

REVELATION

By William R. Cunningham

Updated November 2008

PREFACE

The book of Revelation has a reputation of being a “spooky” book. People typically think of it in terms of its eschatology. However, Revelation has much more to offer than what it reveals about the end of this age. The mention of Revelation brings thoughts of beasts, dragons, the antichrist, etc. However, we will find that the book of Revelation brought hope though it is full of imagery.

The purpose of this study is to help you better understand the book of Revelation. Revelation is not a mystic book that baffles everyone unless you are a bible scholar. What is the message of Revelation? How are we to extract the word of the Lord from a writing that seems so difficult to decipher? How are we to know what the images mean or are those images to be taken literally?

I hope that after reading this study guide that you will have a better understanding of the book of Revelation. This study in no way attempts to be the exclusive and absolutely correct interpretation of Revelation. You will find that such a study does not exist nor can it. However, I will present to you information about Revelation and the various beliefs used to interpret it so that you may obtain the message that will edify you.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Revelation is the last book of the Christian bible. It is very different from all other biblical books, but in some ways very similar as we will see. Revelation is in a class by itself and appears to need a special method of interpretation. Such is generally not the case in that Revelation was written in a literary style that was common.

Let's attempt to answer questions about Revelation such as its purpose, author, time of writing, and more.

Purpose: The purpose of Revelation appears to have been to give the New Christians hope in the midst of their persecutions. It reveals the person of Jesus Christ.

Literary Style: Revelation is written in a writing style called **apocalyptic** literature. Apocalyptic literature is an ancient style of writing using much imagery and was usually written in the name of an ancient hero. Because apocalyptic literature is highly pictorial and symbolic, we should be careful not to get stuck on the details of this book. Always seek the main message. The title of the book Apokalupsis (The Revelation) means to uncover, to unveil. We will discuss apocalyptic literature shortly.

The Delivery: The message given to John was visual. The visions included many signs and symbols that even John didn't understand. He used illustrations to describe these things. The events in Revelations are not necessarily chronological.

Major Sections of Revelation: There are Two Major Sections of Revelation: Things that are (Chapters 1 - 3) and things to come (Chapters 4 - 22).

An Epistle: Revelation was written in the format of an epistle.

- Its beginning occurs at 1:4 after a brief introduction (1:1-3).
- This epistle has the same opening sequence as all of Paul's letters, James, Peter, and Jude.
- The closing of Revelation is similar to all of Paul's letters and Hebrews.
- Therefore, it is important to consider that Revelation was a letter written to a specific group of Christians (to the seven churches), at the time it was written, and addressing specific needs.
- When interpreting Revelation we should try to understand how it would have been perceived by the

intended readers before we transfer its message to our time.

UNLIKE OTHER NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

Revelation is unlike other New Testament books in the following manners.

1. Revelation is a prophecy (1:3; 22:7, 10, 18-19). Other books have prophecies in them, but Revelation identifies itself as a prophecy.
 - a. Prophecies in the NT were give encouragement and edification and comfort to the church (1 Cor. 14:3).
 - b. Chapters 2 – 3 gives the Word of the Lord concerning current situations in the church.
 - c. chapters 4 – 22 concerns itself with things to come “after these things”
2. Revelation was written as apocalyptic literature, which was popular in John’s time. It is a symbolic style of writing.
 - a. There were many Jewish writings from 200 B.C. to 100 A.D. that used the apocalyptic style. Because of that they were called apocalyptic, e.g., the Book of Enoch, The Apocalypse of baruch, The Book of Jubilees.

REVELATION IS SIMILAR TO OTHER APOCALYPTIC BOOKS

Revelation is similar to other books written in the apocalyptic style in the following manners.

1. It was common for angels appear as tour guides and interpreters
2. Revelation was written during a time of intense persecution of believers, which is the case for other apocalyptic writing
3. Vivid images and symbols are used, including symbolic uses of numbers
 - a. This fact is important when interpreting apocalyptic writing. Apocalyptic writing should NOT be interpreted literally. Doing so will cause one to totally miss the message. Literal interpretations are why there are some very strange interpretations of Revelation.
 - b. Revelation should therefore be interpreted symbolically not literally
 - c. One can also argue that the visions and imagery that John saw were real and that his writing therefore only appears apocalyptic. This however is unlikely.
4. Numbers are used for more than the measure of quantity. They many times have symbolic meanings. For example, the number seven is used to represent completeness or perfection (Deut. 28:7, 25; Ps 12:6; 119:164; Prov. 9:1; 24:16).
 - a. There are seven churches, seven seals, and seven trumpets.
 - b. We should also keep this in mind when interpreting the 1000 years period. The “1000 years” could simply mean a long time.

HOW REVELATION IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER APOCALYPTIC WRITINGS

1. Revelation claims to be the inspired word (prophecy) of God, which the Christian church does recognize as such. This is why Revelation became one of the canonical books.
2. Revelation identifies the author by name. Other Apocalyptic writers would use pseudonyms such as the name of a famous person in history.

3. Revelation actually predicts the future. Other apocalyptic writings only appear to tell the future. The writer would write from the perspective of the pseudonym (a famous warrior in the past for example) and speak of things that would come in the future (from the warrior's perspective). However, the writing is really only telling recent history as those "predicted" events would have already occurred in real time.

AUTHORSHIP

- Revelation identifies John as the author (1:1, 4; 21:2; 22:8). But what John?
- The early apostolic fathers attributed the authorship of Revelation to John, the son of Zebedee (the apostle of Christ). This includes Justin Martyr (d. 165), Irenaeus (c. 180), Clement of Alexandria (d. 215), Tertullian (d. 220).
- However, some scholars suggest that it was another John that wrote Revelation, namely John the Presbyter.
- Some also claim that the John who wrote Revelation could not have been the same John who wrote the other New Testament works attributed to John the son of Zebedee. This is because the Greek that is used in Revelation is a very inferior form of Greek than that of the Gospel of John, for example. The Gospel and epistles of John use a very literary (well formed) Greek whereas Revelation's Greek is almost like a foreign language it is so badly formed.
- The fact that the Greek in Revelation is inferior to the other works by John could be explained by the following.
 - John was unschooled (See Acts 4:13). He probably didn't know how to write well formed Greek. The reason that his other writings were well formed could be explained by the use of a secretary, which would not have been available on Patmos. This is like comparing the writings of someone who has very poor English writing skills and someone who is more versed at writing the English language.
 - It could also be explained by the fact that he was rushing to write as he saw the visions.
- It is most likely that there was no one in the early that could be identified by simply using the first name, John. The apostle John was well known such that he could simply use his first name to identify himself.
- Revelation uses many concepts and expressions that are used in the other works of John. For example the word "Logos" as a term for Jesus Christ is found only in the Gospel of John and Revelation (John 1:1, Revelation 19:13).

The result of this data is that John is the most probable author of Revelation.

WHEN WAS REVELATION WRITTEN?

It is very important when interpreting any biblical work that we establish the historical and cultural context. This will help us to understand the things that are revealed within the writing. One important thing to know about Revelation therefore is the date it was written. Of course we will never know the exact date that it was written, but we can determine approximately when it was written.

If we accept that John the Apostle is the author then we know that it would have been written during his lifetime after the resurrection of Jesus Christ (about 32 – 33 AD). It is believed that John died of old age in 99 -100 AD. Therefore Revelation would have been written between 33 and 100 AD.

We said that Revelation was written during a time of intense persecution of the church. Though there were many (about 10) emperors that persecuted the church there are only two that had intense persecution of the church

during John's lifetime. Those two were Nero and Domitian. Nero reigned from 54 – 68 AD and Domitian reigned from 81 – 96 AD.

Most scholars place the writing of Revelation at about 96 AD though there are some who advocate an earlier writing (during Nero's reign). An earlier date would imply that Revelation was predicting the fall of Jerusalem that took place in 70 AD.

There are good arguments for both dates.

DURING NERO'S TIME (EARLIER DATE)

- Some believe that Revelation was written during Nero's reign due to Revelation 17:10.

"There are also seven kings. five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come."

This is taken to mean that five Roman emperors have fallen, one is current, and one hasn't reigned yet. That would mean that the current emperor of Rome was Nero, who was the sixth emperor.

- The reference to the temple in 11:1-2 suggests that the temple at Jerusalem still existed (was standing). It was burned down in 70 AD by the Romans. This may not be a viable clue for when Revelation was written. This reference was part of a vision that may or may not be referring to an actual structure.

DURING DOMITIAN'S REIGN (LATER DATE)

- Chapter 13 alludes to emperor worship and that the "mortal head wound that healed" referred to a superstition after Nero died that he would return and conquer Rome. It is claimed that emperor worship wasn't enforced until Domitian's rule and that Domitian was called "Second Nero."
 - However, some would argue that the prophetic portion of Revelation (including chapter 13) may not be speaking of current events, but of events that would happen in the future. Therefore, the reference didn't have to be of Nero or Domitian at all, but someone in the future.
- Nero's persecution was localized to Rome whereas Domitian's reign was more "global." Revelation was written to seven churches one of which was located in what is now Turkey. Nero's persecution would not have extended to that region so it is believed that the persecution was due to Domitian's actions.
 - However, one could argue that even though Nero's persecution was local it could still have had global affects. Those who had issues with the Christian church could have taken opportunity of Nero's distant persecution to persecute the Christians that were local to them. Thus Nero's persecution could have been global. This is further supported by the fact that Revelations chapters 2 and 3 indicate that the church was suffering persecution from local persecutors.
- Support for a later date of Revelation is found in the fact that a few of the churches had experienced spiritual decline (Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea). Since Nero's persecution happened only decades after their founding, it is believed that there wasn't enough time for spiritual decay at that date. Therefore, Domitian's reign is a more plausible time frame for such spiritual decay to occur. However, we should not think that the spiritual decay of a church can happen relatively quickly. Therefore, it is possible that the churches could have suffered spiritual decay by Nero's reign.
- Support for a later date is found in the belief that the church at Smyrna didn't exist during Paul's time (Paul died in 67 AD). Therefore, if Revelation was written during Nero's persecution then there wouldn't have been a church in Smyrna to write to.

However the belief that there was no church in Smyrna during Paul's lifetime comes from a statement of Polycarp in a letter he wrote to the church at Philippi. In it he stated that the church at Smyrna "had not yet known the Him" (known the Lord). However, this doesn't mean that the church didn't exist only that they didn't know the Lord.

- Support for a later date of Revelation is found from the fact that many early church fathers indicated that Domitian was emperor when John wrote Revelation. It appears that they based their information on a statement made by Irenaeus. He indicated that it was at the end of Domitian's reign that the Revelation was written (Against Heresies, Book V, Chapter XXX).

"Such, then, being the state of the case, and this number being found in all the most approved and ancient copies(3) [of the Apocalypse], and those men who saw John face to face bearing their testimony [to it];"

"We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign."

However there is some dispute as to what Irenaeus really meant. Some say that he was only referring to John while others say he was referring to His work (the Revelation). If Irenaeus was indeed speaking about the vision of John then his statement would hold quite a bit of credibility. This is because Irenaeus knew Polycarp and Polycarp was a disciple of John.

