

INTRODUCTION: I Peter 1:4-5

V. 9

"One of the seven angels" = Evidently the same angel that showed John the fall of apostate Babylon (17:1), now shows John the descent of holy Jerusalem.

"The Bride, the Lamb's Wife" - Who is the Bride?

1. "They which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (v. 27)
2. "His servants" (22:3)
3. They are the ones who "shall see His face" (22:4)
4. Whose foreheads bear His name (22:4)
5. Who will reign for ever and ever (22:5)

The angel not only shows the Bride, but spends much time describing the dwelling place of the Bride.

V. 10

"In the Spirit" = in the realm of the Spirit. (John now travels in the Spirit as he did in 1:10, 4:2)

v. 10-11

John from a mountain top view sees a city which could be described in one word: "Splendor"

1) A great city - no city will compare
2) A holy city - set apart from all defilement
3) A heavenly city - it comes from Heaven where Christ built it (Jn. 14:1-2)
4) A glorious city - it radiates (glows) with the brilliance of God. Every facet of the city sparkles like the glimmer of a diamond.

A Practical Key Truth -- * Appreciate the greatness (splendor) of your future inheritance!**

The great splendor of new Jerusalem is described from the outside and inside.

I. The EXTERIOR splendor of New Jerusalem (v. 12-21)

A. The city's size (v. 12-17)

V. 12

Names on the gates = Compare: Ezekiel 48:31-34

North = Reuben, Judah, Levi
East = Joseph, Benjamin, Dan
South = Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun
West = Gad, Asher, Naphtali

Those who originated the nation of Israel will have their names inscribed.

V. 14

"Twelve foundations" - the same apostles who laid the foundation for the Church will have their names inscribed as perpetual reminders.

Eph. 2:20 - "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

"the twelve apostles of the Lamb" - **All except Judas who was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:26)

[Some argue that Matthias was not God's replacement but was the choice of Peter and the other 120 disciples (Acts 1:23-26), who acted impulsively without direction from God. They say Paul will be the twelfth. This argument is untenable.]

The Apostle John no doubt saw his name inscribed. Imagine the thrill he felt!

V. 16

"Foursquare" = a complete square with four sides.
The length, breadth, and height are all equal in dimension.
Hence, the wall is as high as it is long! No wonder it is called "great" (v. 12).
Like the Holy of Holies in the temple of Solomon where God has his dwelling place, the holy Jerusalem is a perfect cube (Smith, p. 289).
"Furlong" = [Greek "stadion"] - 1/8 Roman mile, 185 meters, 607 feet.
12,000 furlongs = 7,284,000 feet or 1,380 miles

The dimensions can be compared as follows:
The distance of Maine to Florida
The distance from the Atlantic Ocean to Colorado
Over 1/2 the size of the USA is God's eternal city!
"If you allocated 1 mile per floor level, then there would be 1380 floors, with each containing 1,904,400 square miles. Therefore the total surface area of The New Jerusalem would be 2,628,072,000 square miles. The total surface area of the Earth is only 510,100,000 square miles. The surface area of the New Jerusalem is more than 5 times the surface area of the Earth." (Rosenthal, Zion's Fire/May-June 1993, p.11)

V. 17

The thickness of the wall is 144 cubits; Cubit = 18 inches
Hence, the wall will be 2,592 inches thick, or in other words 216 feet! (2/3 the length of a football field, or 72 yards).
The angel used the measurement of a man's cubit (elbow to forefinger) so that we would comprehend the dimensions.

B. The city's quality (v. 18-21)

V. 18

"Jasper" = the wall will be clear as crystal (v. 11), sparkling and transparent because there will be nothing to hide!

V. 21

"Pure gold as it were transparent glass" - apparently the gold of heaven is so pure it is crystal clear. Recent scientific discoveries revealed that Gold in its absolute purest form is as the Bible says: clear as crystal !
Imagine walking on a crystal-clear street!

