

An Overview Of Revelation

Introduction

General Ways To Interpret This Book

- a) The Idealist Approach
 - The book simply contains general principles to follow
 - b) The Historic Approach
 - The book covers the period from John's life through to the second coming of Christ
 - c) The Preterist Approach
 - The book was completely fulfilled in the first century
 - d) The Futurist Approach
 - Nothing of the book was written for the first century ... it is all for the second coming period
- The form of literature here is an apocalypse style which uses symbolism to communicate truth about end time events. The riddles of this form of writing is made to cause the reader to think and ponder.
 - This book contains more references to the old testament than any other New Testament work – some estimate that more than 70% of this book can be found in the OT.

Outline:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Chapters 1-3 | General introduction and letters to seven churches |
| Chapters 4-5 | John's vision of heaven |
| Chapter 6 | The seal judgments |
| Chapter 7 | Paranetical – The 144,000 Jews |
| Chapters 8-9 | The trumpet judgments |
| Chapter 10 | The little scroll |
| Chapter 11 | The two witnesses |
| Chapter 12 | War in heaven and on earth |
| Chapter 13 | The beast and the false prophet |
| Chapter 14 | The 144,000 and judgment of the earth |
| Chapter 15-16 | The bowl judgments |
| Chapter 17-18 | The judgment of Babylon |
| Chapter 19 | The return of Jesus Christ |
| Chapter 20-22 | Life in the Millennium and beyond |

Chronology:

- It is very likely that the three sets of judgments overlap each other, as opposed to running end-to-end. This is likely because of how things are described at the end of each set of judgments.
-

The Theme:

- That God is awesomely majestic, as well as sovereign in our troubles
- That Jesus' sacrifice as the Lamb ultimately brings complete deliverance for those who trust him
- That God's judgments on the world are often to serve notice on the world that God will avenge his people
- That regardless of how things appear in the short run, "sin does not go unpunished," and God will judge⁷⁵
- That God can accomplish his purposes through a small and persecuted remnant; he is not dependent on what the world values as power
- That worship leads us from grief over our sufferings to God's eternal purposes seen from a heavenly perspective
- That proclaiming Christ invites persecution, the normal state of committed believers in this age
- That Christ is worth dying for
- That a radical contrast exists between God's kingdom (exemplified in the bride, the new Jerusalem) and the world's values (exemplified in the prostitute, Babylon)
- That the hope God has prepared for us far exceeds our present sufferings
- That God's plan and church ultimately include representatives of all peoples

Emperor Of Rome at the time of John: Domitian (81AD – 96AD)

- Of the seven cities mentioned in Revelation 2-3, five have imperial priests and altars (all but Philadelphia and Laodica) and six have imperial temples (all but Thyatira). At Pergamum an imperial temple was established as early as 28 B.C. The city was so central to the imperial cult that Revelation describes this city as having the "synagogue of Satan." In short, a Christian in Asia Minor could not avoid the Imperial Cult.

Chapter 1

Verses 1-3

- Note that this reminds us that when the events begin to happen, they will happen quickly
- The same Greek word here translated as soon, is used in Luke 18:8 to indicate this
- There is a blessing promised here for those who study and heed the prophecy

Verses 4-8

- Jesus is the firstborn from the dead – see Col. 1:15, Psalm 89:27
- For a thought on the seven spirits, see Isa. 11:2; A greeting here from the Trinity!
- There is a word revealed to each of seven churches through John
- Verse 7 is a prophetic phrase from Zech. 12:10
- Alpha and Omega were the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet ... like our "a" to "z"

Verses 9-19

- This is the beginning of the vision
- The Lord's Day is a likely reference to Sunday, the first day of the week
- Patmos was a small island in the Aegean Sea, off the coast of Ephesus (a tiny island only 4 miles wide and 6 miles long)
- John was imprisoned here, during the persecution of Domitian
- Ezekiel, Daniel, Joseph, Peter and Paul all had visions of the Lord's revelation will under persecution
- Each lampstand seems to represent a church (verse 20)
- A lampstand is a light to a place – the local church is to be a light where it is planted
- The Lord is among them
- Remember that both here in verse 15 and back in verse 10, the picture of a great sound is likely a reference back to the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, where it appears that the voice of the Lord was like that of a blowing shofar
- The stars of verse 16 appear to be angels assigned to each church ... or perhaps pastors of the churches (this is unlikely, however, as in the first century, churches were seldom lead by one person)
- The sharp, two edged sword here makes reference to the Word of God (see Hebrews 4:12)
- The countenance of Jesus here is similar to what was seen at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-3)
- When Jesus says that He is the First and The Last, He is quoting from Isa. 44:6
- Death and hell ... both physical and spiritual death are in the control of the Lord
- Verse 19 provides the outline of the book ... what is NOW and what WILL come
- Jesus touches John ... what does this imply to you? He then reassures. He then commissions.
- Does the Revelation of Christ challenge OUR complacency to witness to what we have observed?
- Note the similarities between Jesus and the Book Of Daniel:
 - o Daniel 10:5-6 Eyes and limbs of bronze, Sound like rushing waters
 - o Daniel 7:13-14 Use of the term Son Of Man
 - o Daniel 7:9-10 Hair white like wool

The Seven Churches of Revelation



Chapter 2

- These church seem to be representatives of the various states that a church can be found in
- Two of these churches will be spoken of with no warnings; four will have some good and some bad and one will be spoken of as on the verge of falling

Verses 1-7

- This is the church at Ephesus
- First, it was the place of Artamus (Diana) worship. As time went on, this would become the place that people would come to deposit their money since Artamus would watch it. The priests could loan that money out and great rates of interest - the economy flourished.
- Twice a year, there were major celebrations of this goddess that would involve thousands of "sex acts" with temple prostitutes
- Domitian had named Ephesus "guardian" of the imperial cult

Ephesians 5:3 ¶ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

- It was here that an angry mob took two of Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus. Christian preaching had cut into the idolatry of the economy. Apparently sales of silver shrines of Artemis were down, and a silversmith named Demetrius whipped the people into a frenzy by telling them that not only was the silversmith business on the skids, but the temple of their great goddess might someday "count for nothing, and that she might even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship." (Acts 19:23-41)
- Later, around the early 80's, AD, Domitian demanded to be worshiped as a god - he called himself "Lord and God" - a statue some 27 feet tall was built for him at Ephesus who thought that it would be financially beneficial to be known as the place of Domitian worship.
- Ephesus had a great heritage Paul, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila all nurtured this church. There are strong traditions that John the beloved disciple, charged by Jesus at the foot of the cross to care for his mother Mary, brought her to Ephesus where they each lived to the end of their days. Another less strong tradition places Luke's grave here.
- there were no attacks by Paul - He simply preached the Word Of God - Understand that the Word of God rightly preached, will have implications.
- FEW people want a faith anymore that is PUBLIC - this has led to the cry for faith to be a private thing. Avoid this at all costs!
- For John, the implication included jail. For those of Ephesus, they were forbidden from buying and selling in the marketplace and from obtaining water from the public fountains
- the Roman Empire maintained certain mines and quarries, and John, apparently, was banished to this island because of his testimony and preaching of Jesus.
- What did Jesus like about the church?
 - o Their hard work and deeds
 - o Their perseverance
 - o Their unwillingness to wink at sin
 - o Hating evil practices (of the Nicolaitans)
 - As best we can tell from the early church fathers and the references of Scripture, this was a group that linked Christian faith with loose sexual practices. They believed you could be Christian but your sex life could still reflect that of the world. They tied that in with a false religious piety.
- What did Jesus warn about
 - o Forsaking their first love (See Acts 20:29-31)
- What did He promise
 - o Without repentance, He would remove the lampstand
 - o To overcomers, the right to eat of the tree of life

- Is there a danger of a church resembling its culture too much? How would we know if we were at that point?

Verses 6-11

- The City Of Smyrna
- This city was a beautiful place located on the Aegean Sea. It was by far the oldest city on the sea. The city was destroyed in the early 6th century BC and re-founded in the 4th-5th centuries BC (it was sacked by the Lydian king Alyattes about 600 BC and again by the Persians around 545 BC). It was about 40 miles north of Ephesus. It was called the pride of Asia for several reasons. A hill was situated at the back of the city and around its crest was a series of temples that was called the "Crown of Asia". This crown image was even seen on its coinage. Smyrna competed and won the right to build the first temple to a Caesar. They won?! The city was one of the major centers of emperor worship. As early as 26 A. D., during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, a temple had been erected to the emperor, and thus the Christians of Smyrna were confronted with the need annually to choose between saying, "Jesus is Lord," or, "Caesar is Lord." That was the test the Romans applied to all their citizens. It meant that a great deal of pressure and persecution came upon this church because of their unwillingness to say "Caesar is Lord." There was also a large community of Jews within the city who were hostile to the Christian faith.
- This church receives the longest, unbroken statement of praise from the Lord. This is ironic, as it is the smallest, poorest church, facing intense persecution. You cannot evaluate the health of a church based on its societal position
- The name Smyrna means "myrrh." It is a very fitting name because myrrh is a perfume, the fragrance of which is released by crushing. - Myrrh, a bitter gum and costly perfume which exudes from a certain tree or shrub in Arabia and Ethiopia, or is obtained by incisions made in the bark. As an antiseptic it was used for embalming.
- their poverty most likely came because they were not allowed access to the city markets as Christians; poverty in the midst of great wealth!
- Fear is overcome within community. (this is why the rich tend to walk more in fear)
- the Christians were called:
 - o atheists because they served only one god
 - o unpatriotic - a threat to stability
 - o evil as they upset the spiritual order; upset the pantheon of gods who brought fertility
- you will never defend against slander ... let it die in the face of love.
- God has not answered all our questions, has He?