In any case, Irenaeus' words are uncertain since the original does not exist. We only have translated copies of Irenaeus' works.

- There is also evidence of an earlier date of Revelation based on a different approach to interpreting Irenaeus' statements about John.

Tradition has it that Revelation was written by John during the reign of Domitian, which was about 96 AD. However, it should be pointed out that there are valid arguments for an earlier date (during the time of Nero).

INTERPRETATIONS OF REVELATION

There are at least four different interpretations of Revelations that have developed over the centuries.

1. **Historicists** – Revelation is a prophecy that shows us where history is going starting from the time of the Apostles to the end of time.
2. **Preterists** – The events depicted in Revelation were in the future at the time it was written and took place not long after the time it was written, i.e., they occurred in our past. Some preterists believe that some of the events in Revelation took place shortly after it was written and others will take place even in our future, i.e., the end of time.
3. **Spiritualists** – Revelation is a story that tells of the struggle between good and evil until the final victory of God (good), e.g., between God and Satan. This particular interpretation view does not attempt to find fulfillment of the visions (prophecies) in Revelation. Revelation is seen as symbolic something like an allegory.
4. **Futurists** – Everything after chapter 4 will take place shortly before the return of Christ. Therefore, the futurists believe that most of Revelation has yet to be fulfilled.

THE PERIODS OF CHURCH

Christians were persecuted at various times for hundreds of years. We will look at those periods in Christian history where persecution took place around the time of the writing of Revelation since that would be the proper context of the book.

- Nero (AD 64 - 67) - He was born in AD 37 and was the fifth emperor of Rome. His father was vicious and his mother was unconcerned about his morals. He married Poppaea and his attitude changed. He killed

his mother and officials mainly to acquire their possessions. He gave Christians over to wild beasts and burned them alive.

- In AD 64 part of Rome was burned down and Nero was suspected of giving the order to burn it. He used the Christians as the "scapegoat". Nero killed himself in AD 68. He was the last of the Cesears. Paul and Peter were martyred under Nero.
- Domitian (AD 95) - His reign was short but dense. Over 40,000 Christians were tortured and killed in Rome and Italy.
- Trajan (AD 98 - 117) - One of Rome's best emperors. However, he felt that he had to uphold Roman law. Christianity was unlawful because Rome considered it a secret society and such were not permitted. Also, the Christians would not take part in Emperor worship. Simeon, Jesus' brother, was killed during this period.
- Before AD 60, Christianity fell under the umbrella of Religio Licita. Roman law regarded Christianity as a variety of Judaism which was a permitted cult. Eventually the Roman officials saw a clear distinction between the two. Now Christianity was not allowed to survive because it became a political threat.

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MILLENNIUM

One of the greatest controversies in Revelation is the meaning of the millennial rule. The book of Revelation deals with the apparent second coming of Jesus Christ. This second coming is associated with a period of a thousand years, i.e., the millennium. There are many interpretations of the millennium period (See Chapter 20). Let me list them below.

- **Amillennialism** - The thousand years is figurative. This interpretation, from the Alexandrian school of theology (Third century), believes that the millennium has already begun with the first coming of Christ. The prophecy will be consummated in his second coming followed immediately by the eternal state. The Roman Catholic Church and the protestant reformers adopted this view.
 - The binding of Satan happened spiritually at the Cross
 - The reign of the saints is the present age
 - The loosing of Satan is a final period of deception shortly before the second coming of Christ
- **Postmillennialism** - Jesus will come after the thousand years. Introduced by Daniel Whitby. It is believed here that the church will establish the 1000 years of peace through its evangelistic mission of the church. This will result in all or most people on the earth becoming Christians, which is the cause for such peace. This view has been predominantly abandoned because of 20th century world events.
- **Premillennialism** (chiliasm) – Jesus will come before the millennial period and then establish his kingdom on earth and reign as king. Christ will reign with his saints on earth during these thousand years. The millennial reign will be characterized by peace and justice on the earth.
 - **Historic premillennialism** – this is the basic pre-millennialism that was discussed above
 - **Dispensational premillennialism (dispensationalism)** – The emphasis is on the continuing centrality of national Israel in God's eschatological program and in anticipating a rapture of Christians to heaven before the beginning of the tribulation period.

ESCHATOLOGY

Eschatology is a division of systematic theology dealing with the doctrine of last things such as death, resurrection, the second coming of Christ, the end of the age, divine judgment, and the future state. Differing interpretations of eschatology is dependant on the literalness of the interpretation of the subject prophecy. These views differ also according to the view of God in eschatology. Eschatology is not designed to satisfy curiosity, rather to provide an intelligent comprehension of the future as a guide for a present program, and a sure ground

for hope.

THEORIES ABOUT THE RAPTURE

Many believe that Christians will be taken up in an instant to be with Jesus before He returns or during the time of his return. This brings on many theories as to Christians in the tribulation. It is important to learn what the bible has to say about anything that we are taught or believe.

The word rapture does not exist in the Bible. It comes from a Latin word used to translate a Greek word in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 - "Caught Up". There are two occurrences of a rapture: 1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 18 and Revelation 19. There are about five views of the rapture.

1. **A-Tribulation** - There is no literal tribulation period. This implies that a rapture will not exist.
2. **Post Tribulation** - 1 Thessalonians 4:13 and Revelation 19 refer to the same event.
3. **Mid-Tribulation** - Jesus will return for the church age believers in the middle of a seven year tribulation period.
4. **Partial Rapture** - Spirit filled believers will be raptured before the tribulation and carnal believers afterward.
5. **Pre-Tribulation** - Jesus will get his people before the tribulation and then return to earth to set up His Kingdom for 1000 years.

It is always very important to remember that no one knows when the end will come (Matthew 24:36 - 51).

CHAPTER ONE

VERSES 1:1 – 3 (THE PROLOGUE)

God gave the revelation to Jesus who in turn gave it to John via an angel (messenger), in order to show the servants of God what will soon (suddenly) happen.

Read Daniel Chapters 10 - 12 for reference (Particularly chapter 12).

We note that John is spoken of in the third person indicating that someone else added this section to Revelation. Another explanation of the third person reference to John is that John added it later after receiving the entire work from the angel.

The "Revelation of Jesus Christ" could mean that it is a unveiling of Jesus Christ to John (and the churches) or that Jesus Christ is doing the unveiling.

"the testimony of Jesus Christ" has the same ambiguity as the above. It could refer to the testimony that Jesus gave John or the testimony of Jesus Christ by John (the gospel).

"Shortly come to pass" - This seems to indicate that these events can come at any time (suddenly) or that it will happen in the near future. However, let's look at different ways of interpreting this statement.

Historicists – The events started shortly after John's time, but extended until the end of the age.

Futurists – the word shortly means "quickly" or "suddenly." This indicates that the events will happen at various times in history. These events could happen long after John's time.

Preterists – The statement should be taken literally and appear to prophecy the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of Rome in AD 70. Some preterists would interpret it to mean the identify the fall of Rome much later.

VERSE 1:3

Anyone who reads, hears, and keeps the words in the book of Revelation is blessed.

The fact that the hearer is blessed indicates that this prophecy should be read at church meetings (Luke 11:28 and Matthew 7:24-27).

The time is Near (See James 5:8): This phrase refers to the season or opportunity for these events to happen. Again, No one knows when the "Time of the end" is (See Acts 1:6). Matthew 24:13 Tells us to watch and be ready because we don't know when Jesus is coming. To try and figure out when the end is or what current event is described in Revelation is a waste of time. Just be ready when Jesus comes.

VERSES 1:4 – 6 (THE SALUTATION)

The following verses comprise the salutation of the epistle much like Galatians, James. This was most like a circulating epistle in that it was addressed to seven churches. Each church would read it and then pass it on to the next church (or make copies).

John was to write to seven churches in Asia, though there were many more. Remember the number seven represents completeness. The Revelation applies to all churches (The Church) even though John only wrote to seven. I say "the church" since the number seven represents completeness and the Revelation applies to the complete body of Christ - The Church.

The seven churches were about fifty (50) miles apart, forming a circle in Asia moving clockwise north from Ephesus and coming around from Laodicea (East of Ephesus). Asia wasn't the name of the continent as we know it now. It was A Roman province in the western part of what we know as Asia Minor, now a part of Turkey.



Figure 1 - A map of Asia during John's time

"From him who is, and who was, and who is to come" - This signifies the Eternal One (God), No beginning or End. This MAY be John's rendering of the word Yahweh or of the fuller expression in Exodus 3:14, "I am who I am."

"Seven Spirits" or "Seven-fold spirit" - The word seven-fold means to be comprised of seven parts or folds; composed of seven. There are three interpretations of the term seven-fold spirits:

1. **It refers to the Holy Spirit.** The seven refers to the description of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 11:2. There

are seven attributes if you include "The Spirit of the Lord" as one attribute. However, it does appear, due to the construction of the verse, that there are six (6) attributes and not seven listed.

2. **It refers to the seven angels.** The messages to the seven churches are addressed by the angel of the church. Also, seven angels blow seven trumpets (Rev. 8:2). However, we have to ask ourselves if Grace and Peace, stated at the beginning of the verse, can come from angels.
3. **It refers to the completeness or totality of the Spirit's ministry.** Remember the number seven represents completeness. This in a sense reflects the opinion that the seven-fold spirit refers to the Holy Spirit.

I think that the term seven-fold spirit or seven spirits refer to the Holy Spirit, the spirit of God. I come to this conclusion primarily because of the statement "Grace and Peace to You". Grace and Peace does not come from Angels. In the Bible Grace and Peace comes from God the Father and Jesus Christ. See the following scriptures for reference: Romans 1:7, Ephesians 1:2, 1 Corinthians 1:32, Philippians 1:2, 2 Corinthians 1:2, Colossians 1:2, Galatians 1:3, 1 Timothy 1:1. It is not appropriate to greet anyone spiritually in the name of God, the son, and the angels. The angels are only ministering spirits.

We note that the attention therefore shifts from the Father to the Holy Spirit and next to Jesus Christ.

"Before His throne" or "Before the Throne" represents the presence of God in his temple.

VERSE 1:5

Jesus Christ the faithful witness. See John 8:14 (The term bear witness is analogous to testifying). We already know that Jesus Christ spoke those things that he was told and had seen from His Father (See John 18:37). We note that Jesus Christ as the faithful witness would have been an important point for those who were being persecuted with the false witnesses of others as a catalyst.

Jesus Christ the first begotten (firstborn) from the dead (See Colossians 1:18). Begotten (Begot) means to procreate, produce, or to generate. In this case the term means to come from the place of the dead. Jesus died for our sins - He paid the price of death for our sins (Romans 6:23). This title given to Jesus establishes his superiority. He defeated death and was given all power (authority) (1 Corinthians 15:55, Hosea 13:14; Matthew 28:18). It is overall a reference to the fact that Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead and those who would die would also raise from the dead to be with Christ. These would have been comforting words to the persecuted church.