II. The INTERIOR splendor of New Jerusalem (v. 22 - 22:5)

A. The city's Temple (v. 22)

In the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-6), there will be a temple (Ezek. 40-46), but not in the New Jerusalem. A temple is a place to go to meet with God. In the New Jerusalem, God is the Temple. Hence, we will be dwelling forever in the midst of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb" - NOTE: how closely tied together God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are in context (SEE also: v. 23, 22:1, 3)
They both comprise the same temple (v. 23); they both radiate the same glorious light (v. 23); and they both sit on the same throne (22:1, 3).

B. The city's Light (v. 23-25)

V. 23

"The Lamb is the light" - Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12, 9:5)
NOTE: Christ's brilliance in Rev. 1:16 - *"His countenance was as the Sun shineth in his strength"* [to look into the sun with your naked eye at 12:00 noon would compare with looking at Jesus Christ!]

V. 24

"The nations of them which are saved..."

--Only saved people will be in this city.

Are you saved? (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 10:13; Acts 16:31).

"The kings of the earth..." = (cp. v. 26) apparently people can live outside of the city during eternity - on the new earth (21:1).

V. 25

"The gates of it shall not be shut" = In ancient times, city gates were locked at sunset for security purposes.

"There shall be no night there" - Since God is light (I Jn. 1:5), and God dwells in the city, there will never be any darkness.

C. The city's Purity (v. 26-27)

V. 26

That which is valuable shall not be stored away in some bank, nor in the Vatican, but in New Jerusalem.

V. 27

"There shall in no wise enter ..." (cp. 21:8; 22:14-15).

"Defileth" - that which is common (or unclean) (It is a place of purity)

"Abomination" - shameful or indecent practices (it is a place of righteousness)

"Lie" - falsehood (it is a place of truth)

"The Lamb's book" - it is a book that belongs to Jesus; and a book that only includes the names of those who belong to Jesus (Rev. 20:15).

D. The city's River (22:1)

"The water of life" - God is the only source of such!

Jesus is such living water (Jn. 4:13-14).

E. The city's Tree of Life (22:2)

"The tree of life" - the tree formerly restricted from sinful Adam (Gn. 3:22-24) is now available to all (SEE: Rev. 22:14).

F. The city's Occupants (22:3-5)

V. 3

"No more curse" - no more cursed ground (Genesis. 3).

The reason for no more curse is because God the Father is there. He will not exist where there is a curse (EX: He turned His face away from Jesus as He became a curse for us - Gal. 3:13).

"His servants shall serve Him" - uninhibited service with the curse of sin removed.

V. 4

"They shall see His face" -

Ps. 17:15 - "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Mt. 5:8 - "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

I Cor. 13:12 - "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

I Jn. 3:2 - "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is."

"His name...in their foreheads" (cp. Rev. 7:3) - indicative of ownership and allegiance. Satan the counterfeiter, will falsely duplicate such a mark on people's foreheads (Rev. 13).

V. 5

"They shall reign for ever and ever" - In contrast to kings of today; also in contrast to the 1,000 year millennial reign (Rev. 20:6). They will have uninhibited dominion as Adam did before the Fall (Gen.1:26), however, in glorified bodies.

"The Book of Revelation . . .
WORDS YOU MUST NEVER FORGET!"
Revelation 22:6-10, 18-19

A major emphasis in Revelation 22:6-21 involves the credibility, authority, urgency, and importance of the written words of the book of Revelation.

The word ***"words"*** or ***"sayings"*** (Greek Logoi) occurs six times in this chapter
(v. 6 - "sayings"; v. 7 - "sayings"; v. 9 - "sayings"; v. 10 - "sayings"; v. 18 - "words"; v. 19 - "words").
The word ***"prophecy"*** (referring to the written future events) occurs four times.
The word ***"book"*** (Biblion - meaning scroll) occurs seven times.