It appears that God has deliberately left us in a quandary about many things. Why did He not summarize all the rules in one book, and all the basic doctrines in another? He could have eliminated the loopholes, prevented all the schisms over morality and false teaching that have plagued His Church for two thousand years. Think of the squabbling and perplexity we would have been spared. And think of the crop of dwarfs He would have reared!

THE LIBERTY OF OBEDIENCE, Elisabeth Elliot

- "Be faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life." Surely that is intended to be a contrast to the Crown of Asia, the pagan temple buildings that were built on the hill of Pagos. That was an earthly crown, a recognition of earthly status, and a source of great pride to this city. But our Lord says that he will give something much better: a Crown of Life, of eternal life.
- Under Turkish rule the city was renamed Izmir, and today it is the only one of the seven cities of Asia which retains anything of its ancient standing. It is now Turkey's third largest city (2.7 million) after Istanbul and Ankara. Izmir is the last stronghold of Christianity in Turkey. To this day there is a significant Christian presence in the city. There are about 12 active churches, including the first legal Turkish Protestant church, which was officially recognized just a few years ago.
- Another phrase with special meaning to the people of Smyrna could be: "who died and came to life again." Aside from its obvious reference to Christ, it possibly refers to the time the city was

destroyed in the early 6th century BC and re founded in the 4th - 5th centuries BC (it was sacked by the Lydian king Alyattes about 600 BC and again by the Persians around 545 BC).

- With reference to the 10 days of verse 10, the Jews had a tradition that Abraham had been tested a total of 10 times... further Daniel was tried for 10 days when first taken to Babylon (Daniel 1:12, 14)
- note that in the second century, this city would have a Bishop called Polycarp (martyred in 156 AD)

Verses 12-17

- Pergamum, at one time the capital city of the Roman province of Asia Minor, was known for its spectacular architecture and many beautiful temples dedicated to a variety of gods. This letter is identified as being "the words of him who has the sharp, double edged sword" (verse 12). This introduction held special significance for people of Pergamum.
- The provincial governor in that city had what was known as "the right of the sword". Rome's authority to decide which prisoners or accused persons would live or die (including Christians who refused to honor the 'divine' Caesar). So John's letter is a clear statement saying that Jesus; not the governor; has power over life and death.
- Pergamum was the Roman capital of the province of Asia. Located about 50 miles north of Smyrna. It was a center of pagan worship and there was a temple to Caesar there as well. It is called here, "where Satan has his throne," i.e. the place where Satan rules. And it is also referred to as the city "where Satan lives," i.e., where he has his headquarters. Many scholars think that refers to the great altar of Zeus which was on the hillside overlooking the city. It was a great chair, or throne, forty feet high, and any citizen could look up there at any time and see what Jesus calls "Satan's throne." This was such a center of pagan worship it seemed to be the very center of evil.
- When the people of Pergamum needed healing, they went to the temple shrine of Asclepius - the snake god of healing. Everyone who entered the hospital complex passed a snake symbol and thereby credited any healing they would receive to the snake god. Priests interviewed potential patients to determine whether they were acceptable for healing. Interestingly, they turned away people who were dying and women who were ready to deliver babies. They didn't want a particular patient's death to 'taint' their god.
- Once accepted, patients were led through an underground tunnel to a huge treatment room where they went to sleep, probably after being drugged. The patients waited to receive a vision of treatment from Asclepius, which they would reveal to the priests, who in turn would prescribe treatment(s). The main treatments related to water, so patients would take mud baths or drink sacred spring water. Exercise, dietary changes, rest, and attending the theater were also prescribed. Once healed, patients bowed down on their knees before a statue of Asclepius, thanked him for their healing, and gave him gifts. Finally, they would inscribe their name and the ailment from which they'd been cured on a large, white stone as a testimony to the god.
- The reference to Jesus's sword comes from Hebrews 4:12; Our allegiance to the Word will divide us from those that reject
- Interestingly, the word Pergamum means "marriage". Is the thought that this church was attempting to mix the world and the Church?
- The teaching of Balaam comes from Numbers 25. Balaam was a false prophet who had been hired by Balak, the King of Moab, to curse Israel, but when he tried to do so he found he could not. Every time he tried to curse them, words of blessing came out of his mouth. God would not let him curse his people. So, in order to achieve the end for which he had been hired, he paid beautiful maidens from Moab and Midian to parade before the young men of Israel, tempting them into sexual immorality. Since these women were worshipers of idols, by that means he introduced idol worship into the tribes of Israel. Thus he corrupted and enticed them into sin.
- Ironic that Jesus is said to come against those with the "Sword" - this is how Balaam himself died (see Numbers 31:7)
- Hidden manna seems to make reference to a cache of supplies unseen by the temporal world

Please understand that many Christians will continue to use the tools of the world and the enemy and will never experience any of the blessing that the Lord desires for His people. You can't know peace with forgiveness, you

cannot experience riches without knowing surrender; you will never know the sweetness of a close call with the Spirit without cultivating a relationship with Him; Never know humility and freedom from anger without transparency; Never will there be spiritual gains without personal risk.

- Antipas may be a reference to the first Christian martyr in Asia

Verses 18-27 (Thyatira)

- After the death of Alexander the Great, his kingdom was divided up between four of his generals. One of these, Seleucus I, established the state of Pergamum in 282 BC. It was at this time that Thyatira became the eastern flank of Seleucus' kingdom and it was re founded by him as a military outpost (the name Thyatira means 'the citadel or castle of Thya' and indicates that a settlement already existed there before Seleucus re fortified it).
- Archaeological evidence indicates that Thyatira frequently changed hands between Pergamean and Syrian rule. This meant that no lasting growth was ever possible during this time of its history like that of the cities of Ephesus and Pergamum further behind the lines.
- Thyatira lay in an alluvial plain between the Hermus and Calcius rivers and it was not built on any natural geological phenomena that provided it with a good base from which to defend its position. Its sole purpose was to act as the first line of defense in front of a hostile advancing army, to hinder their movement while the kingdom's main forces were mustered deeper behind the battle front.
- Thyatira was not a jewel worth fighting for except in the sense that it could be employed to hinder an advancing army. The garrison stationed here would, therefore, have been composed of the more guerrilla like warriors who would be less concerned with winning a war than with throwing the enemy into disarray and hindering its speedy onslaught.
- Thyatira fell to the Romans in 190 BC and became first part of the Pergamean Kingdom and then part of the province of Asia. When, in 133 BC, Thyatira gave itself wholly into the hands of the Roman empire, an era of both peace and prosperity was ushered in
- This is a city that was "hicksville", out of the way, completely ordinary
- No beauty, no power, no military advantage (yet, it is given a place to rule by Christ)
- It was a prosperous manufacturing city ... many organized trade guilds in wools, linen, dyes, clothing, leather, bakery, pottery ... Lydia was a seller of purple (Acts 16) ... from Thyatira
- Christ's description of Himself here is much stronger than in previous letters
- Christ's eyes penetrate into the soul ... His feet of fire picture judgment
- Everyone who worked there was a member of one or more trades. There were carpenters, dyers, sellers of goods, tent makers, etc. Lydia, Paul's first convert in Philippi, was from this city. To be involved in a trade meant that you must be a member of a trade union. Yet, these unions would meet regularly for drunken parties that would eat meat involved in pagan rituals and also be involved in "sexual expressions" the gods. What were Christians to do?
- Though there is simply no way to arrive at a harmony between these two differing ways of life, nevertheless, Jezebel (as we will see later) managed to work out a theology that compromised faith in Christ with continued participation in the trade guilds and that meant continued financial prosperity and material wealth.

The Positives:

Their works, Their love, Their service, Their faith, Their growth!