Jesus Christ the ruler (prince) over the Kings of the Earth. This title establishes Jesus' sovereignty. See Revelations 19:16. Jesus is ruler of the Kings, Presidents, and all Governing officials on the Earth. At the time of the writing of Revelation, the only ruler that John probably knew of was a King. Note the emphasis on JESUS CHRIST. This also would have been a comforting thought to the persecuted church. They were reminded that though the kings of the earth were oppressing them that Jesus Christ is above even them.

The word "washed" here comes from a Greek word *lousanti*, which means "to bathe the whole". A more accurate translation is from the Greek word *lysanti*, which means to loose or to free from. This seems appropriate since we are not literally washed by Jesus' blood, rather we are freed from sin by His sacrifice. We see that, figuratively, we are free from our sins because Jesus washed it away with his blood (See Hebrews 10:4-11).

VERSE 1:6

We are a kingdom (kings) and priests to serve God. There are two renderings of the Greek here. One is "Kings and priests" and the other is "Kingdom of priests". See also Rev. 5:10. The word "kings" is used in the King James version instead of "Kingdom" as in the New International Version (NIV). A King is a ruler of a realm or people. A kingdom can be one of three things: 1) The realm or domain over which a king rules (Such as a geographical area or "The Wild kingdom", 2) The people that are ruled, 3) The rule or reign itself. From these definitions and the original verses in the NIV and KJV we see that we are a group of God-Spirit filled people forming a "Kingdom" over which Jesus is the King. The fact that we are sanctified to do a service for God (This is

what a priest did generally) establishes our priesthood in a sense. This is indicated in Matthew 5:13-16.

I take the approach in interpreting "Kings and Priests" because we are partakers together spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We shine forth to the world the Kingdom of God (See Exodus 19:6).

Exodus 19:6 (NKJV) {6}And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

The title given here to the church is interesting because it suggests an association with God that was previously with Israel. Israel was the Kingdom of priests, but now the church has that designation.

In Exodus Israel was a Kingdom OF Priests. Revelation states that we are a Kingdom AND Priests. The point being that we are the kingdom. We are ordained or purposed to serve God in this kingdom. Some scriptures concerning a kingdom are: Matthew 3:2, 4:17, 4:23, 5:3, 5:19, 6:33, 7:21, 21:43, and Luke 17:21.

VERSE 1:7

The announcement of the return of Jesus Christ (See Matthew 24, Mark 13, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18). This is part of a Doxology, which includes verse eight.

The term "coming with the clouds" indicates the presence of the Glory of God. This is derived from Daniel 7:13. Also see Mark 13:26, 14:62; Matthew 24:30.

Acts 1:9 tells us that Jesus was received by clouds upon his ascension and that he will return similarly (Acts 1:11).

In Exodus 13:21-22 a pillar of cloud led the people of Israel through the wilderness during the day. This was a visible manifestation of the presence of God. Also, Exodus 16:10 says that the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

Exodus 40:38 says that the cloud of the Lord was above the tabernacle by day. Therefore, we see that clouds are associated with the Glory or presence of God.

When Jesus comes again everyone will see him (See Mark 13:26; Matthew 26:64). This seems to refer to the prophecy at Zechariah 12:10. All men will mourn because of the sacrifice of Jesus.

"Those who pierced him" could be the Roman soldiers that stabbed him or the Religious Leaders that were responsible for His death. Regardless, everyone will see Jesus Christ even those not of the kingdom of faith. This could also mean those who rejected Jesus (The unsaved).

A preterist approach is to see the second coming as symbolic of the judgment of Jerusalem by Jesus Christ through the Roman Armies.

VERSE 1:8

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. God is eternal and will always be the almighty God.

VERSE 1:9

John starts off by stating that he is a partaker of those things that the church partakes in. That is, He is suffering for the gospels sake and he is a member of the family of faith. John WAS on the Island of Patmos because of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words, he was imprisoned because he preached about Jesus Christ.

Note that he says he was on the island of Patmos. This indicates that he actually wrote down what he saw after his exile.

Patmos is a crescent shaped island about 10 miles long and six miles wide and is covered with rocks.

Other church leaders wrote about the suffering of John under Domitian.

Hippolytus says that John was dumped in a bath of boiling oil before his exile. Victorinu states that John was forced to labor in the mines on Patmos.

VERSE 1:10

The Lord's day: The day that belongs to the Lord. This denotes the first day of the week since Jesus rose from the dead on this day.

The term "in the spirit" means to "become spirit" or to "be caught up in prophetic ecstasy". This is the same experience that Ezekiel had when he said that "the hand of the Lord was on him" (Ezekiel 3:22).

Some futurist commentators hold that John was carried to the Lord's day in the future. The Lord's day here is understood to be the second coming of Christ.

However, most commentators believe that this refers to a Sunday and denotes John's state of mind at the time "*A loud voice like a trumpet*" simply is an expression used to describe the power and force of the voice that he heard. Note that this does not describe the voice of Jesus Christ. Jesus' voice was like rushing water (verse 15).

VERSE 1:11

He was told by the one with the loud voice to write on a scroll the things he sees and send it to the following churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

VERSES 1:12-16

Reference: Daniel Chapter 7 and 10

John turned to see who was speaking to him and he saw seven golden lampstands and someone like the son of man among the lampstands. We see in these verses that Jesus is wearing clothes of a priest (See Ex. 28:4, 29:5). Jesus is our High Priest (Hebrews 1).

"His eyes like a flame of fire" - I think of Matthew 6:22-24. Jesus states that "The light of the body is the eye". Also the window to the soul is the eyes. Jesus is full of light and it showed. The eyes can also represent knowledge.

"Someone like the son of man" - Someone that looked like a descendant of man or looked like a human being.

"Sharp two edged sword" like a long Thracian sword. This sword was a small sword or dagger. The sword symbolized divine judgement.

"His face was like the sun" - The glory of God radiated from Him. This phenomena happened to Moses (Exodus 34:29-35).

VERSES 1:17 – 19

John was overwhelmed with this sight and fell to Jesus' feet. Jesus says he has the keys of death and Hades (hell and death). Hades is the state or place of the dead (The Hebrew Sheol).

VERSE 1:20

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches

- The seven angels could refer to heavenly beings
- The seven angels could refer to a person at each of the churches

The seven lampstands are the seven churches

CHAPTER 2 – THE LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES

There were no church buildings where Christians congregated. The thousands of Christians met in hundreds of homes. Each home or congregation had its own pastor (congregational leader). This is a hint to the fact that the angel to the church was a personification of the overall spirit of the church as a region. Remember that the church is the group of believers and not the building.

The preterists and spiritualists believe that the letters were addressed to seven actual churches during that time. It however could apply to churches in similar situations in the future.

Some historicist and futurists believe that the letters to the seven churches represent periods of church history since that time.

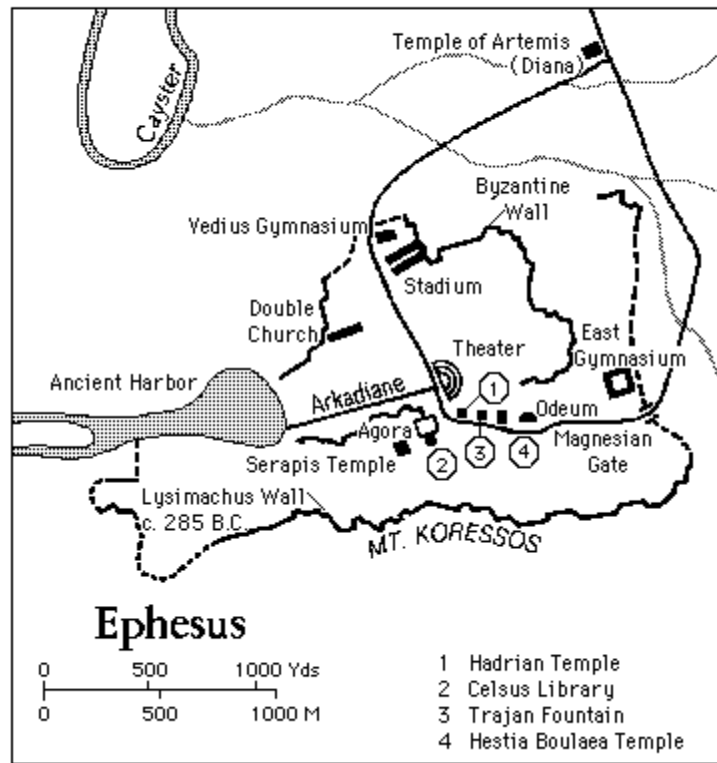
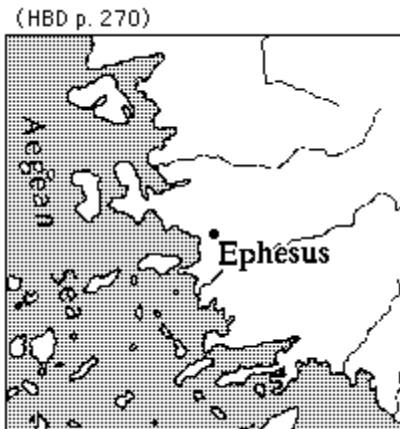
1. Letter to Ephesus – churches during the apostolic age
2. Letter to Smyrna – From 100 – 313 A.D. (Under persecution)
3. Pergamum – From 313 – 500 (as the church was after Constantine's edict of Milan, tolerance, to the rise of the papacy).
4. Thyratira – 500 – 1500 (The condition during the papacy until the reformation)
5. Sardis – 1500-1700, the church during the reformation
6. Philadelphia: 1700 – present, the church during the resurgence of missionary work.
7. Laodicia: The liberal churches of modern times

THE LETTER TO EPHEBUS (2:1-7)

Ephesus was the capitol of Asia Minor and the center of land and sea trade. It was also a pagan city engulfed in idolatry and sexual immorality. The Temple of Diana was located there (One of the seven wonders of the ancient world). The major industry was the manufacturing of idols of Diana. Ephesus was also a melting pot for many nations since it was so prominent in trade.

DIANA was the Roman goddess of the moon; identified with Artemis, her Greek counterpart. The Diana of the Ephesians (Acts 19:24-35) was a combination of the Greek Artemis and the Semitic (i.e., Arabic and Hebrew) goddess Ashtoreth, the patroness of the sexual instinct. Her images were lascivious. Her special worship was centered in the great temple at Ephesus.

The city plan shows buildings and walls over several centuries before, during, and after Paul's time in the mid-first century A.D. (HBD p. 270)



Location and city plans of Ephesus

The fact that the stars were in Jesus' hand indicates his authority over the churches.

THE MESSAGE TO EPHESUS

The angel could be a Heavenly messenger, Earthly messenger/minister, or Personifications of the prevailing spirit of each church.

What Did This church Do Right?

Didn't tolerate wicked men, Tried all proclaimed apostles to see if they were true, Persevered, Endured many hardships for the Gospels sake, and they Didn't Give up

What Did They Do Wrong?