A Practical Key Truth -- * It is important that you never forget the book of Revelation!**

Above all books, you must know this one!
Four facts about the book of Revelation reveal its extreme importance to your life:

I. **The Book of Revelation Contains:** **BELIEVABLE WORDS (v. 6)**
(They are worthy of your complete trust)
II. **The Book of Revelation Contains:** **IMPORTANT WORDS (v. 7-9)**
(They require your serious attention)
III. **The Book of Revelation Contains:** **URGENT WORDS (v. 10)**
(They are soon to be fulfilled)
IV. **The Book of Revelation Contains:** **SPECIFIC WORDS (v. 18-19)**
(They are not to be altered)

I. The Book of Revelation Contains: BELIEVABLE WORDS (v. 6)
(They are worthy of your complete trust)

After hearing the amazing wonder of the events yet to come (i.e. the awesome nature of the miracles, signs and judgments about to come [Rev. 4-19]; and the splendor of our eternal home [Rev. 21-22:5] -- the skeptics might sneer and doubt the validity of such promises.
It is because of such cynical skepticism, as well as to bolster our faith, that words of assurance follow in Rev. 22:6ff.

"He said unto me" - the same angel which revealed to John the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9;
cp. 22:8).
"These sayings are faithful and true" -
"Sayings" - lit. words (the preceding prophecies as written)
"Faithful" - worthy of trust; dependable; you can place "full faith" in these sayings
"True"- free from falsehood. The basis for the "faithfulness" of God's Word is the "trueness" of it. Nothing is worthy of anyone's faith unless it is absolutely true.
The prophecies of Revelation are called "true and faithful" also in 21:5.
And the reason they are "faithful and true" is because their Author is! [Jesus is named "the Word of God" (19:13), who is called "faithful and true" (3:14; 19:11), and He is the Revealer of the "Apocalypsis" (1:1; 22:16)]

"The Lord God of the holy prophets" - The same God who spoke in the Old Testament through Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, etc., is the One who spoke in the book of Revelation. Just as many of God's prophecies in the O.T. were fulfilled at Christ's first coming, so His prophecies will be fulfilled prior to, during, and after Christ's second coming.

v. 6
NOTE: Another proof of the deity of Christ:
cp. ***"The Lord God ... sent His angel"*** (v. 6)
"I Jesus have sent my angel" (v. 16)

"His servants" - lit. His bondslaves (doulois - cp. I Cor. 4:1)
God's slaves are Christians who serve Him in local churches (22:16).
The book of Revelation has direct bearing on local churches today! It is not merely a book for "Tribulation saints." God wants you to know this book, because its events could take place in your lifetime!

"The things which must shortly be done" -
"Must" = lit. It is necessary.
God does not say the prophecies "will" merely take place, but that they must take place. Thus God shows the absolute certainty of fulfillment.
In a context of prophecy, Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away"* (Mt. 24:35). Also Jesus stated in Matthew 5:18 - *"For verily I saw unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."*

II. The Book of Revelation Contains: IMPORTANT WORDS (v. 7-9)
(They require your serious attention)

V. 7

"Blessed" = to be blessed is to be showered with God's benefits of strength, wisdom, and joy (all of which will be needed by the generation that enters the 20th week of Daniel - commonly called the Tribulation)

"Keepeth" - to hide the Word (in your heart) and heed the Word (by obeying it).

"The prophecy of this Book" = cp. Rev. 1:3. The book of Revelation is the only book of the Bible that specifically promises a blessing to those who read and heed its message.

V. 8
"I John" - John is overwhelmed at the thought that he personally had the privilege of seeing (with his eyes) and hearing (with his ears) the panoramic preview of End time events.
Being awestruck, he again (perhaps a bit irrationally) falls down before the angel who revealed God's prophecies to him, as he did before in Rev. 19:10, only to be rebuked.
V. 9
The angel is quick to reject ***"worship"*** and gives 3 reasons why:
1. Angels are only God's servants (***"fellow servant"*** - lit. "fellow slave")
2. Angels are no better than God's prophets (the saints will one day judge angels - I Cor. 6:3)
3. Angels are in a similar class as those who obey God's Word, being subject to God's Word themselves.