Their Weakness Exposed:

- o a toleration of sinful practices
 - note that Christ's rebuke is against the church ... not against the Jezebel
 - this name is meant to denote the kind of false teacher this was - it comes from the OT wife of Ahab
 - - note the deception of this woman:
 - a) clever deception
 - a. 1Ki:21:9: And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:

- b. 1Ki:21:10: And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.
 - b) manipulatively dominate
 - a. 1Ki:21:7: And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.
 - c) viciously scheming
 - a. 1Ki:19:2: Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.
 - d) influentially wicked
 - a. 1Ki:21:25: But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up (lit. urged on)
- The chief god to be worshiped here would be Apollo. 'Apollo' was one of the sons of Zeus, the twin of the goddess Artemis (see Acts 19:23-41), by birth to Leto his mother. Being a 'son of Zeus', therefore, meant that he was a son of the supreme god, a 'son of god'. That the emperor also took upon himself this title is not surprising as they were regarded as being divine and were worshiped as such throughout the Empire. But the emperor had to be the 'son of god' made incarnate who dwelt among mankind. It should be noticed that Apollo's medium or mouth-piece on the earth was the Pythia ('python'), a local woman over 50 years of age who delivered oracles under his (supposed) inspiration. The word is used in Acts 16:16 where the slave girl is said to have a 'python' spirit ('a spirit of divination' in the RSV) by which she prophesied. If we are meant to understand that this slave girl was a Pythia then she would have been a leading figure in the city of Philippi. Of more significance to our present study is the figure Jezebel, called a 'prophetess' in the city where Apollo was worshiped. Although it would seem unlikely that Jezebel would have been a Pythia, she is equated as being as worthless as such to the church for, when Jesus uses the title 'Son of God', He is immediately exercising His authority over His (supposed) mouth-piece. The implication here is to the doctrine of friendship with the world which is the strongest weapon of Satan to corrupt the church. A little variation of love, of sex, of joy, of pleasure; a misplaced emphasis, that is all what is required to give a totally variant heresy. The historic Jezebel was doing the same thing. As Baal worship was part of the agricultural form of living in Canaan, so was the Thyrian Prophetess teaching in a community of feudal guilds. In our times, the community is different.
- The Son has feet like burnished bronze. The feet, portraying movement and moral stand, are strong, sure and beautiful (Rom. 10:15). The Son's feet are consistent with the Son's eyes. The feet move in accordance to the eyes' discernment. The Thyatirans, as adopted sons of God (Gal. 3:26; 4:1 ff.), stand firm in their new found position as sons of God. They should move as sons of God, firmly and decisively in the right direction. Holy relationship ("Son of God") should result in holy actions
- In Ephesus there is much zeal for orthodoxy, but little love; in Thyatira there is much love, but a carelessness about false doctrine.
- To the overcomers Jesus promises authority over the nations. Verse 27 refers to the quality control supervisors of the pottery guild, who sounded each pot for quality. He will gently strike the pot to generate a vibration. If the vibrations did not produce a high pitched note showing that the construction was perfect, it was shattered to pieces with a shattering blow. An iron rod was used for this purpose. The picture of the authority over the nations is a total authority to destroy that which are found unworthy. The authority is over the nations, which evidently is on the earth. This therefore would simply imply the dictatorial rule of Jesus during the millennial period when these overcomers are given authority.

Chapter 3: 1-6

- - this was not the case of heresy or persecution at Sardis .. Rather laziness

- No external problems are mentioned at this church – only internal ones!
- - The city had ceased to be useful by the time of Jesus since Roman had brought peace to the land. It was a city under some decay
- - there had been an earthquake here in AD 17. The Emperor, Tiberius spent vast amount of money to make it look good again ... but it was still a dying city
- In the city were found:
 - o Jewish temple located in the Greek Bath (known for its utter paganism)
 - this is the largest synagogue ever found - very beautiful
 - within this temple, a lion statue with the Cybele removed (she was the goddess of fertility)
 - a table with two eagles carved on it (signs of Rome)
 - a ceremonial cleansing basin (listed in the city records as a public vessel)
 - o many store niches (where store owners would set up shops) with Christian crosses carved in the walls
 - o a temple to Cybele (still standing) with pillars some 55 feet in height
 - within this temple, a small Christian church
- Where these examples of religious people taking their faith into the pagan land and offering an alternative to the culture of the day or were they examples of a faith that had grown accustomed to the paganism of the day???
- This city was once the capital of the Kingdom of Lydia ... it was built on the top of a rock 1000 feet high and considered unscalable ... walls on three sides were nearly vertical
- - twice in its history, it was invaded by armies who scaled the rocks by finding small crevices and slipped into the city unguarded ... these crevices developed slowly as cracks vertically up the side of the cliff. The enemies would have to be silent, unobserved (at night) and come one at a time (Happened twice; under Cyrus and Antiochus)
- - the lessons of old had not been learned ... because of resting on their strengths and laurels, when the crunch came, Sardis was unprepared

3:7-13 (Philadelphia)

- Philadelphia was founded for a special purpose and with a special intention. It was situated where the borders of Mysia, Lydia and Phrygia met. It was a border town. But it was not as a garrison town that Philadelphia was founded, for there was little danger there. It was founded with the deliberated intention that it might be a missionary of Greek culture and the Greek language to Lydia and Phrygia; and so well did it to its work that by A.D. 19 the Lydians had forgotten their own Lydian language and were all but Greeks ☐ That is what the Risen Christ means when he speaks of the open door that is set before Philadelphia. Three centuries before Philadelphia had been given an open door to spread Greek ideas in the lands beyond; and now there has come to it another great missionary opportunity, an open door to carry to men who never knew it the message of the love of Jesus Christ.
- Philadelphia guarded and commanded an important pass through the mountains between the Hermus and Meander valleys. It was the “Keeper of the key” to door, or gateway, of the eastern highlands. The officials had the power to open and close this door as they willed. Through this portal passed the mail, trade, and commerce of the west to the wide regions of central and eastern Lydia.
- The city of Philadelphia was subject to frequent and severe earthquakes. No city of Asia Minor suffered as more or as much. The historian, Strabo, who lived between 64 B.C. and A.D. 21, said Philadelphia was “full of earthquakes.” He may have been there in A.D. 17 the year of the great earthquake that destroyed the city. Unfortunately, that was only one of a series of quakes which kept the citizens in a state of fearful expectancy. Because of this situation, the people often fled to the open country living in tents or booths. This kept them beyond the range of disaster during an earthquake season. The city was often shattered and the migrations from its ruins were frequent. The citizens lived in constant terror. Yet, in spite of this ever present danger the Philadelphians were determined to make the city realize the aims for which it was founded. This constant fear of the day of trial when the citizens must flee for their lives made the language employed by Christ very striking

- (Verses 10-12). He encouraged His people with the promise that if they were faithful they would one day enter the New Jerusalem the city of God, where they could dwell safely and “go no more out.”
- - “Who is true.” “True” is the Greek word *alhqinos*. It means “the real, the genuine, the ideal,” and stands opposed to what is false and to what is only a picture or type of the real.
 - - He holds the “Key Of David” ... the promise or authority of the fact that the Messiah would come from the line of David, whose kingdom would reign forever and forever
 - - He “holds the key of David.” That is a reference to an incident recorded in the 22nd chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah. In the days of Hezekiah the king there was a courtier (we would call him a chief of staff, for he was in charge of the palace) whose name was Shebna. He had been caught in a personal scam run for his own benefit, and as a result God says a very unusual, very descriptive thing about him: “I will take him and whirl him around and around (like a discus thrower), and hurl him into a far country,” {cf, Isa 22:18}. It was a prediction that he would be sent into Babylon. He would be replaced by a godly man named Eliakim, of whom God said,

“I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David. What he opens, no one can shut, and what he shuts, no one can open.” {Isa 22:17 NIV}

- Our Lord refers back to that passage in Isaiah and applies it to himself: “I am the one who shuts and no one can open, and opens and no one can shut.” His will cannot be opposed.
- No government, no power, no system could close the door of the Gospel being spread through this little church that the Lord had blessed
- note that in spite of its small size, and limited resources, and its apparent lack of success in evangelizing, the Lord registers no complaint against the city church
- “Those of the synagogue of Satan.” The synagogue refers to the place of Jewish worship and study.
- “Of Satan” is a genitive of possession, Satan’s synagogue, that which belongs to him. Satan was its head and the power behind the scenes. More crime, evil and persecution have been perpetrated in the name of religion and by the religious, self-righteous type than almost any other one source of evil. Religion is Satan’s trump card, and one of his primary weapons that he uses to both deceive and hurt mankind. This is what we have here. Religious persecution by religious Jews operating under Satan’s control whether they realized it or not. The Lord’s word to the religious leaders in John 8:41-47 is fitting here: “Who say they are Jews and are not.” They were literal Jews, physical descendants of David and Abraham, but in claiming to be Jews they were also claiming to be God’s people, religious guides to the truth, and the means and access to God. The Apostle Paul comments on what constitutes a true child of Abraham in Romans 9:6-8. There he makes the clear distinction between racial Israel and regenerate Israel. They were not children of God regardless of their claims and religiosity. They had rejected God’s Son and revelation of God, they were of their father the Devil, as Christ plainly told them. To be a true Jew in the biblical sense one had to have the hope and faith of Abraham. Abraham was the possessor of faith in the promises of God to him and faith in the coming Messiah.
- the thought of the pillar ... and never leaving the city reminds us of the history of the city - constant earthquakes
- the promise is, is that we will be established here and forever - the Lord will bear us up and for all eternity, we will be made a strong fixture in the Kingdom of God
- A change of names would be meaningful to the Philadelphians because that city changed its name twice in its history. It called itself Neocaesarea when Tiberius helped it; and later on, in honor of Vespasian, one of the Flavian emperors, it changed its name to Flavia. (It later resumed the name Philadelphia.)