They LEFT their first love. They were busy doing works not out of love. They were a busy church that eventually left the love of God. The Ephesian church was doctrinally strong and SERVICE oriented. The church lost its focal point which is Jesus Christ. This is the case, I believe, of many churches today.

The removing of the lampstand symbolized immediate judgement.

NICOLAITANES were a heretical sect within the church that had worked out a compromise with the pagan society. They apparently taught that spiritual liberty gave them leeway to practice idolatry and immorality. Tradition identifies them with Nicolas, the proselyte of Antioch (One of the first seven deacons). A similar group in Pergamum held to the teaching of Balaam, and some at Thyatira were followers of the women Jezebel.

What Were They To Do (Verse 2:5)

The church was told to remember where they came from and to go back to their previous state of agape love and

then to repent and do the first works. The first works could be the things that they did in the beginning or it could mean the number one priority works of the saints.

VERSE 2:7

"Overcome" means to be victorious by believing, persevering, remaining faithful, and living as one who follows Christ. Basically a true believer (1 John 5:4-5). There is a reward for overcoming.

The tree of life will be in the New Jerusalem (City of God). The tree of life seems to represent life itself. See also Ezekiel 47:12.

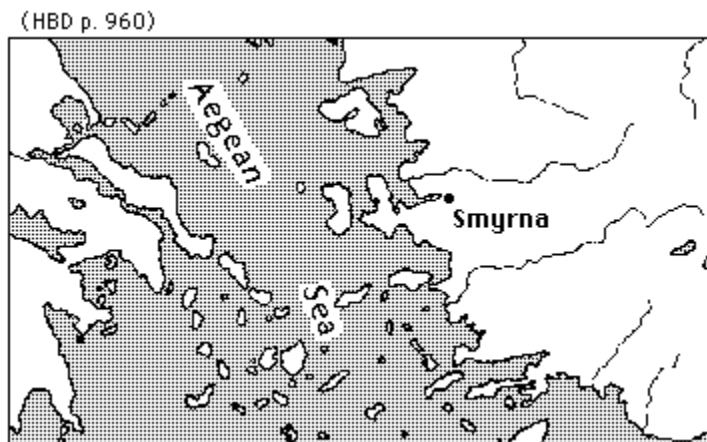
"The paradise of God" – The word "paradise" comes from a Persian word that means "pleasure park.". The word was originally applied to the garden of Eden in the Septuagint (Gen 2:8; Ezek. 28:13). It was the location of the original tree of life.

In the New Testament the word was applied to the final place for the faithful in Christ (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:4)

THE LETTER TO SMYRNA (2:8-11)

Smyrna (modern Izmir, Turkey) was a city on the west coast of Asia Minor possessing a well-known port and rich farmland. Smyrna was famous for science, medicine, and its majestic buildings and an excellent Harbor at the Aegean Sea. Smyrna was occupied by Jewish people opposed to Christianity and by Non-Jewish people dedicated to Rome. The city as a whole remained loyal to Rome. The church there was the center of persecution because of these social surroundings. Smyrna was also the center of emperor worship.

God comforted the church at Smyrna because they would suffer more persecution and they must hold on until the end.

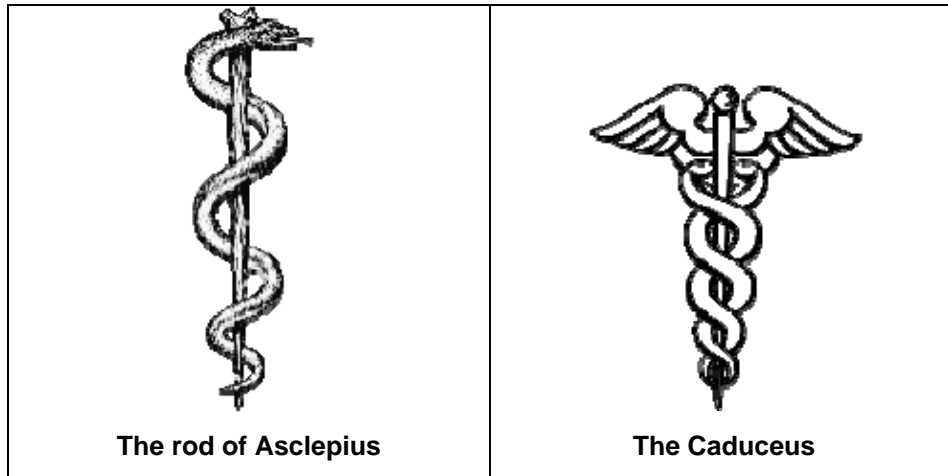


Smyrna (From the Harper's Bible Dictionary)

THE LETTER TO PERGAMUM (2:12-17)

Pergamum (Modern village of Berganma, Turkey covers part of the site) was built on a hill 1,000 feet above the surrounding countryside. It was a very beautiful city. It was a center of Greek culture and education and it had a library of over 200,000 volumes. Pergamum was also a center for four cults (Zeus, Dionysius, Asclepius, and Athene) and emperor worship. The main God of the city was Asclepius, a god of Healing. The symbol of Asclepius was that of a serpent entwined around a staff. It is interesting that the symbol for the medical field derives somewhat from Asclepius' symbol. However, a misunderstanding of the Caduceus by the US has resulted in it being the symbol of medicine. There is not association with the Caduceus and medicine. It is actually more

suites as a symbol for commerce.

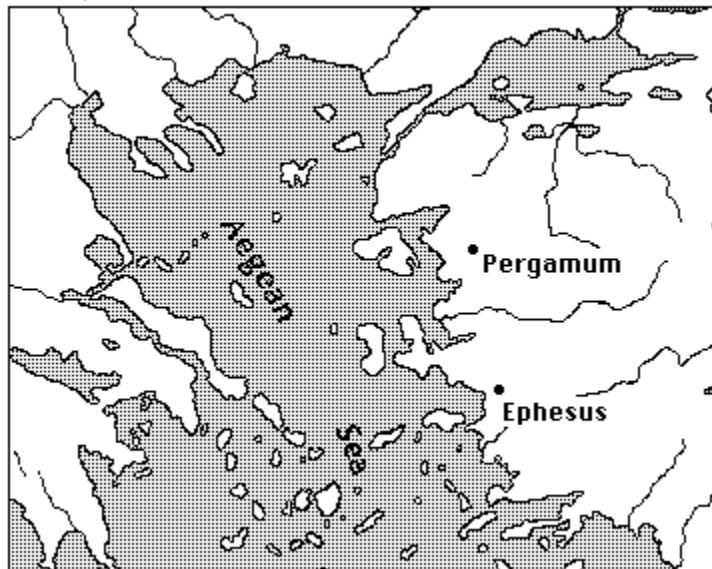


People came from all over to be healed by this god. Even the medical priests of the medical school dedicated to Asclepius were associated with the worship of this god. Pergamum was also a center for the teachings of the Balaamites and Nicolaitans.

A temple of Augustus was erected in 29 B.C. making Pergamum an official place for emperor worship.

A massive altar to Zeus was located in Pergamum. Zeus was the chief of the Olympian gods.

(HBD p. 771)



Location of Pergamum (HBD)

"Sharp sword with two edges" - This usually represents judgement.

"Satan's Seat" - Because of the various idol worship and the emperor worship, Pergamum was said to be the Seat of Satan. The place was engulfed in Satanic practices.

WHAT DID THEY DO RIGHT?

They remained true to Jesus. They didn't deny the faith.

Antipas was killed because of his faith in Jesus Christ. Nothing is known about Antipas for sure. It is said that he was slowly roasted to death in a bronze kettle during the reign of Domitian.

WHAT DID THEY DO WRONG?

They tolerated people in the church that taught or were part of the Balaamite and Nicolaitan practices.

The doctrine of Balaam (Numbers 22 - 25, 31:16) - Balaam was a diviner (Soothsayer) who was asked by the king of Moab (Balak) to curse the people of Israel. He was a prophet for profit due to his motives. He was the catalyst that caused the people of Israel to worship idol Gods (Numbers 31:16). The Doctrine of Balaam is that of compromise for profit.

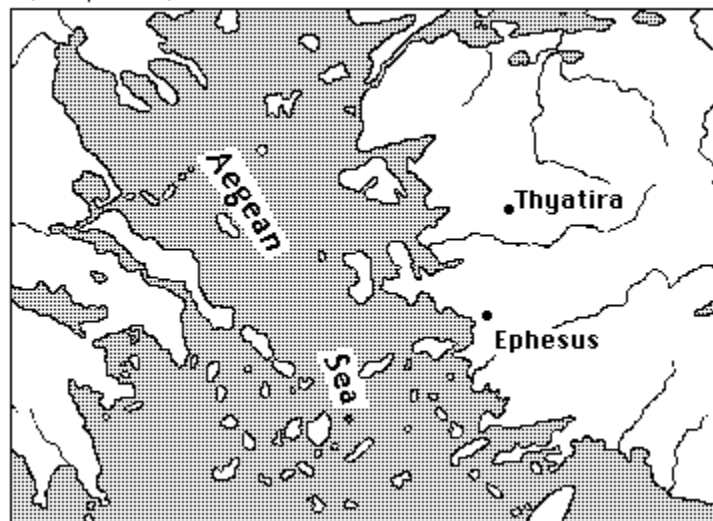
"Hidden Manna" (Verse 17) - This could mean the nourishment that believers would receive in heaven.

"The white stone" - The meaning to this is uncertain. Each overcomer will receive the white stone with a name only the possessor knows. Some believe the stone is a type of ticket into heaven.

THE LETTER TO THYATIRA (2:18-29)

Thyatira (modern Akhisar) was a workingman's city. It had many trade guilds each with its own god. Thyatira was not the center of any particular worship. Christians with a trade were pressured into worshipping the god of that particular guild because job security was at stake if one didn't worship the "guild god". Thyatira was well known for its cloth industry and special dyes. Thyatira also had a temple to Artemis (Diana).

(HBD p. 1069)



Location of Thyatira (From Harpers Bible Dictionary)

WHAT DID THEY DO RIGHT?

This church possessed the following commended attributes: Love, Faith, Works, Service, and Patience. The church was commended for their good deeds as well as their faith.

WHAT DID THEY DO WRONG?

They allowed a "Jezebel" to teach and cause sexual immorality in the church. She also caused them to eat things that were sacrificed to idols.

The unburned meat that was sacrificed to idols was sold to shoppers in the heathen temple market. Eating meat

sacrificed to idols was not wrong in itself, however it could cause a new christian to stumble (1 Corinthians 8).

It is not certain whether there was a particular women named Jezebel or that it represented someone or a teaching group.

Jezebel: She was the wife of King Ahab (King of Israel). She managed the king and had about 850 pagan priests under her control. She was a very evil women who tried very hard to have Israel worship her pagan gods. In the end she died a brutal death. See 1 Kings 16:31 - 2 Kings 9:37.

Notice God's patience with this "Jezebel" in Revelations 2:21 (See Psalms 103:8-11).