"Worship God" - Christ is worshipped many times in Scripture
(by angels - Heb. 1:6; by men - Mt. 14:33; by all - Phil. 3:10).
We must never worship anything or anyone other than God!

III. The Book of Revelation Contains: URGENT WORDS (v. 10)
(They are soon to be fulfilled)

"Seal not" = to "seal" a book means to securely close it up so that its contents cannot be read or tampered with until an appointed time.
(EX: "According to Roman law, a testament or will was sealed with seven seals by seven witnesses" - Reinecker, p. 824).

By telling John not to seal up the book of Revelation, the angel is telling him that this book is not a closed book. It is a book that God wants read, studied, memorized, understood, applied, and obeyed.

God's reason for not sealing the book is clearly stated: ***"For the time is at hand"*** (the season or specific point of time for fulfillment is near!)

"The prophet Daniel was commanded to seal his book (Dan. 12:4), because the time was not yet ready. John's book was an "apocalypse"--an unveiling (Rev. 1:1)--and therefore, it must not be sealed" (Wiersbe, p. 625).

SEE Verse 6 - ***"The things which must shortly be done"***
"shortly" - quickly or speedily.

Two ideas:

1) The events in Revelation will occur with speed once their prophecy begins to be fulfilled (EX: the Tribulation is only 7 years long).

* 2) The events in Revelation will soon be fulfilled. The time is near! NOTE: the frequent references to time and imminent expectancy in Rev. 22 -

a) "Shortly" (v. 6)
b) "I come quickly" (v. 7)
c) "The time is at hand" (v. 10)
d) "I come quickly" (v. 12)
e) "Surely I come quickly" (v. 20)

The same way Jesus begins the book of Revelation speaking about its soon fulfillment (Rev. 1:1), so He ends the book.

IV. The Book of Revelation Contains: SPECIFIC WORDS (v. 18-19)
(They are not to be altered)

V. 18

"I testify" - the One who bears testimony (witness) to this warning is Jesus Christ (He is the subject of the context - v. 16)

"Unto every man" - This warning is for all who hear. God wants all to know the seriousness of tampering with His Word.

"that heareth the words" - NOTE: The warning applies not merely to scribes and Bible translators, but to everyone who even *"**hears** the word of the prophecy of this book."*

In John's day, the book of Revelation was read aloud. If those who heard it expanded on what was said and claimed that God had said more than He actually said, they would be held culpable by God. (ex. allegorical interpretations; reading into the text what is not really there)

"If any man" - This warning is to all -- to fear. No one, regardless of position or power will be excluded from paying for their additions to God's Word.

"Unto these things" - the things in the book of Revelation.

"The plagues" - the Trumpet Judgments (Rev.8-9), Bowl Judgments (Rev. 15:8-16), particularly death (Rev. 18:8), and the Lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

Those who add their words to written Revelation and claim that their words are on an equal par are heading for disaster!

V. 19

"If any man" - again pointing to the universality of the warning.

"Take away" - to delete, omit, etc. God intends for all of his written message to be preserved so that no one will miss any details that they will need to survive the coming Tribulation.

To add or take away from God's Word is to alter its faithfulness and trueness (v. 6), which is something God has providentially safeguarded through the centuries.

The Lord is not only referring to a deletion of written Scriptural text, but, if anyone denied any of the details that God said in this book, they will also be considered guilty.

> --The Liberals deny God's Word by minimizing the importance of the very words of this book.
>
> --Others, among mainline denominations "allegorize" the Word and explain away its true meaning (Epp, p. 445)

"The book of life" - Rev. 20:15

NOTE: This does not indicate that a person is saved and then lost. But rather it indicates that the person was not a believer in the first place or else he would not have tampered with the Word of God" (Epp, 445).

"The Holy City" = New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

"The things which are written" - the blessings awaiting the believer (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

God is serious about His Word! Even in the O.T., God sternly warned against additions or omission to His Scripture. --

> *Deut. 4:2 - "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."*
>
> *Deut. 12:32 - "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."*
>
> *Prov. 30:6 - "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."*

NOW IS THE TIME!
Revelation 22:10-17; 20-21

v.10 ***"The time is at hand"***
A major emphasis in Rev. 22:6-21 is on the urgency of preparedness: the extreme importance of being ready for Christ's return.