Rev. 3:14-22

- there is a richness that appears great, but leads us to longing
- there is a lack of trouble that we think is peace, but leaves us wretched (enduring toils and troubles)
- there is a wisdom that we think will make us wise, but it leaves us in the dark

- Many large, beautiful homes were built in this city, the ruins of which are still visible, and probably some of them were owned by Christians.
- Had a flourishing clothing industry. A particular breed of black sheep were raised around this area, and the glossy, black wool was woven into special clothes that were sold here.
- The city was also noted for its medical practice, especially for its eye and ear salve. The medical cult of Aesculapius was located here.
- Laodicea is a beautiful location in Asia Minor. Nearby are the great ruins of the cities of Colosse and Hierapolis, known for their springs—hot at Hierapolis and cold at Colosse. To the church at Laodicea, in between the two, John wrote these words: “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:15—16). What was it about the believers in Laodicea that led John to address them with those words—to portray their unfaithfulness in terms of hot and cold water? Could it be that there’s more to the meaning of hot water and cold water than what meets the eye when we first read that verse? An understanding of the geography, and particularly the water sources, of these neighboring cities gives us a new understanding of what this message may have meant to the church of Laodicea and what it means for Christians today.
- By far the most impressive feature of Hierapolis (6 miles from Laodicea) was its hot springs. The baths of the Hierapolis were among the largest in all of Asia Minor, allowing hundreds of people to bathe at the same time. People from distant regions came to soak in warm baths and seek healing for arthritis, skin diseases, and even abdominal problems.
- In contrast to the Hierapolis, the ancient city of Colosse was known for its cold water. Located about eleven miles from Laodicea, Colosse was built at the foot of Mt. Cadmus, which towered more than nine thousand feet high. Colosse was known for a purple dye called colissinus and for its many, ice cold snow and rain fed streams that rushed down from the snow covered peak of Mt. Cadmus. People in the fertile Lycus River Valley commonly talked about this wonderful, invigorating water.
- Their own water was an awful mix of lime water.
- Jesus looks at the people and says in essence, you are not hot - like the soothing, pain relieving waters of Hierapolis and you are not cool - like the refreshing, invigorating waters of Colosse. Because you are not; not practicing whatever spiritual gift you find yourself with, you are like lukewarm water that makes me sick
- I need to see myself for what I am
- to become a student of what drives my desires, what angers me; what motivates me
- to remember that I am not simply a thermostat responding to my environment and circumstances - that I too have the power to choose
- acquiring doesn’t bring relief -when will you have acquired enough?
- when life gets tough, do I go shopping, dive into a comfort food? Does this make the difference in me?
- it is ironic that they had money, but not fresh water - they could say that they did it themselves, but they needed to lay pipe upon pipe as each one would calcify and fill with minerals
- it is a shame that they could not purchase water from Colosse , but it seems that Colosse would not sell them water as that city was in decline and they did not want to see another city grow more popular than they were.
- what a foolish way to live - always competing, never looking out for another person; never caring or feeling another’s hurt - never realizing that life coupled together is a life twice as strong!
- In fact, an ancient writer recorded that the city of approximately 120,000 people refused an emperor’s offer to rebuild following an earthquake (AD 60). The Laodiceans apparently told the emperor that they were rich and didn’t need his money
- they were trusting in the wealth that their black sheep brought them
- Then, second, they needed white clothes: "white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness." Everyone is morally naked before God. Every one of us knows something about ourselves that we would not want anyone else to know. But God knows! He sees us in our nakedness. What does he offer for it? The righteousness of Christ! All through these letters we have seen that white clothes stand for redemption, for righteousness imparted by Christ. We are no longer

to be clothed with our own self-righteousness, which Isaiah says is nothing but filthy rags in the sight of God, but we are to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ himself, a perfect righteousness which God accepts.

- Laodicea was noted for their eye ointment. But Jesus says they need spiritual eye salve that will enable them to see. Everywhere in Scripture we have mention of an anointing of the Spirit which opens eyes to understand the truth of God.
- As part of the wedding proposal, the bride would wait in an inner room, while the suitor and her father would negotiate the "bride-price". When the father was satisfied, the groom would knock at the door, and await as the bride answered. Would she? Will we, as Jesus "knocks"?

Revelation 4:1-14

- here, we see John called into heaven and what he describes from this point on is from that vantage point
- we note that he hears a sound like a trumpet blast - language that surely draws us back to 1 Thess. 4, in which the rapture of the church is seen.
- the church is never mentioned again in the Book Of Revelation until the 19th chapter; there are no words to the church during the tribulation period.
- there will come a period of seven years, yet future, in which the Glory of the Lord will be showed in ways that will leave all who see it without excuse as to the path they will take.
- this seven year period is drawn from the book of Daniel, chapter 9

1 Corinthians 15:51 ¶ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—

52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 ¶ Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 ¶ Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever.

18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

- The second coming of Christ appears to proceed in two parts. In our two passages above, Christ meets the saints "In the air". The event occurs quickly when as saints of God, we are changed from mortal to immortal; to that which is dying to that which never dies. Bodies of those that have died "In Christ" will be awakened from the grave. This is a mystery - it was never revealed in the Old Testament. When we die "In Christ", we go to be in the presence of the Lord (according to Philippians 1). That part of us that is immortal our soul and spirit, if you will, are in His presence. However, Christ makes it clear that He desires us to be fitted for life on this earth (in the Kingdom to Come) and so He has planned a different body for us - most likely identifiable as the one we now possess - but one that does not know corruption.

- Flesh and blood cannot enter the new Kingdom:

1 Corinthians 15:50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

- yet, our new bodies are flesh and bone:

Luke 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

- There is no blood - the spiritual body will be empowered directly by the Spirit.
- Note that John was immediately in the spirit - he could not tell the difference between the body and the spirit; we are at the core of our being, spiritual
- Perhaps he is remembering the cascading colors that reflected the majesty and glory of God. Moses was told, "No man can see the face of God and live," {cf, Exod 33:20}. No one has ever seen God at any time; all that man may see are manifestations of his Being which tell out his attributes and glory. John saw a figure seated upon the throne but he could not see his features through the dazzling lights that danced about the throne.
- The throne room of God - He is in control of His entire creation
 - a) "jasper," Hard, inflexible, clear, unchangeable, firm. Describes the Lord's government. (III. The Lord's fixed physical laws Gravity, thermodynamics, etc.) His moral laws are just as stable. (III. He will rule with a rod of iron Psa. 2:9)
 - b) The second stone is the carnelian, or sardius, which was blood red in color a glowing, beautiful, blood red stone. That, of course, immediately suggests the Son. His major characteristic is his willingness to shed his blood on our behalf, to give himself in redemptive atonement for our sins. It is the wonder of the ages. He is the Lamb of God, slain from before the foundation of the world.
 - c) The third color was the emerald. John saw a great rainbow circling the throne, green as an emerald. Green is the color of nature, of creation. A rainbow was first seen at the flood of Noah. After the terrible holocaust that wiped out the world of that day by a flood, Noah for the first time saw in the sky a rainbow, not a green rainbow, but a rainbow of various colors, just as we see them today during a mist or rain. The rainbow was the promise of grace expressed in nature. "Never again," God said, "will I ever visit the earth with a universal flood," {cf, Gen 9:9 26}. Never again. That is God's grace shown in the natural world. See also Ezek1:28.
- Lightning and thunders remind us of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai - where there were tremendous storms that surrounded the mountain. God is a holy God and He is a God of judgment to be sure.
- The 24 elders are a picture of the redeemed saints both Jewish and gentile. Twelve are seen as representing the tribes of Israel and twelve are seen as representing the initial working of the disciples. It does not appear that angelic beings wear crowns, and they have been promised to the church as a sign of rewards. The clothing of white robes is also in keeping with the work that the Lord has done for the saints. Parallels gates and foundation of new Jerusalem. 21:12
- Note also that there were 24 divisions of priests and singers spoken of in 1 Chron. 24-25.
- Verse 7 reminds me so much of the picture of Christ. Often, I am asked why the Lord desired four independent Gospel writers to record the life of Christ and why they are not always chronologically in agreement with each other. Understand that each of the writers had a different reason for writing (but all wrote under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit). Matthew wrote to the Jewish people to tell them Jesus was their Messiah - He was the Lion Of Judah. Mark wrote to all people to show how Jesus came to be a servant - a "beast of burden" like an ox. Luke wrote to the Gentile world to show us that Jesus was like us - the qualities of a man - He was the Son of Man and John wrote to all people to show them that Jesus was God - the Son of God; the King (as an eagle is often considered a royal bird). These four creatures remind me of the character and working of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The seven spirits of God - the Holy Spirit
 - Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him
 - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
 - the Spirit of counsel and of power,
 - the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD
- John now introduces us to the "sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, ☉"
 - a. In the Old Testament the bronze laver was called "the sea" (see 1 Ki 7:23 25)
 - b. It was the place between the tabernacle or temple and the altar of sacrifice ... the place of cleansing.