The false teaching of a women or a group of people was causing some of the saints to go astray and commit fornication. They were seduced by this women "Jezebel" to commit sexual sins. This could also symbolize doing those things that are not of God - a type of fornication/adultery. Those responsible for this false teaching and those who partake in the teaching would receive much tribulation. Note that the people would not receive the tribulation if they repented of their sins. To repent means to change your mind about what you were doing.

"Her children" in verse 23 most likely refers to the followers of the false prophetess.

"reins and hearts" - This is translated minds and hearts. In this particular time period an organ of the body stood for an attribute or component of the soul. The reins (kidneys) were the seat of emotions and the heart stood for the center of the intellect. Notice that God searches both our hearts and minds (See Psalms 139)

We will be rewarded according to our works (verse 23). Also see Matthew 16:27.

VERSE 24

"The depth of Satan" - This could refer to Satanic insight by people.

The true believers in Thyatira would have no more burdens placed on them. They were encouraged to stay strong and keep the faith until Jesus Comes.

VERSE 26

Those who keep the faith (overcome) will be given authority over the nations. (See Psalms 2:8,9). We will share in the victory of Jesus Christ over the nations. We will rule (Shepherd) these nations with him (See Psalms 2:9).

Note that Psalms 2:8-9 is quoted in verse 27 and is structured like a supporting clause in the text.

SIDE NOTE

Just because all is going well in your life (you're receiving your blessings, you study your bible, and you live a godly life) doesn't mean that God is totally pleased with you. God will deal with you in whatever part of your life needs to be corrected or developed. This is the case with some of the churches in Revelation. In some areas they were doing well but in others they were admonished by God. Always evaluate yourself to verify that you are on the right track (See 2 Corinthians 13:5).

MORNING STAR (VERSE 2:28)

The morning star refers to Jesus Christ in Revelations 22:16

It appears to refer to the Light of Christ that rises in a person's heart from a revelation of Him in 2 Peter 1:19.

CHAPTER 3 – THE LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES CONTINUE

THE LETTER TO SARDIS (3:1-6)

Sardis was a wealthy city. It had two locations: One on a mountain and the other in the valley below. There is evidence of emperor worship, paganism and occult practices. Sardis was the capitol of ancient Lydia and the first center to mint gold and silver coins.

WHAT DID THEY DO RIGHT?

Nothing.

WHAT DID THEY DO WRONG?

The church at Sardis was alive in reputation only. In reality they were dead (spiritually) because of the idol worship and the like. The church compromised with its pagan environment causing it to lose its true identity with Christ.

The church was called to "Wake Up" and repent. Judgement will come swiftly and suddenly if the church doesn't repent.

There were some people there who were true to God. They will be with Christ dressed in white (clean) along with those who had overcome.

THE LETTER TO PHILADELPHIA (3:7-13)

Philadelphia (modern Alashehir, Turkey) was founded by the citizens of Pergamum. The purpose for founding the city was to make it a center to spread the Greek language and culture throughout the Asian province. Philadelphia was named in memory of Attalus II, King of Pergamum who was called Philadelphus ("lover of his brother") because of his loyalty to his brother and predecessor Eumenes II.

Philadelphia was the gateway to the Plateau of Asia Minor and it kept barbarians out of the region. It was the center of Hellenism (Jews who spoke Greek and most likely accepted Greek culture) and was located in a beautiful valley. However, Philadelphia was located on top of a fault and an earthquake in AD 17 destroyed the city. This same earthquake destroyed Sardis also. For about 20 years Philadelphia was tormented by this earthquake's aftershocks.

There is some evidence that the religious life at Philadelphia was affected by its pagan environment (Greek culture). Its coins show pagan gods and the god of wine and revelry (Dionysus) was worshiped there.

The church of Philadelphia was successful at resisting Muhammedanism while other cities fell to this religion. The church was relatively small and not very strong. Philadelphia still exists today and even has a bishop over several churches.

Note: No blame is given to Philadelphia. They are only commended and encouraged.

THE KEY OF DAVID (VERSE 3:7)

This represents the fact that Jesus is the Prince of the House of David, that is, God's people (Hebrews 3:2-6). Reference: In Isaiah 22:20-22 Eliakim will be given the keys to the house of David (God was setting him up to be the king of Judah). He would become the steward over God's people. The keys in Isaiah probably refer to the control of the entrance to the royal palace or the overseeing of God's people.

VERSE 3:8

The "Open door" was probably a door of opportunity. Even with their strength, they used it and remained faithful

to Jesus Christ.

VERSE 3:9

"The synagogue of Satan" - Metaphor for unbelieving and hostile Jews (See Romans 2:28-29).

VERSE 10

"Keep you from" - The Greek word for this phrase can mean to keep you from undergoing or to keep you through the experience.

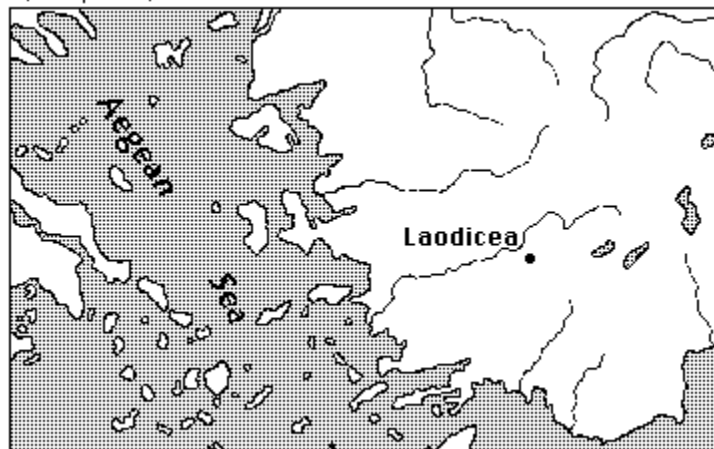
VERSES 11 – 13

We see the blessings of the overcomer. We will have a special identity by the three names (The Name of God, the Name of the New Jerusalem, and the Name of Jesus Christ).

THE LETTER TO LAODICEA (3:14-21)

Laodicea was a very wealthy city during Roman times. It was the ancient capitol of the province Phrygia. It was a part of a tri-city metropolitan area which included Colossae and Hierapolis. It was widely known for its banks, medical school, and textile industry. It lacked a good water supply, and therefore its water came from a mountain about five miles away and was nasty because it traveled through stone pipes. The physicians at Laodicea developed an ointment for the ears and powder for the eyes (These were called salves). The physicians were loyal to Asklepios, the serpent God, as in Pergamum. It was a center for emperor worship.

(HBD p. 547)



Location of Laodicea

VERSE 3:14

The Amen: Amen means to confirm or support. General - "So let it be" or "truly indeed". This represents truth, One who is faithful and trustworthy (John 14:6).

"The beginning (or ruler) of God's creation" - The Greek word "beginning" or "ruler" can also mean first in rank (See Proverbs 8:22, John 1:3).

VERSE 15

"Cold nor Hot"

Cold water refreshed the people at Collossea (a neighboring city). Hot water provided healing properties (medicinal) at Hierapolis (a neighboring city). The water supply at Laodicia was warm and nasty because of the journey through the stone pipes as mentioned earlier.

WHAT DOES "HOT" AND "COLD" REPRESENT?

Jesus says that he wished they (The Laodicians) were either hot or cold. It is commonly thought that Hot represents Christians, cold represents non-Christians, and lukewarm represents a "fence straddler". If that were the case then Jesus was condoning a non-Christian by giving them a stamp of his approval. He said that he wished they were one or the other. Why didn't he say "I wish you were Hot". It is not God's will that any should perish, that is, he wants all to be saved (See 2 Peter 3:9). Therefore, the Hot and the Cold must represent something else.

Hot and cold are illustrations or symbols used to describe two church conditions, Collossea and Hierapolis. The lukewarm represents an undesirable condition just as the lukewarm water that traveled through the pipes was undesirable. Jesus was saying that he wished they were like the church at Collossea, which had cool water, or like the church at Hierapolis, which had hot water. Jesus used an illustration that the Laodicians would relate to and understand.

VERSE 16

"Spit you out of my mouth (Vomit)" - Jesus would reject the Laodician church just as one would spit out nasty warm water.

VERSE 17

Laodicea was a wealthy city and perhaps conceited. Material wealth has nothing to do with spiritual matters (Matthew 6:19-24). Don't let blessings blind you of the blesser. The church didn't realize how bad a condition they were in. This is why it is so important to examine ourselves periodically to see if we are on track with the word of God and his will (2 Corinthians 13:5).

The church, according to Jesus, was wretched (miserable, lowly), pitiful (worthless), poor, Blind, and naked. The Laodicians believed that they were not associated in any way with these things. They thought that they were proud, high and mighty, self sufficient, and Rich. They were also known for their salve (medicinal ointment) and clothing.

VERSE 18

Jesus instructs them to get His richness, clothes, and salve for their spiritual recovery.

VERSE 19–20

Jesus rebukes (corrects) who he loves. All they had to do was repent. Since Jesus says that he was on the outside knocking, we can conclude that the church was probably not gathering in Jesus' name or for worship of God (Matthew 18:20). church may have been a social club for the rich and famous (both actual and perceived) and the proud as some churches are today.

Matthew 18:20 says "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Jesus would be among the two or three. We can apply this by saying that Jesus would be among the people that are gathered in His name in a whole congregation.

Those who overcome would participate with Jesus in His sovereignty (See Ephesians 2:6).

CHAPTER FOUR – THE THINGS TO COME

The Throne of God

Verse 1: The invitation to the prophecy (The open door).

Verse 2: John was "In the spirit" - He probably was in a trance seeing the vision.

Verse 3: John saw a throne in heaven with someone sitting in it. He couldn't identify the person so he described his appearance as best he could.

Jasper: Here Jasper was probably a green ornamental stone. Today jasper is an opaque variety of quartz, of red, yellow, or brown.

Carnelian: A red stone.

Emerald: A precious stone, rich green color.

Verse 4: The twenty four thrones and elders. These represented the whole body of believers or an exalted angelic order worshiping and serving God in Heaven. The number twenty four is often used to represent the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve disciples - The old and new, the complete body. See Revelation. 3:21, 3:5, and 2:10 for references to sitting on thrones, clothed in white robes, and wearing crowns respectively.

Verse 5: The majestic power of God is represented here. The seven spirits represents God's fullness or completeness.

Verses 6 - 8: John saw what looked like a sea of glass in front of the throne. This could be the basin of the heavenly temple. The counterpart to this sea occurs in the earthly temple (1 Kings 7:23-25, 2 Kings 16:17). The four creatures - See Ezekiel 1:6-10 for a reference. It is not definitely known what these creatures represent - if anything. They do appear to be a type of worship leader in heaven. The eyes could represent the omnipresence of God.

Verse 9 - 10: The twenty four elders worship whenever the living creatures give praises to God. A crown is a symbol of a position or rank. The elders took off their crowns and laid it at the throne signifying their acknowledgement of the one who is ultimately worthy of praise.