Note the repeated references to Christ's coming:
"Behold I come quickly" (v. 7)
"Behold I come quickly" (v. 12)
"Behold I come quickly" (v. 20)
The fulfillment of the book of Revelation is surely near!
This is why John is told not to "seal up" the book of Revelation (verse 10).
"The time is at hand" - lit. the specific season for fulfillment is near!

The time is near for the Antichrist to be revealed . . .for the seals to be loosed . . . for the trumpets to blow . . . for the bowls to be poured out . . . Above all, the time is near for Christ to come back!

Therefore, now is the time for God's people to wake up spiritually (SEE: Rom. 13:11-12)

A Practical Key Truth -- * Realize the urgency of the present hour!**

I. Now is the time to: CHANGE YOUR DESTINY! (v.11)

Note the contrasts:
"unjust" (unrighteous) -- -- ***"righteous"***
"filthy" -- -- -- -- -- --***"holy"***
When it comes to salvation, urgency is most clearly emphasized in Holy Scripture -
Prov. 27:1 - "Boast not thyself of tomorrow: for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."
II Cor. 6:2 - "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: beheld, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

At which point is man's fate fixed? (When will it be impossible to alter one's eternal destiny?)
--Upon death (Heb. 9:27; Lk. 16:26) It's too late in eternity to change your destiny!
--Upon receiving the Mark of the Beast (Rev. 14:9-11)
*Those who believe the lie of the Antichrist will have no chance to change their destiny - II Thes. 2:10-12

II. Now is the time to: LAY UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN! (v.12-13)

V. 12
"My reward is with Me" = Christ comes with His rewards at hand.
This phrase, when compared with Isaiah 40:10, proves Christ to be Jehovah God!
"To give" = to pay back
"Every man" = impartial and universal treatment
"As his work shall be" - Whatever has been done will be rewarded.
Our works for Christ will not go unrewarded. "Their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13)
"Whatever is sown will be reaped" (Gal. 6:7) Works don't lie.
Christ saves according to grace (Eph. 2:8),
But He rewards according to works!
(I Cor. 3:13-15; II Cor. 5:10)
Where are you laying up treasure? SEE: Matthew 6:19-21 (cp. I Tim. 6:13-19)
SEE: II Peter 3:10-11

V. 13
Lest anyone would doubt Christ's true ability to reward men of all ages, He identifies Himself as eternal!

--Nothing has ever been before Christ -
"He is before all things" - Col. 1:17
"In the beginning was the Word..." - Jn. 1:1

--Nothing will exist after Christ

III. Now is the time to: OBEY GOD'S COMMANDMENTS! (v.14-15)

V. 14
"Blessed are they that do His commandments" - Some suggest that the better reading is: "Blessed are they who wash their robes" (NASV, NIV).
However, Tertullian (160-221 A.D.) quoted this verse as *"do his commandments"*
("On Modesty" I:19:2)
Obviously, God is not teaching "works" salvation.
So what commandments would give one the right to the tree of life?
*The command to believe.
(SEE John 6:28-29; cp. Acts 16:31)
NOTE: the proof (evidence) of such belief would be keeping His commandments (SEE I Jn. 2:4-5)

"Right to the tree of life" = authority to eat of that tree (cp. 22:2), only comes to those who are saved and have evidenced such salvation by obedience.

"Enter in through the gates into the city" - Authority to enter the pearly gates of New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10, 21) will also go to the obedient true believers.

V. 15
"Without" = outside; left out; those who will not be allowed entrance are described in verse 15.
Who will not be in the heavenly city?