- c. John is describing the great "sea" around the throne, only those who have been cleansed can approach God's throne!
- Eugene Peterson, a powerful communicator in our day, has said that true worship does five things to you:
 - a) It centers things for you: You see God as the center of everything. Your ego is no longer center. You stop living for yourself but for him.
 - notice that the crowns are thrown at the feet of Jesus
 - b) And it gathers: It includes others with you. You become part of a family, a congregation. It crosses lines of exclusion. Every tribe and every race are represented here
 - c) It affirms: It responds to God's great promises with an "Amen" and a "Yes" from you.
 - d) It reveals: things you never saw before you now begin to understand.
 - The familiar patterns of life take on new vistas.
 - e) And it makes you sing:
 - Christians are always singing. There are many songs in this book of

Interestingly, of all the songs in the Book of Revelation, not one is a solo. The twenty-four elders sing and cast their crowns before His feet, the united voices of countless angels resound, every living creature in heaven and earth and under the earth and all that is in them are joined in one song. Those who are victorious over the beast are given harps and a song to sing. In every case multitudes of people or angels unite in the same song with absolute unity. -- Graham Kendrick. Leadership, Vol. 15, no. 2.

- This scene is like a huge trial, with the Father sitting as judge. Perhaps the Trinity is here to speak as testimony to what is happening. The Spirit draws and woes, the Son redeems. How does all of creation respond?

Revelation 5:1-14

- A seal, with writing on both sides has been rolled around a rod. Seven times, it has been sealed with wax and not one person alive was found to have the authority to break those seals ... until Christ
- This scroll is clearly sealed by the Father (seven times)
- Christ is called the Root Of David (verse 5) ... He that came from David pre-existed David (see John 8:57, Micah 5:2, Rev 22:16)
- Christ is called the one worthy to open the seal. Perhaps it is wise to view the seals, at least in one sense, as the title deed to all of creation. Christ has created it all, He has redeemed it all and He is about to conquer it all.
- Seven horns ... the OT allusion to horns was one of strength or power or authority
- Seven eyes ... another reference to Christ's omniscience (see also Zech. 4:10)
- Seven Spirits ... the Holy Spirit poured out on all the earth
- In the OT, each morning and evening incense was burned, representing the prayers of God's people rising to Him. He has accepted them, as symbolized here (Psalm 141:2)
- Note the saints sing a new song ... one that is current, not looking back but forward
- God makes things new (2 Corinth. 5:17, Rev. 21:5)

Revelation 6:1-16

- The sixth chapter of Revelation brings us to the beginning of the judgments of the wrath of God. It is not an easy passage to preach on, but it is part of the content of blessing promised to those who read and keep the prophecies of this book (1:3).

The Bible has long predicted a crisis of that nature. One of the proofs that the Bible is from God is the fact that in the Old Testament the book of Daniel corresponds closely to the book of Revelation. Daniel saw many of the same things that John records here, although Daniel lived 600 years before John wrote. In the ninth chapter of his prophecy Daniel is given a great calendar that would outline history to its final days. There was marked out a period of 70 "weeks," which means weeks of years. Seventy "weeks" times seven years is 490, so there would be 490 years that were to be fulfilled from the beginning of the building of the wall of Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah, to the end of the age. 483 of those years would end on the day when the Messiah would be presented to Israel as her King. Just a few days later he was rejected and crucified, for the prophecy of Daniel had said that Messiah would be "cut off and have nothing," which is surely a reference to the crucifixion. After that there is an indeterminate, long running period of time during which the prophet was told "wars and desolations were determined," {cf, Dan 9:26 KJV}. It is during that indeterminate length of time that the church comes into being, starting on the Day of Pentecost when God began to call out a special people for his name, made up of both Jews and Gentiles. That church began almost 2,000 years ago, and perhaps is almost completed now, but it is still on earth today. The prophet is then told of certain other events that were to occur during the last seven years of that 490 year period. Those events have not yet happened! Many commentators have thus understood that this seven year period is still unfulfilled and when it begins it will be largely and closely associated with the nation Israel. Those seven years are referred to by Jesus himself in his great prophetic passage in Matthew 24. Before his crucifixion, as he sat on the Mount of Olives, he explained to the disciples what must come to pass. In that passage he refers several times to "the end of the age," or more simply, "the end." That end is the seven year period of Daniel's prophecy that will run its course when Israel is once again brought into prominence among the nations. It is that same period of seven years, which Revelation 6 through 19 covers, we are looking at the events to occur in that period. The four Gospels tell the story of the life of Christ, but one third of the gospels focus upon the last week of our Lord, the seven days before the crucifixion. So also in Revelation, 13 out of the 22 chapters of this book relate to the seven year period of time which constitutes the end of the history of this age.

- Why does all this occur?

A) Preparation For The Messiah

- again in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar has a vision of a giant statue
- it represents the governments of the Gentiles - the Time of the Gentiles
- in it, a large Rock formed without hands crashes and destroys the image
- Jesus will come to set up His kingdom here on earth
- a great number of Jewish souls will enter the Kingdom during this time

B) God hates sin - He does not merely tolerate it!

- The concept of God's Judgment is foreign to many who believe that God is simply love
- this negates the image of our Lord that recoils at the thought of sin
- there is nothing that can diminish what will come

- the three sets of judgments will unfold in an overlapping way - each taking us from the beginning of the tribulation period to the end - do not think in terms of chronology - rather overlapping

- The First Seal (6:1-2)

There is much dispute as to what this rider on the white horse represents. Some identify him as Jesus, because in Chapter 19 Jesus appears on a white horse, wearing a crown (a different kind of crown, however) and bringing to an end all the terrible series of judgments that have come upon the earth. But it is a mistake to identify these two because the context is entirely different. Here we are looking at the beginning of the judgments of God, and in Chapter 19 we see the end of them. The rider of Chapter 6 is summoned by one of the living creatures, but it would be unthinkable for a creature to summon the conquering Christ of Chapter 19.

- But it is significant that this rider on the white horse here bears some resemblance to the appearance of Jesus on a great white horse in Chapter 19. They both ride a white horse; they both wear crowns;

- and both are bent on conquest. It suggests that this rider is someone who is like Christ, but is not Christ.
- This is doubtless the long predicted Anti-Christ, whom Scripture speaks of in various places, who is yet to appear in the last days. The "Man of Sin" {2 Th 2:3 KJV} the Apostle Paul calls him, also "the Lawless One" {2 Th 2:8 NIV} who is yet to appear and offer himself as though he were God's Christ. Jesus himself said to the Jews of his day, "I have come in my Father's name and you do not accept me, but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him," (John 5:43 {NIV}). This rider comes like Christ, but in his own name.
 - Note the bow is given to him - he does not earn it
 - he is GIVEN a crown by the people
 - there are two types of crowns in Scripture:
 - a) diadem = passed down from king to king - not earned
 - b) stephanos stef' an os = a crown that is earned or given - that is the kind of crown the rider has
 - people give this crown to this rider - a bloodless war - a cold war
 - He is given a bow, but no mention is made of arrows. This appears to be a bloodless conquest he launches. When you ask, "What is this describing?" I think it is clear that it suggests some kind of overpowering of the minds and wills of men, without physical destruction. How is that done? The answer is by some form of deceit, by lying that misleads and deceives men and thus overcomes them without the shedding of blood. It is noteworthy that in Matthew 24, the first word Jesus speaks to his disciples is, "Watch out that no one deceives you," {Matt 24:4 NIV}. You will find references to the possibility of deception throughout that chapter.
 - What kinds of deceptions exist today?
 - a) Turn on the television and fraudulent ideas bombard you
 - b) So much of what we read is a mix of lies and truth
 - c) Drugs deceive
 - I must TRAIN myself to see deception
 - see 2 Thess. 2:9-12
-
- Second Seal (6:3-4)
 - War erupts
 - The sword mentioned here is a 12 to 18 inch blade - double sided - used by assassins
-
- Third Seal (6:5-6)
 - The scales represent commerce. It takes a day's wages to earn a single quart of wheat or, because it is cheaper, three quarts of barley. This would only be enough food for one person for a day. You would work all day long and all you would be able to earn at best would be enough for your own physical needs. There would be nothing for your family or for anyone else. But the luxuries, the oil and the wine, are left untouched.
 - Interesting, in AD 92, Domitian passed a law that forbade new crops of grapes (and use the land for grain) to avoid this very situation. However, the vineyard keepers lobbied successfully for a repeal of the law.
-
- Fourth Seal (6:7-8)
 - This rider is named "Death"; and floating along behind, was a figure that is identified as "Hades," or Hell. Death takes the body and Hades takes the soul.
 - There are four forms of death that are related to this attack.
 - First, the sword, which here is not war but murder; individual assault upon one another.
 - With murder comes famine and widespread starvation.
 - These plagues are endemic diseases. When civilization begins to crumble, the defenses of mankind against diseases are lost as well.
 - Fourth, the wild beasts of the earth multiply, and humans are subject to attack by these predators.