CHAPTER 5

The Scroll and The Worthy Lamb (Jesus) - Chapter Five identifies Jesus Christ as one worthy of all praise.

Verse 1: John sees a book (scroll) in the right hand of the person sitting on the throne. The scroll had writing on

both sides and was sealed with seven seals.

Books were written on scrolls, pieces of papyrus or vellum up to 30 ft. long rolled up and sealed with clay or wax.

Verse 2: Strong angel - Mighty Angel

Verse 3: There was no one in heaven, earth, or buried (Dead) that was worthy to open, read, or even look at the writings on the scroll.

Verses 5 - 6

One worthy to open the scroll - The Lion symbolized the strength and authority of Jesus, the one who was worthy. The Lamb symbolized his submission to God's will. Lambs were sacrificed for sins in the old testament (Leviticus 5:6).

Ancient documents were folded and tied, and a lump of clay or wax was pressed over the knot. the sender would then stamp the hardening clay with his signet ring or roll it with a cylinder seal. This authenticated and protected the contents. It was a Roman Law that wills or other official documents had to be sealed by seven witnesses. Only one with the proper authority could break the seals.

The horn is an ancient Jewish symbol for power or strength. Seven horns would symbolize full strength. See 1 Kings 22:11, Zechariah 1:18, Daniel 7. The seven eyes represent the seven spirits of God or rather the Holy Spirit.

Verses 7 - 8: The lamb took the book because he was worthy.

Verse 9: The lamb's worthiness is proclaimed.

"Redeemed us to God" - The King James version uses this term whereas the NIV and the Amplified Bible uses the term "Redeemed men." There are arguments that support the term "us" and those that support "men". We said earlier that the twenty four elders could represent the complete church of God. Regardless of the interpretation of "us" or the elders, we know that Jesus has redeemed us (people) to God. This was simply part of a song. Remember not to get stuck on the details - Look for the message.

Verse 10: We will reign on earth - This, relative to the 24 elders, represents all Saints (Christians).

CHAPTER 6

The Seven Seals

This is the first of three seven part judgements. The "Horsemen of the Apocalypse" are introduced. There is another occurrence of four horses in Zechariah 6:1-8.

The worthy Lamb (Jesus Christ) begins to open the seals of the scroll.

First Seal: White Horse (The white represents conquest or to triumph)

The rider had a Bow and was given a Crown. He went out to conquer. Three interpretations as to the identity of the rider are: 1) Jesus Christ, 2) Anti-Christ, 3) Spirit of conquest. The crown appears to be the reward of conquest as in a King or someone who won a crown in a contest. It appears to be out of context for Jesus Christ to be the rider of this horse - This comes later in Revelation. This appears to be an Anti-Christ going out possibly to deceive many and to conquer.

Second Seal: Red Horse (War and bloodshed)

The rider was given power to take peace from the earth and a large sword. People would kill each other as a result of the absence of peace on the earth.

Third Seal: Black Horse (Death due to famine, calamity)

The rider had a pair of balances. The text indicates that prices were very inflated at this time. One quart (Greek choinix-> 1 liter) of wheat for a days wages and three (3) quarts (choenix) of barley for a days wages. The significant of this is that one day's wage would only be enough for the amount of wheat for one person daily. Barley was food fed to animals. Conditions would be so bad and food so scarce that the people would have to eat the food of animals. Three choinixs of barley was barely enough for a small family. Also, barley is less nutritious than wheat.

The oil and wine, items of luxury, were not to be effected. For one thing the roots of the olive and vines (grape) went very deep into the earth and was not effected by the immediate drought. I believe that these items might have had some purpose for God so he let them stay available.

Fourth Seal: Pale Horse (Death)

The name of the rider was death. Hades (the abode of the dead - grave) followed him. The rider was given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by four methods: 1) Sword (War), 2) Hunger (Famine), 3) Death (Plagues), and 4) Animals (Nature). The word pale comes from the Greek word chloros which is sometimes translated green - corps like color.

Fifth Seal: Souls of Martyred Saints under the alter (Sacrifice alter)

The saints wanted to be avenged and the world to be judged. They were told to REST (Hebrews 4:1-11) a little while more because more would be killed. The fact that they were told to rest indicates that the dead saints were in some type of restful state. This could be the state before the saints reign with Jesus Christ.

Sixth Seal: The Great Earthquake

Earthquakes sometimes are a sign of divine visitation (Exodus 19:18, Zechariah 14:4, Matthew 27:51).

The people of the earth evidently knew that they were experiencing Judgement from God and they tried to hide themselves from Him. Adam and Eve did something similar in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8).

CHAPTER 7

The Sealing of the 144,000

Verse 1 - 3: The four angels on the four corners of the Earth preventing the winds from blowing and harming the Earth until God's people were sealed on their foreheads. The winds can be interpreted as judgement from God for the Earth. Throughout the Bible, God always protects his people from the judgment that was intended for those around them.

Verse 4 - 8: 144,000 people of the tribes of Israel were sealed. This tribal listing is symbolic. It is not the same list of the actual tribes (Numbers 1). The Actual tribes of Israel are as follows: Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Isachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphteli, Joseph, Ephraim and Manesseh (Sons of Joseph adopted by Jacob), and Benjamin. Note that Levi was not counted in the listing of the twelve tribes because they were given a national priestly duty and would forever belong to God. However, the list given in Revelation is: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Aser, Nephthalim, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Isachar, Zabulun, Joseph, Benjamin.

The differences are: 1) Dan is not included in the Revelation list, 2) Only Menesseh is included in the Revelation list, 3) The tribe of Levi is only included in the Revelation list, 4) Joseph is included in Revelation only.

Judah probably is mentioned first because Jesus Christ came from this tribe.

Dan and Ephraim are not listed probably because of their rebellion and idolatry (Genesis 49:14, 1 Kings 12:25-33, Judges 18).

Joseph is included instead of Ephraim. Usually the tribes representing Joseph were Ephraim and Menesseh.

It appears that the 144,000 represents a complete people, perhaps the body of Christ.

Significant Numbers in the Bible:

The following is a list of numbers and what they are believed to represent.

- Three (3): Numerical Signature of God
- Four (4): Numerical signature of nature
- Seven (7): [3 + 4] The signature of Totality
- Twelve (12): [3 times 4] Signature of God's People (The measurements of the New Jerusalem. See Revelation 21:9 - 21)
- Ten (10): Signature of Worldly Power (See the Great Harlot, Revelation 17)

Verse 9: The Great Multitude. The people that no man could number had the following things: 1) They were from all Nations and different languages, 2) White Robes (Saved and Born again people), and 3) Palms in their hands (The palms signify victory and rejoicing - See John 12:13).

Verses 13 - 14: Who were the people around the throne? They were the people who came out of the Great Tribulation. These may or may not have been the people that were sealed. Chapter 9 verse 4 seems to indicate that these were a different group of people.

Verses 15 - 17

The promise to the Saved: God will spread his tent around us (Protect Us), We will never hunger, We will never thirst, We will not be burned or tormented by the sun, and God will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

CHAPTER 8

The Seventh Seal

Verse 2: The trumpet was usually used to announce an important event or give signals in times of war.

Verses 3 - 4: In Old testament temple worship, incense was poured on a censer filled with live coals. The sweet smelling smoke drifted upwards to God (Exodus 30:7 - 9).

The Seven Trumpets

The first trumpet sounds [Judgment Begins] - Hail and fire mixed with blood thrown down to the earth. A third of the earth and trees were burned up. All of the green grass was consumed. The "third of" may not have been an actual third but a representative number illustrating the magnitude of the numbers of people affected.

The second trumpet sounds - Something that looked like a burning mountain was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, and a third of the sea animals died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. This can be thought of as some natural disaster on earth. However, because it was said that the burning mountain was thrown into the sea, this could be something directly from God in the supernatural. The burning mountain could also represent something large that looked as though it was on fire and landed in the sea.

The third trumpet sounds - A star from heaven hits the earth. This star, named wormwood (Bitter), caused the water to become bitter. Many people died because of the bad water caused by the star. Wormwood is a plant with a strong bitter taste.

The fourth trumpet sounds - 1/3 of the sun and stars were darkened. The day was without light for 1/3 of the time and likewise the night.

Woes to the earth because of what is about to come. Woe is a condition of deep suffering from misfortune, affliction, or grief.

CHAPTER 9

The fifth trumpet sounds - The star in verse one could be a fallen angel (Angels were sometimes called stars). He was given the key to the bottomless pit (Abyss). The star can also be interpreted as a good angel that was sent to do God's will concerning the pit. In either case God is in control.

When the pit was opened, smoke arose and darkened the air. Locusts came out of the smoke and they were given power like scorpions. The locusts can be thought of as demons. The scorpions were only to harm those people that did not have the mark of God on their foreheads (See notes on 7:1-3 on page 24). Also, the locusts were only given authority to torment these people for five months and not to kill them. The torture of the locusts was like a scorpion's sting.

Verse 6: The torture will be so great that people will want to die.

The appearance of the locusts: They looked like horses prepared for battle, They had something like a crown like gold on their heads, Their faces were like a man's face, Hair like a women (probably long), Teeth like a lion, Breastplates like iron, and Wings sounded like many chariots and horses running for battle.

Verse 11: The locusts had a leader who was the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon (Destruction) and Apollyon (The destroyer) in Greek. The picture here is that of great demonic invasion of the earth and much torment for the unsaved people (God's people are sealed). This is just more of God's judgement on the Christless people and an illustration of how God's people are kept.

The sixth trumpet sounds - The alter had four projections, called horns, on each corner (Exodus 27:2). Four angels of the great river Euphrates were loosed. These angels appear to be demons.

Verses 15 - 16: How did John know the number of the mounted troops? I believe that someone must have told Him: "I heard the number of them...". The number was two hundred million (two myriads of myriads). A myriad is an innumerable or great number. Today we may something like "there are zillions of ants in the grass" in order to relate to someone that there are a lot of ants - too many to count.

The troops had breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone.

Fire: Fiery red

Jacinth: Dark blue.

Brimstone: Sulfur yellow

The heads of the horses were like a lions's head. Fire, smoke and brimstone came out of their mouths.

A third of the people on the earth were killed. The remaining people did not repent. This is a picture of mass destruction as part of the judgement on the unsaved. Notice that people did have a chance to repent. Again, the sealed people of God are unaffected.

CHAPTER 10 [The Interlude before the final seal]

Here we see a mighty angel with a scroll that John eventually takes and eats. It appears that this angel's job was to announce the coming of the seventh seal. Since his feet were on the sea and land we can say that this final judgement is for all the earth.

For some reason John was not allowed to write the things that the mighty angels uttered as seven thunders. This same type of thing happened in Daniel 12:9.

Verses 9 - 10: John eats the scroll. This same type of thing happened to Ezekiel (Ezekiel. 3:1).

CHAPTER 11

The Two witnesses

Verse 1

Reed: A straight and light Bamboo-like cane reaching a height of 20 feet.