1) ***"Dogs"*** = not referring to canine animals but to people of evil character.
Phil. 3:2 - "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision"
The word "dogs" was particularly used of Sodomites. In a context describing who was and was not allowed into the camp of O.T. Israel, Moses refers to Sodomites as "dogs" who are not to be allowed in Israel
(SEE Deut. 23:17-18; cp. Lev. 18:22, 20:13)

2) ***"Sorcerers"*** - Pharmachoi - drug users (cp. 21:8)

3) ***"Whoremongers"*** = fornicators; those involved in illicit sex and pre-marital sex.

4) ***"Murderers"*** - someone who takes the life of an innocent person (EX: abortion, hatred)

5) ***"Idolaters"*** - someone who lives for that which is not God! (Beware of "idols of the heart" - Ezek. 14:3-8)

6) ***"Liars"*** - those who practice falsehood
"Loveth" - those who find pleasure in lying
"Maketh" - those who live a lie. Just as telling a lie with your lips is wrong, so is making a lie by your life wrong. Falsehood and deceit is accomplished in more ways than with the mouth. Don't be a hypocrite!

IV. Now is the time to: RESPOND TO GOD'S INVITATION! (v.16-17)

V. 16

"in the churches" - the warnings and admonitions in Revelation must have direct bearing on the N.T. local church.

Don't neglect Revelation because you suppose its fulfillment will be future. It could explode into fulfillment in this generation.

V. 17

Who is inviting men to salvation?

1) The ***"Spirit"*** - the Holy Spirit (Don't resist Him! Acts 7:51)
2) The ***"Bride"*** - the saved, the Church (Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 19:7)
   The "Spirit and the Bride" are closely joined because it is the Spirit who invites men to salvation through the Bride.
3) ***"Him that heareth"*** - him who has "ears to hear" (Rev. 2-3)
   Implied - one who has heard and believed should witness so others can hear. "How will they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14)

Who can come to salvation?

1) The thirsty - ***"Him that is athirst"*** cp. Rev. 21:6; Jn. 4:14; 7:38
   Psalm 42:1-2 - "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"
2) The willing - ***"Whosoever will"*** - Those who wish to be saved will be! Those who desire to be saved will be.

"The water of life freely" - No cost to the one who drinks.

Is. 55:1 - "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

V. Now is the time to: PREPARE FOR CHRIST'S COMING! (v.20-21)

V. 20

"He which testifieth" = Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:1-2)
"Surely" = YES
"I come quickly" - Christ's coming will be with speed
(Mt. 24:27 - *"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."*)
"Amen" = "so be it" This is the response of someone who is ready.

"Even so" = Yes
"Come Lord Jesus" = the heart's desire of someone who loves Christ is to have Him come--and soon.
How do you know when you are prepared to meet Christ?
ANSWER: When you can say, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"*
Can you say that?
Or do you have you own agenda to finish first?

Today, we await the coming of Christ (I Th. 4:14-18). The Day of the Lord will follow and catch the world by surprise (I Th. 5:1-9)

This interim time period is a time to:

***<u>wait</u> for His coming**

I Th. 1:10 - "And to wit for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

***<u>look</u> for His coming**

Titus 2:13 - "Looking for that blessed hope,a nd the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savor Jesus Christ"

***<u>be ready</u> for His coming**

Mt. 24:44 - "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

***<u>to desire</u> His coming**

Rev. 22:20 - "Even so come Lord Jesus"

V. 21

"Grace" - Unmerited favor. Grace is not only needed for the lost to be saved, but for the saints to be victorious through life. Grace will be needed for the Tribulation saints to make it through!

"Of our Lord Jesus Christ" - God's grace is only in Christ. God has no other reserve wherein grace is stored. The source of grace is only Christ! (Eph. 2:5-7; Jn. 1:7; Rom. 5:15; Eph. 1:3) Apart from Christ, God has no grace to offer.

The grace of Christ is the most needed virtue you could <u>wish</u> upon anyone.

Rather than saying, "God bless you," a better phrase might be: "May God's grace be upon you" The reason: God's grace in Christ is the source of blessing!

"With you <u>all</u>" = all need Christ's grace, and His grace is extended to all, but only those who have Christ have his free grace (Rom. 6:33; I Jn 5:11-12).