- The fifth seal (6:9-11)
 - John sees a great crowd which no man could number, from every tribe, nation, and language of earth, standing before the throne, all having been killed for their testimony. They are given a white robe and told to wait until their brethren would also be killed. This indicates that these martyrs and those killed later who make up the great multitude, all enter heaven at the same time. It is God's way of expressing the transference from time into the conditions of eternity, where past and future are eclipsed and only the present exists.
 - But notice the prayer these martyrs pray. It is a call for vengeance. That is quite different from the prayer Christians are expected to pray for their enemies, is it not? Jesus told us that we are to pray for those that despitefully use us and persecute us, and our prayer is to reflect the prayer that he prayed on the cross. But these martyrs under the fifth seal are not living in days when God patiently endures the injustices of men. These are days of judgment; days when wrong doers are being called to account, the time of vengeance. The prayers, then, of God's people reflect the mind of God at that time. Led of the Spirit, they pray for what God intends to do during the last days. It is ironic that in Genesis, the cry of Abel is similar to this cry!

- The sixth seal (6:12-14)
 - It is a vivid description of chaos in nature! The whole natural world goes on a rampage. Again, in Matthew 24 Jesus describes this same event (24:29-30 or Luke 21:25-27):
 - Who can stand? That is the question left hanging in the air. Of course, no one can stand. It is the end of civilization as we know it. All people who have not yet believed in Christ, who have refused his offer of grace, are the subjects of this terrible catastrophe and cry out in desperate fear. It is clearly the scene described in Isaiah 2, when "men shall go into the clefts of the rocks and cry for them to fall upon them," (Isa 2:21)
 - In that day, those who refuse to believe have reached a stage where they cannot believe. They do not repent and pray to the Lord for salvation. Rather, they feel a terrible fear and pray to the rocks to destroy them. They will manifest openly and publicly what they feel privately and secretly today. It is a strange phenomenon, but it is easily confirmed, that every unbeliever is convinced in his own heart that death is somehow an escape into oblivion! Somehow they think they can escape the terrible consequences of their evil by dying. That is why people commit suicide. They believe they are escaping their problems, that there will be no consequences beyond death. But the Word of God assures us this is not true:

Gleanings Worth Reaching For:

- 1) When it looks like "everything is falling apart", Jesus is close
- 2) We must not stop drawing close to the grace of God now, while it is called Today
- 3) Deception is the tool of the enemy and we must be on guard - calling every deceit by what it is!

Revelation 7:1-17

- If this chapter has anything to say to us, it is this: God is the God of second chances
- See Romans 11:11-25
 - – from this passage, we see that:
 - My failure can still bring great fruit in my life
 - God receives great glory in restoration
 - Humility reigns when we are given second chances
 - No one is beyond a second chance

- Verse 1 indicates that these events take place before the pouring out of God's wrath (see Genesis 19:22). The number four here again symbolizes universality.
- don't miss the breathing in this book - God's judgments are interspersed amongst these passages that show an incredible portrayal of God's mercy and love as well.
- these seem to be protected - perhaps like the Israelites during the plague of the death of first born - the mark was the Blood - these people will be the witness to the Gospel - the Lord has never been without a witness - here is where it starts - here is the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel 9.
- We do not have to guess at what the seal of God is, because believers today are also sealed by God. Paul tells us in the letter to the Ephesians, "You were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," {cf, Eph 4:30}. The presence of the Spirit of God in every individual Christian is the unmistakable mark of God's ownership. Paul declares in Chapter 8 of Romans, "His Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," {cf, Rom 8:16 KJV}. The Holy Spirit himself, then, is the seal of God.
- We as Christians have already been sealed - this is a new group!
- It is made up of 12 000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Note that the tribe of Joseph is named instead of Ephraim.
- But what about Dan? The tribe of Dan is not included here, I believe, because they are the tribe that introduced apostasy into Israel. The closing chapters of Judges give an account of the sordid way the tribe of Dan led Israel into terrible apostasy, involving homosexuality and idol worship in its grossest forms. This was in line with Jacob's prediction concerning Dan. In the 49th chapter of Genesis Jacob predicts the future of his twelve sons and he says, "Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heel so that its rider tumbles backward," {Gen 49:17 NIV}. It is a poetic portrayal of the treachery of Dan in introducing apostasy. In the millennium, however, Ezekiel (48:32) tells us that Dan has a portion in the distribution of the land in that day.
- Note that those spoken of in verses 9 and 10 are tribulation saints (see verse 14).
- It appears that these Jewish 144,000 will have a world-wide ministry to the Gentiles
- These martyred saints have a place in the inner sanctuary of God. Note that these saints will enjoy that which they likely lacked during the tribulation; God's protection, God's provisions and God's presence.
- Note that the whole assembly sings ... the curse of Babel has finally been removed.

Revelation 8:1-13

- Now we find the revelation of the Trumpet judgments, seven of them in total

Insight: Ray Stedman lists for you five effects of judgment upon us since we are all being judged in some degree, more or less. Hardships, trials and difficulties are all a part of the judgment of God upon human evil, and we all experience it.

1. First of all, judgments frighten us. They are intended to. They are sent to arrest our attention. They chill our blood. They alarm us. They scare the living daylights out of us. Like children at a horror movie we are fascinated by them but we want to hide our eyes from them and not look fully at them. That is the first effect of judgment. It arouses fear.

2. Then, because it terrifies us, judgment also sobers us. How many people in the Bay Area immediately rearranged their priorities five minutes after the earthquake hit on October 17? We heard many testimonies during that time of people saying, "I'll never take life as lightly again. That taught me a lot. I began to see what is really important." That is also what judgments do. They help us reassess our lives. They change our priorities. C. S. Lewis well says that fear or pain or judgment is "God's megaphone to reach a deaf world."

3. And so judgments correct us. They force us to face unpleasant facts about ourselves. We do not like that. We do not like to be told that we are not perfect. We know we are not, but we do not like anyone else to say so. We are uneasy at having these things pointed out. But judgment strips away our illusions. It restores us to reality. We begin to think accurately, clearly, as God thinks. We plan more carefully. We live more thoughtfully. That is why God sends judgment.

4. And fourth, judgment humbles us. We begin to see that we are really not in control. We do not run everything about our lives. We are not autonomous creatures. We are not little gods, capable of making anything we want to of ourselves, as the media keeps trying to tell us. We are not in charge. We see how foolish we have been in the past, that we have made many mistakes when we thought we were right. We begin at last to welcome guidance, to listen to others, and especially, to seek out the wisdom of the Word of God.

5. Finally, judgment reassures us. It comforts us. It answers Habakkuk's great prayer, "In wrath, remember mercy," {Hab 3:2}. We learn that God does not like judgment either. He calls it, in Isaiah 28:21, his "strange work." He keeps it as brief as possible. He gives ample warnings before it gets unbearable. He sends anticipations of it, forceful reminders, that this kind of thing can happen so that we might pay attention and act before it gets out of hand.