The measuring of the temple and the alter and the counting of the worshipers appear to be a way of marking the true people of God. We also see a separation inside of the temple (or church). The true people of God have the inner holy section and the Gentiles, Godless people, have the outer section which they desecrate. This separation may indicate a falling out of some "church folk" since they were given a piece of the Temple, that is, they defiled the temple. The gentiles will trample or desecrate the city for 42 months.

Two witnesses were given power to prophesy for 1260 days (42 months times 30 days per month).

The two olive trees and the lampstand before the God of the Earth - See Zechariah 4:14.

Sackcloth - A coarse dark cloth woven from the hair of goats or camels. It was worn as a sign of mourning and penitence (Joel 1:13, John 3:5-6; Matthew 11:21).

The witnesses are basically untouchable during the time of their prophesying. Anyone who would harm them would be killed by the fire that come out of their mouths. The witnesses had miraculous powers even over nature.

Who are these witnesses? They were likened to the olive trees and candlesticks in verse 4. According to Zechariah 4:1-14 the candlestick represents the House of God, and the olive trees the spirit of God. We can say that the witnesses in General represent the Church and the Word.

We can also interpret this as referencing two aspects of the church. There is the inner or pure (true) church of God and the outer or professing church. The professing church are a compromising people (church folk). The witnesses are prophesying to the outer church and the outer church rejects them.

The church does have the power to do many supernatural (spiritually natural) things (See John 14:12-13).

Verse 7: The witnesses will be killed by the beast from the bottomless pit when their testimony is complete. The beast from the pit could be Satan or a demon. It could also represent the evil satanic ungodly "spirit".

The killing of the witnesses could represent the persecution of the church. We already know from chapter six that christians were persecuted for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Verse 8 - Sodom represents low morality and Egypt represents oppression.

Note that the witnesses (church) is untouched until their work is complete. This is similar to what happened to John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

Verse 10 -People will rejoice because of the death of these witnesses. Remember that the witnesses were telling these people things they didn't want to hear. People in darkness want to stay there so that their sins will not be seen. Again this is similar to John the Baptist's imprisonment (See Matthew 14:3-5).

It may be that the reason that they were not buried is because the people wanted to justify their sins by believing that the witnesses must have done something wrong (not been true) since they were killed. In general, they were justifying their sins and suppressing their guilt. Non-christians tend to gloat in the misfortune of a christian if they were constantly told by him/here that something they are involved in is ungodly. They justify their sins by convincing themselves that if this person was true then this misfortune would not have happened.

After 3 1/2 days the witnesses were resurrected and called up to heaven. This could represent the believers

being raised from the dead and brought up to heaven to be with God. It could also represent the new purified church of God.

The message to me: The word of God is preached to the ungodly so that what they do in darkness would be revealed in order to lead them to repentance. However, God will not continue to give them the chance to repent forever. There will come a time when judgment will come. Because some of those who are in darkness do not want the light and they reject what is preached to them. However, the word and purpose of God will prevail though the ungodly may think that they have extinguished the light of God.

After all of the incidence with the witnesses a great earthquake causes the death of thousands of men and the destruction of the city. Those who remained were so scared that they gave glory to God. This appears to be another partial judgement of God. Note that the people did not necessarily repent. They gave Glory to God because they were scared. This is an emotional conviction and not a spiritual prompting.

Verses 15 - 19

The Seventh trumpet sounds - The time of Jesus' rule has come. The temple of God in heaven was opened and the power thereof was seen as well as the ark of the covenant.

CHAPTER 12

The women and the Dragon

This vision seems to represent the events surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ. A women is often used to symbolize a religion or a set of beliefs.

The vision of the sun, moon, and the stars seem to refer to Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:9. The sun and moon may represent his parents and the stars his brothers (the other tribes).

Verse 1: The women appears to symbolize the Israelite nation because of the crown with 12 stars (12 tribes of Israel). God invoked his master plan of the redemption of man when Adam and Eve sinned. This master plan was manifested into Jesus Christ who came from the Israelite nation.

Verse 3 - 4: This Dragon is identified as Satan. Satan wanted desperately to kill Jesus. Much took place spiritually when Jesus Christ was born and during his life. Remember how Herod tried to kill Jesus when he was born and how the religious leaders wanted to kill him during his ministry. This originated from Satan who tried to put an end to God's plan of redemption of man to himself.

Satan - In Hebrew this word means accuser

Remember that the color red represents war and bloodshed. Jesus said that Satan was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44).

The fact that the dragon has seven heads and ten horns signifies that it is involved with world government and nations. It is the complete manifestation of evil and ungodliness. The crowns on its head shows his authority on the earth.

Verse 5 - 6: The women fled to the wilderness. The wilderness is associated with spiritual refuge and protection (Matthew 4:2). The women would be fed for 1260 days. It is clear that the child symbolizes Jesus Christ in that it states that he will rule all nations.

The greek word used here for "caught up" means to be seized or rescued from danger. This same term is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Perhaps the two references symbolize God's protection from danger.

Verses 7 - 12: Satan and his angels fought against Michael the arch (chief, principle) angel and his angels. Satan and his angels lost their place in heaven and were thrown down to the earth. This is not the original casting out of Satan from heaven. This is the final battle in heaven where Satan and his angels have no more access. They were expelled. Satan can no longer accuse the people before God as he did in Job (See Job 1:6, 2:1).

I believe that the theme here is that Satan wanted to stop the redemption plan that God had for man. One sure way to do this is to kill his son Jesus Christ.

Verses 13 - 17: The dragon (Satan) pursues the women because he was thrown out of heaven and knew that he didn't have much time left. Why? He couldn't kill Jesus so now man became redeemed to God by faith. It is only a matter of time before Jesus Christ returns and puts an end to Satan and his angels. Since the women was protected, he went after her offspring (Christians).

CHAPTER 13

The Beast from the Sea - The Anti-Christ

Verses 1 - 2: The beast from the sea (The World Ruler). Again this beast had seven heads and ten horns. On the ten horns he had ten crowns signifying his worldly authority (See significant numbers in the bible on page 24). He had the name of blasphemy on his heads. Blasphemy can be thought of as something that is against God, ungodly. This beast seems to represent the ANTI-CHRIST and is similar to the beast in Daniel 7:2-7. The sea here can represent the sea of humanity or the abyss.

Verse 3: The beast had a fatal wound that had healed. This may emphasize the beast recuperative power or it may be a sign to people of his might. Tough guys are often measured by the wounds on their bodies and are in awe by common people.

Verses 4 - 10

The beast speaks many blasphemies for 42 months. This beast was in direct opposition to the Godly things including God. All people whose names are not written in the lamb's book of life will worship the beast. Remember that God's people are sealed and protected from spiritual harm. However, the saints will endure tribulation and suffering because of their opposition to the beast. Some will be imprisoned and some will be killed for their faith in God. Later they will be rewarded. The book of life represents God's knowledge of who belongs to him.

The Beast from the Earth - The false Prophet

Verse 11: This beast had two horns like a lamb's (young bull) and spoke like a dragon. The fact that he has a feature as a lamb and speaks as a dragon (Devil) indicates his counterfeit nature. This beast represents the false prophet.

Verse 12: The false prophet reinforces the worship of the first beast (The one from the sea).

Verses 13 - 14: The false prophet deceived the people of the earth by performing many wonders and signs. He further advocates worship of the first beast and persuades the people to make an image of the that beast to worship.

Verse 15: The beast from the earth gave the image life so that it could speak. All those who would not worship the beast were to be killed.

Verses 16 - 17: All people, except true believers, were to receive the mark of the beast on their hands or foreheads so that they may be a part of the economical and perhaps government system. The people of God refused this mark otherwise they would have submitted to the beast and reject God. God's people were killed for this opposition to the beast. See Revelation 14:9 for reference to these marks. This mark also served as a way to ostracize true believers.

CHAPTER 14

The Lamb and The 144,000 People (Sealed people of God)

Verses 1 - 5: We see Jesus Christ (The lamb) and the true believers, those redeemed from the earth (The 144,000), singing in heaven. This is what the overcomers have to look forward to. This is, I believe, part of that living hope that is revealed in (1 Peter 1:3-5).

In the study of 1 Peter, I had asked the question "Why did the people in the early church have die?" I thank God for answering this question. Some of the people in the early church died because they were given as a firstfruits offering to God. Jesus Christ was planted for the redemption of man to God. This seed produced fruit - the early christians. From these first fruits, an offering was made to God just as in the old Testament law. I find that almost everything can be traced back to the seed principle. Jesus Christ, the seed (the word Matt 13, Mark 4) was planted and produced fruit.

Verse 4: These people were not defiled by women and were virgins. This most likely is a symbolic reference to their loyalty to Christ. The old testament scriptures often referred adultery to being unfaithful to God. Virgins symbolized those who were loyal and true to God (Hosea).

Verses 6 - 11 - The last chance for the unsaved. There are three things that happen here. First, the gospel is preached to the everyone on the earth. Second, it is declared that the great Babylon (the great and evil world system) has been destroyed. Third, a warning is given about receiving the mark of the beast and worshiping Him. Any one who worships the beast or receives his mark will burn forever. They will face the wrath of God for their "adultery". There is no rest for these unbelievers (See Hebrews 3 - 4).

Verse 12 - 14 - This tells us that it will take perseverance on the part of God's people who keep his commandments and remain faithful. The people that die in the Lord are blessed (happy, to be envied). The wording is strange in that it says "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Verses 14 - 20

The harvest of the earth (See Matthew 13:39-41)

Jesus is separating the godly from the ungodly. The fact that the harvest was ripe signified that it was time to harvest the earth of God's people. The purposes of God in the earth at this time was complete.

A winepress was a large trough where grapes were put and then smashed. The juice would run out onto a duct into another holding trough. The Bible sometimes likens the wrath for sins to this grape smashing process (Isaiah 63:3-6, Lamentations 1:15, Joel 5:24).

CHAPTER 15

The Angels with the seven last plagues - These plagues represent the completion of God's wrath on the earth.

Verse 2 - The people of God that overcame the beast worship and praise God. These people refused to worship the beast or receive his mark.

The fire may be symbolic of the judgement about to come.

Verse 5

"The tabernacle of the testimony" is a Greek translation for the Hebrew "tent of the congregation" (Ex 40:34,35).

Verse 7: The vials full of the wrath of God was given to one of the seven angels that came out of the tent of the

congregation. The judgement is poised to begin.

CHAPTER 16

The Plagues begin (Judgment on the Earth)

Verse 1: The judgement begins. The angels go out to release their part in the judgement of God.

The first angel poured out his portion of the wrath. A troublesome and grievous sore fell upon all those who had the mark of the beast and worshipped his image.

The second angel pours out his vial on the sea. All living souls in the sea died. The sea had become as blood of a dead man.

The third angel pours his vial into the rivers and fountains of the earth. They were all made to be as blood. The justness of God's judgement is declared by the angel of the waters. Even though things seem harsh at times, we know that God's judgements and actions are true and righteous.

The fourth vial is poured. Men on the earth are scorched by the sun and blaspheme God. They do not repent.