- Verse 1 The entire ensemble of heaven stops ... perhaps in utter horror as the next phase of the judgment is ready to begin. The revealing of the seventh seal brings seven further trumpet judgments.
- remember that these judgments are more focused than the last seven - they occur over the same seven year.
- God hears our prayers. He responds in HIS time to the cries of the people. They are precious
- You will find here a third used all the time. This is opposed to the seal judgments in which the number four is used (a fourth)
- The number three is associated with God.
- When local magistrates sentenced [John] Bunyan to imprisonment unless he promised them he would not preach, he refused, declaring that he would remain in prison till the moss grew on his eyelids rather than fail to do what God had commanded him to do. "John Bunyan and the Pilgrim's Progress," Christian History, no. 11.
- Verse 2: Trumpets are used several times in Scripture ... most notably in Numbers 10:1-9. Here they are used to gather people together, to start them marching, to gather them for war and are used in worship, anointing of a king etc.
- Verses 3-5 Why the prayers of the saints? Have we not been taught to pray ... "Thy kingdom come"? Have we not asked the Lord to bring His kingdom to fruition? This is the beginning!
- The censer is a bowl of transport - it was used in the OT to move coals from the brazen altar to the tabernacle, where they would be used to burn incense (The Alter of Incense), which would please the Lord representing the prayers of the saints.
- This scene in verse 5 is very similar to the events that took place at the giving of the Law in Exodus 19.
- In a Temple service, after the sacrificial lamb was slain, the altar of incense was prepared. Two of the priests would go into the holy place and take the burnt coals and ashes from the golden altar and relight the lamps of the golden candlestick. One priest filled the golden censer with incense, while the other placed burning coals from the altar into a golden bowl. Deep silence fell over the temple during this solemn ceremony. It was a time of profound worship.
- Verses 7-13: Here comes judgments upon the earth.
- Again, a destruction of such massive proportions was unknown in the first century. The greatest devastation John could possibly have been familiar with was the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. It completely destroyed and buried the city of Pompeii with molten lava and even destroyed a few ships in the Gulf of Naples.

The May 1984 National Geographic showed through color photos and drawings the swift and terrible destruction that wiped out the Roman Cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in A.D. 79. The explosion of Mount Vesuvius was so sudden, the residents were killed while in their routine: men and women were at the market, the rich in their luxurious baths, slaves at toil. They died amid volcanic ash and superheated gasses. Even family pets suffered the same quick and final fate. It takes little imagination to picture the panic of that terrible day. The saddest part is that these people did not have to die. Scientists confirm what ancient Roman writers record weeks of rumblings and shakings preceded the actual explosion. Even an ominous plume of smoke was clearly visible from the mountain days before the eruption. If only they had been able to read and respond to Vesuvius's warning! There are similar "rumblings" in our world: warfare, earthquakes, the nuclear threat, economic woes, breakdown of the family and moral standards. While not exactly new, these things do point to a coming day

of Judgment (Matt. 24). People need not be caught unprepared. God warns and provides an escape to those who will heed the rumblings. Michael Bogart, Lemoore, California. Leadership, Vol. 6, no. 4.

- Watch the four and three pairing again - visible and invisible
- The first four judgments fall primarily on nature. Philosophers of the day believed that the whole of God's creation could be described as earth and sea, fresh water and sky (see Rev. 14:7).
 - A) Third part of the trees destroyed
 - Jesus curses the fig tree
 - Hail was seen in the plagues of Egypt
 - B) Third part of the sea made as blood & third part of the creatures of the sea and ships were destroyed
 - as did the Nile river during the plagues
 - livestock of the Egyptians all perished; all in one day
 - the fish in the Nile also died
 - what kind of tidal wave this must be!
 - it is interesting that at times, a mountain can refer to a nation (Jer. 51:25, Dan 2:35)
 - C) Third part of the fresh waters were made bitter
 - undrinkable; this is what happened to the Nile
 - We have had, perhaps, a kind of a foretaste of this and a note of warning from God, in the terrible atomic accident that happened in Russia some years ago. It occurred at a city named Chernobyl and Chernobyl is the Russian word for Wormwood!
 - wormwood is a bush with a bitter, but non-poisonous taste (Jer. 9:12, 23:15)
 - D) Third part of the sun, moon, stars not shining
 - darkness was part of the Egyptian plague as well
 - how do I feel about ecology today
 - I am still called to have stewardship over creation
 - it is not to worship creation ... rather the Creator!
 - remember how dark it was during the crucifixion?
- Note the eagle seen proclaiming the woes yet to come. Note that the first century tended to categorize the vulture as a type of eagle ... one that fed on carrion ... and as a harbinger of impending death.
- Gleanings Worth Reaching For:
 - o These events all seem to have to do with things either falling from sky or things in the skies.
 - o Why? Perhaps because it is a reminder that there is literally no place to hide from these things.
 - o There has been a partial fulfillment of these in the plagues of Egypt. Read Exodus 9:24-26, 7:19-20,
 - o Part "D" above may simply describe a partial darkness over the earth (See Exodus 10:21-23)
- These times are designed to bring human beings to their knees. Some willingly and others not
 - o how much have you submitted yourself to the Lord these days?
 - o God values and responds to the prayers of His people
 - don't stop praying for the lost, the need, the friend, son or daughter
- God uses natural disasters to communicate spiritual messages
- God's harsh judgments have a holy purpose
 - o Do not question the character of God
 - o Harsh events will bring out the purpose of God
 - o God will not quit until His plan has run its complete course
 - all praise will end up going to the Lord, not to us

Delusion: (psychology) An erroneous belief that is held in the face of evidence to the contrary.
- Solomon made the statement, that knowledge would increase (Daniel 12:4)

Ecc. 12:9 Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs.

10 The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.

11 The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd.

12 Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wears the body.

13 ¶ Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

- Culture continues to grow more complex; we become more tightly connected.
- We become less able to understand the “bigger pictures” and therefore we rely more and more on the “experts” to tell us what we need to know.
- When we focus too specifically on details, we forget how tightly everything is connected together.
- The problem is, of course, that nobody can agree as to what an “expert” really is!
 - Was Doctor Spock, Opera, Dr. Phil, Bono?
- To who or to what source do YOU turn for facts, understanding and wisdom?

Delusional Ideas That Spread Today:

a) Facts have no implications

- How can one teach about the physical aspects of sex without any moral abilities to make choices?

b) Feelings are more important than truth

- If it feels good, it must be right.
- God is concerned with how I feel - He wants me to be happy, therefore I will do what I will to get those happy feelings???

c) Experience defines truth

- If I experience a situation, it must be of the Lord.
- If a miracle occurs (or something unexplained), it must be of the Lord???

d) My best source of truth will be a distilling of all the popular voices into a best fit picture for me

- “Majority rules” kind of mentality.
- We value many opinions today and when there is a consensus, that must be right.
- The Bible then becomes just another source of truth to be judged.

e) Packaging sells the message

- How a message is presented will determine how you receive it.
- If it is packaged slickly, using lots of technical jargon, it will be bought.

Note In Passage Above

- Truth is revealed (By One Shepherd), then recorded for all to see and understand.
- Opinions will ALWAYS be many and varied.
- Truth does not always “feel good” but it always brings about good.
- Often times, the opinions offered are rehashed from before (all has been heard).

The Lord will actually allow people to walk in lies and delusions as much as they want.

Isa. 66:3b ...Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not. (KJV)

*2Thess. 2:9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,
10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.
11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie
12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. (NIV)*

- as I have said before, often God will allow us choices in life and then amplify the effects of those changes. Our path is not set in concrete, but the further along a line of belief we travel, the more difficult it is to change. Always, we must be aware that there is a battle for our minds and it is here that the war will be won. Note above:
 - Refusal to listen to the Spirit of the Lord allowed the delusion to begin.
 - Miracles alone are not a sign of the Lord's presence.
 - Continuation down that path makes it ever more difficult.
- God's great Word gives us EVERY tool that we need to overcome delusion
- From our passage in Revelation, it appears that:
 - A set of demons, now bound, are released by an angelic being who has been allowed to open this pit.
 - The pit is a place where demonic forces are bound - the "abyss".
 - Satan himself will be bound here through the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-3)
 - Demonic forces hate it:

*Luke 8:30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him.
31 And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.*

- Their work is a delusion and is metaphorically described in Verses 7-11
- Their abilities to hurt are limited to five months (perhaps tied to the actual life span of a real locust).
- This describes the nature of the propaganda that this leader will unleash upon the world and the effect of it upon human minds. It is given, of course, in symbols, as is much of the book of Revelation. These are not difficult to interpret.

"Crowns of gold" speak of something authoritative

- As people hear the teachings and claims of this charismatic leader, he impresses them as having great authority and power.

"Human faces" speak of intelligence

- This teaching will appear reasonable and will seem intelligent, making its appeal to the mind.

"Women's hair"

- Describes that which is alluring and attractive. Many will believe the propaganda because it appears to offer much personal advantage. (1 Corinth. 11:6-7)

But it will also be like "lions' teeth"

- A symbol of that which is penetrating, cruel and frightening. That is what begins to happen as those who follow this teaching succumb to its delusion. They find it becomes cruel and vicious.

"Iron breastplates"

- Speak of callousness of heart. The demonic powers will be heartless, without mercy. Once the torment begins no appeal can relieve it, there is no way of escape. And it will come with an overpowering sound. That speaks of something which is widely popular. There will be tremendous peer pressure to believe this teaching, so much so that it seems irresistible and overpowering.

The "stings in the tails"

- Speak of the terrible aftermath, the mental/physical torment that follows this awful teaching.