The fifth vial is poured. The vial is poured on the seat (throne) of the beast. His kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues and cursed God because of their pains and sores. These people still would not repent of their ways.

The sixth vial is poured on the great Euphrates river. The Euphrates River was a natural protective boundary or fortress for Israel (Judah also) against the empires to the east (Babylon, Assyria, and Persia). If it dried up, nothing could hold back invading armies. The armies to the east symbolize unhindered judgment.

The Dragon, Anti-Christ, and False prophet prepare themselves and their people for battle at Armageddon via the evil spirits that came from their mouths. These spirits could represent the evil confessions that the false prophet, Anti-christ, and beast spoke since these spirits came from their respective mouths. Evil spirits were sent out over the earth to gather the ungodly together for battle. The demons that came out of the unholy trinity's mouths may symbolize the propaganda they spread to the world.

Armageddon probably stands for Har Megeddon (The mountain of Meggido). See Judges 5:19. This could represent the geological location where the final overthrow of evil by God will take place.

The seventh vial is poured into the air. A declaration from heaven that it is done. The greatest earthquake in history completely destroyed the great city (Rev 17:18, 11:8, 14:8).

Verses 17 - 21: Babylon is symbolic for ungodly (evil) people. The fact that the city was divided into three parts symbolizes its complete destruction. A great hailstorm from heaven fell upon the earth. Men cursed God because of this hailstorm. Each hail stone was about a talent in weight (100 lbs.).

CHAPTER 17

The Punishment of the Great Prostitute

The kings of the earth committed adultery with her (Shifted loyalty to her) and the people of the earth were drunk with the wine of her adulteries (they participated also). It is quite normal for the people to do what the leader does.

The great whore (prostitute) sitting on many waters (A geological reference to Babylon).

John saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet and shining with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. The woman was also drunk with the blood of the saints (Believers).

The beast: Who used to exist but now doesn't, will come out of the abyss to his destruction. The unsaved will be astonished at the sight of this beast.

The seven heads: These are the seven hills that the woman sits on (A geological reference to Babylon). It also represents seven kings, five of which have already fallen, one is current, and the other has not yet come. When the seventh king comes he will remain for a little while.

The beast is the eighth king who belongs to the seven.

The ten horns: These represent ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom but are given authority as kings with the beast for one hour (A short time). The ten kings will give their authority to the anti-christ and make war against the lamb but will be defeated.

The waters that the woman sits on: These represent nations, peoples, and multitudes.

The beast and the ten horns (kings) will hate the prostitute and destroy her. The woman is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.

The Babylon here perhaps refers to the early Roman Empire (which started as a settlement on seven hills). Early readers of Revelation easily identified Rome with Babylon. Babylon could also represent any wicked governmental system.

CHAPTER 18

The fall of Babylon

A mighty angel declares the destruction of Babylon the great city.

Verse 2: Babylon was a house for evil.

Verse 4: God's people will not be judged with Babylon. They are called to get out. Throughout the bible, God always removes his people from those who will be judged. God does not judge the righteous with the unrighteous - He is just and fair.

Verses 5 - 8 - Babylon will now reap what it has planted. All of its sins has grown up to heaven and has caused its ruin. Whatever you sow is what you will reap (Galatians 6:7).

Verses 9 - 10 - The people that gave allegiance to Babylon will be astonished and terrified when they see her destruction. Their mighty leader (system) is destroyed.

Verses 11 - 19 - Those merchants that make profit from the activities of ungodly people and their desires will suffer economically because their customers, the great city, is no more. The term "one hour" may indicate that the destruction of the great city was swift.

Verses 21 - 24 - The declaration of the complete and permanent destruction of the great city.

This chapter describes the destruction of the Great Babylon (world system). This can also be thought of as a destruction of the evil world system. The source of this evil will be destroyed later.

CHAPTER 19

Victory is declared

Verses 1 - 5

God is praised for judging the great whore (prostitute) and for avenging the saints that were her victims. God's righteous judgements are also announced as He is given more praise.

Verses 6 - 10

Omnipotent = Almighty

It is time for the lamb to marry his bride. She is arrayed in fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints (See Matthew 25:1 - 13). The bride is the church, the body of Christ. This imagery is used most likely to show the intimate relation of Jesus Christ and his people (Ephesians 5:32, Matthew 22:2).

Verses 11 - 21

The rider on the white horse and the final stage of judgement of men.

Due to the description of the rider on the white horse, we can safely conclude that he is Jesus Christ. Jesus is heading the war against the unsaved on the earth. Remember that the unsaved were gathered at Armageddon to do war. Here they are defeated. The army that followed Jesus were clothed with righteousness.

The beast (Anti-Christ) and the false prophet were cast into the lake of fire (burning sulfur). The rest of the people (army) were killed by the sword that came out of the rider's mouth and their flesh was eaten by the birds that were summoned by the angel. This is the great supper of God.

CHAPTER 20

Verses 1 - 6: Satan bound for 1000 years

An angel with the key to the bottomless pit (abyss) binds Satan in the pit for 1000 years. During this time the people that died during the tribulation (did not receive the mark of the beast or worship him) were resurrected and reigned with Christ. This is the first resurrection.

Those who did worship the beast and received his mark will not resurrect until the 1000 years are over. See the notes on Postmillennialism, Premillennialism, and Amillennialism (Page 6) for different views of this thousand year period.

Millennium is Latin for thousand years.

Verses 7 - 10: Satan is judged. Satan is loosed from the abyss to deceive the nations. When they surrounded the city of God they were destroyed by fire. Satan was then thrown into the lake of fire with the false prophet and Anti-Christ. The three will be tormented forever.

Gog and Magog (See Geneses 10:2, Ezekiel 38-39). These represent all the forces of evil who band together to battle God.

Verses 11 - 15: The dead are judged.

Are these all people, or just the unsaved? Here are some thoughts.

1. All people will be judged and rewarded for their works (Matthew. 16:27, 2 Corinthians 5:10).
2. Christians are rewarded according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11 - 15).

The importance here is not the judgement of works, rather, your name appearing in the book of life. If your name isn't in this book then you will be cast into the lake of fire. That is how you are judged.

Note that death and Hades (Grave) will also be cast into the lake of fire. Death originated when Adam and Eve sinned. Death is actually a byproduct of sin (The wages of sin is death - Romans 6:23). I don't think that God's original plan was for men and women to die. The body follows the spirit. If the spirit dies then the body will. Adam and Eve suffered a spiritual death (separation from the everlasting God) and their bodies followed.

CHAPTER 21

Verses 1 - 8: The new heaven and the new earth. The way has been paved for the new heaven and the new earth, the seat of righteousness (2 Peter 3:12).

The sea to the Jews was a symbol of separation. By saying there was no more sea implies that the separation between God and Humans was gone.

It is announced that the old order of things have passed away. All things are now new. There will be no more death, crying, mourning, etc. The person that overcomes, is saved, will inherit the things described.

God himself will abide with people in the new earth. The ungodly will have their place in the lake of fire. Going to the lake of fire is called the second death.

Verses 9 - 21: The New Jerusalem

Note that John is mixing metaphors here. In chapter 19 the bride represented the church (people) of God. Here it represents the New Jerusalem, the new home for the overcomers. The city is beautiful and full of the Glory of God.

Verse 22 - 27: There was no need for a temple (church) in this new Jerusalem because God and Jesus are the temple. There is also no need for the sun and moon because God's glory will light the city.

All whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life shall enter this city. This city is the new home for the saved.

CHAPTER 22

Verses 1 - 6

The River of Life

A river of water of life flowed down the great street in the new city (See John 4:7 - 14).

In the middle of the great street and on both sides of the river stood a tree of life. These trees yielded twelve types of fruit and the leaves were for the healing of a nation. This does not imply that there will be a need for nations to be healed, rather this illustrates the power of the trees.

Nothing cursed will enter this city (See Zechariah 14:11).

Verses 7 - 21: The Conclusion by Jesus Christ. Jesus confirms the writings of this book and admonishes us to keep the things written in it. Jesus warns against anyone that would take away or add anything to the prophecy of Revelation.

INDEX OF WORDS

144,000 12, 16
A-Tribulation 3
adultery 8, 16, 17
amen 9
Amillennialism 3, 18
angel 4, 6, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18
anti-christ 11, 15, 17-19
Apokalupsis 2, 3
Armageddon 17, 18
Babylon 16-18
Balaam 6, 7
beast 14-18
believer 7
blasphemy 15
blood 5, 12, 13, 17
brimstone 13
burn 2, 16
christian 6, 7, 9, 14
cloud 5
dead 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19
death 3, 5-8, 11, 14, 19
demon 14
devil 16
Diana 6, 7
Domitian 2, 5, 7
dragon 15-17
earthquake 8, 12, 14, 17
Ephesus 4, 6
Eschatology 3
evil 2, 8, 14-19
false prophet 15-19
fire 6, 12-14, 16, 18, 19
Futurists 2
glory 5, 6, 14, 19
God 3-19

grave 11, 19
hades 6, 11, 19
heaven 7, 10, 13-19
hell 6
Historists 2
horn 11
horse 11, 18
hot 9
incense 12
interpretation 3, 11
Jerusalem 7, 9, 12, 19
Jezebel 7, 8
judge 18
kill 11, 13, 15
kingdom 3, 5, 17
kings 5, 8, 10-12, 17, 18
lamb 10, 11, 15-19
lampstand 6, 14
Laodicea 4, 6, 9
life 7-9, 15, 16, 19
mark 5, 13, 16-18
Mid-Tribulation 3
mighty 10, 13, 18
Millennium 3, 19
Nero 2
Nicolaitanes 6
overcome 7, 8, 10
overcomer 7, 9
pale 11
Partial Rapture 3
Pergamum 6-9
Philadelphia 6, 8, 9
Post Tribulation 3
Postmillennialism 3, 18
praise 10, 16, 18
Pre-Tribulation 3
Premillennialism 3, 18

Preterists 2
priest 5, 6
prostitute 17, 18
rapture 3
red 10, 11, 13, 15
reed 14
rejoice 14
repent 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 17
resurrection 3, 18
Revelation 2-5, 10-12, 16, 18, 19
rider 11, 18
righteous 17, 18
saints 7, 8, 11, 15, 17, 18
Sardis 6, 8
Satan 7-9, 14, 15, 18, 19
scorpion 13
scroll 6, 10, 11, 13
seal 11-13
second death 19
seven 3, 4, 6, 10-13, 15-18
Seven spirits 4, 10, 11
seven-fold spirit 4
Smyrna 6, 7
Spiritualists 2
suffer 7, 18
sulfur 13, 18
sword 6, 7, 11, 18
temple 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 19
Throne 4, 10, 12, 17
Thyatira 6-8
torment 13
torture 13
Trajan 2
tree of life 7, 19
trumpet 6, 12-14
vial 17
war 11, 12, 15, 17, 18

water 6, 9, 13, 19

witnesses 11, 14

women 8, 13, 15-19

worship 2, 6-10, 12, 15, 16, 18

worthy 10, 11