- Then we are told clearly that it is all under the leadership of an invisible demonic king, the very angel of the Abyss himself. This, of course, is a figure for Satan. This whole account depicts an infusion of demonic forces upon the earth under the leadership of Satan himself in these terrible last days.
- Paul warns young Timothy in his first letter, Clearly this has been foretold in other parts of Scripture.

"In the latter days some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons," {1 Tim 4:1

- I am challenged to think about what great delusions Satan tries to use to attack me?
- None of us are free from delusion and it is the Word of the Lord that challenges those lies
- As I read, I come into conflict with the lies I am believing - who will win?
- The invisible is real; Demons may not be seen, but they exist
 - Keep away from those things that open the doors to the demonic.
 - They are real, aggressive and alluring.
 - The destruction of your life is their goal.
 - They are organized and ready for our destruction.
 - There are leaders of various ranks, perhaps over every government of this world.
 - Though intimidating, demons have limitations.
 - they must bow before the Lord Jesus Christ.
- In verse 13, we have four angels released from a current prison (see 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6).
- These four apparently have the ability to influence millions.
 - Is it possible that (due to their location, associated with Babylon) that these four controlled the Babylon, Persian, Greek and Roman empires??
 - This river was one of the four that used to flow from the Garden. This is where Satan first corrupted the planet. It is the eastern boundary of the Promised Land coming.
- This huge army is likely demonically empowered humans
- Note that the term "a third part" is used thirteen times (earth, trees, fish, sea, ships, rivers, waters, sun, moon, stars etc.
- Note that according to Rev. 9:20-21, God does not ever force us to believe.
- We often wait for God to force us into a position - even saying that I will get right with God when He forces me (confronting death)
- Note that the demon worship has its manifestation in the form of idols!
- Verse 20 is a partial retelling of the 10 commandments.
- Note that the term "magic arts" is a reference to "pharmakeia" ... the word that we use for pharmacy ... it makes specific reference to drugs which produce a numbing or hallucinogenic effect.
- Note that judgment does not change the mind of the people. This is foreshadowed in the life of Pharaoh ... who hardened his heart during the ten plagues of Egypt.
- This is simply God's way of showing people that this is the outcome of our choices in life -

Jonathan Melvoin was a backup keyboard player for the rock group Smashing Pumpkins. On the night of July 11, 1996, he died of a drug overdose. The drug that killed him is a brand of heroin known on the streets as Red Rum--that's murder spelled backwards. When news of his death hit the media, it caused an astounding reaction among other drug users on Manhattan's Lower East Side. The demand for Red Rum skyrocketed. "When people die from something or nearly die," explained one police official, all of a sudden, there's this rush to get it because it must be more powerful and deliver a better high." This is but one more example of how drugs produce their own peculiar brand of insanity.

a) God has given us a reward system in our brains that we may enjoy the good things in life.

- Christian Medical Fellowship:

God gave us reward systems in our brains so that we could enjoy the good things in life. Drugs of abuse interact with these natural reward systems and addiction is a sign that they have been 'hijacked', resulting in reduced control over their use. As Christians we serve only one master and should seek help if another begins to gain mastery over us.

b) The Lord desires His people to always be in a position of making the best decisions in life

- how often do drugs and booze influence us to make poor choices
- it is a lie to believe otherwise

c) Abuse of substances is always spoken of in the Bible as producing woe, distress
 - anecdotally, this has been proven over and over again

Proverbs 23:29 ¶ Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?
 30 *Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.*
 31 *Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly!*
 32 *In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper.*
 33 *Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things.*
 34 *You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging.*
 35 *"They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?"*

Revelation 10:1-11

- Reasons to think it may be a representative of Christ:
 - 1) The language of verse 1, describing Christ, is similar to Rev. 1:12-16
 - 2) He holds the little book (see Verse 5:7), which is open (seals broken)
 - 3) His shout is that of a Lion (sometimes used to identify Christ)
 - 4) Standing on the sea and earth implies possession
 - 5) He swears by the Father - angels do not typically do this
 - God swears by no greater than Himself!
 - 6) Rev. 11:3 seems to be narrated by this "angel"
- Note that verses 10:4-7 give us a time frame - that these events occur at the end of the tribulation period - there is no more delay in the fulfillment of God's Kingdom.
- It is useless to attempt to decipher what the seven thunders say - it is sealed up
- Note: 10:9-11 The concept of "eating a scroll" means to read it, understand it and preach it. See also Ezek. 2:3-3:14, Jer. 15:16, 20:7-9. Obviously, it is a book of judgment and ownership. It is sweet since it brings about God's kingdom; it is bitter because in it is God's wrath and people will respond with hardened hearts.
- See Verse 11 and note that the word again means to repeat ... the next part of Revelation will repeat the time frame that we have already studied.
- If the Lord owns it all, will you willingly grant each day to Him? He has allowed you to live in this time and in this period and in this circumstance
- You may not like it, but trust Him with whatever strength lies within you
- The thing that must drive us forward is HOPE - this vision gives John hope for the future
- Jesus will not abandon and what He has allowed will bring forth its fruit - whether you see it or not
- If God says STOP doing something, would you obey like John did?

A True Understanding Sets Us Forth To Minister!

- Scripture occasionally does this to us. When it happened here to John, and he ate the scroll, it was sweet in his mouth but turned sour in his stomach. But only then was he given a new assignment! Verse 11 reports, "Then I was told 'You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.'"
- The principle illustrated here is very instructive.
- It means that after you have personally entered into the meaning of judgment; God has judged you as well as others; and you have felt the hand of God upon you, then, and then only, are you prepared to speak to someone else about the program of God.
- John is given here the privilege of ministering again to nations and peoples and languages and kings. That new ministry covers Chapter 11, 12, 13 and 14. We are going to find a pronounced

change of scene in Revelation at this point. John, as it were, is sent back over the terrible scenes of judgment to highlight, zoom in, as it were, on certain characters and personalities, and tell us more detail about them. It will involve, as it says, "peoples and nations and languages and kings." That is going to be the theme of the next chapters of Revelation. It is all yet to come, but it was only as he entered personally into the searchings of God that he is prepared to speak with impact to others.

- How true that the Lord opens new vistas of opportunity for us as He is revealed in us and His will opens within us. This is preparation that we may not long for, but it is only then that the trues details are revealed.

Two hundred years ago, Christian statesman William Wilberforce led the drive to end the British slave trade. But ironically, his conversion to Christianity nearly led him to abandon politics. His story illustrates how crucial it is for every believer to have a biblical understanding of calling.

As Kevin Belmonte writes in his new book, HERO FOR HUMANITY, Wilberforce resisted efforts by friends to convert him. A wealthy and popular young man, Wilberforce was enjoying life to the fullest: dinners, balls, and high jinks with friends. His chief goal in life was advancing his own political career. As he told a friend, "My own distinction was my darling object."

But then came his fateful encounter with the man who would bring him to Christ: Isaac Milner, his former tutor. Through Milner's influence, "Wilberforce began to wrestle with the implications of what it might mean to embrace the Christian life." And once Wilberforce came to Christ, Belmonte writes, he condemned himself for having wasted precious time, opportunities, and talents.

But the big question after his conversion was how should he spend the remainder of his time and talents? One friend, a member of Parliament, advised Wilberforce to retire from public life. But other friends, including John Newton the former slave ship captain, now a minister urged him to stay in politics.

As Belmonte writes, "His quandary has been described as the 'Eusebian temptation,' the belief that one could best serve God in sacred rather than secular activities." Wilberforce "contemplated leaving politics to pursue holy orders or some other sphere of Christian service."

In seeking direction, Wilberforce searched the Scriptures. He was struck by the command of Christ to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. "Who is my neighbor?" he asked. Taking his cue from the story of the Good Samaritan, Wilberforce concluded, "It is evident that we are to consider our peculiar situations, and in these to do all the good we can." As he explained to his mother, "Some are thrown into public, some have their lot in private life."

Given his particular gifts, Wilberforce concluded that it was God's will that he stay in public life. "It would merit no better name than desertion," he wrote, "if I were thus to fly from the post where Providence has placed me."

But there was a change. Instead of working for his own distinction, he now desired to discover God's plan for his career. That plan included playing a central role in abolishing the British slave trade and reforming the morals of British society.

Had Wilberforce abandoned public life, the consequences would have been enormous. His friend, the Rev. Thomas Scott, wrote, "The slave trade might have continued into future generations." Thank God Wilberforce embraced a proper view of biblical calling.

As we ponder God's call on our own lives, we should remember that not every Christian needs to be in formal ministry. There are opportunities to serve God and do His will in every field of human endeavor. After all, we believe that all of life is ministry. So Christians laymen included should be equipped to be ministers of the Gospel wherever God puts us.

He died three days after England finally declared that slavery would become illegal!

Revelation 11:1-13

- Some Initial Thoughts:

1) God has given you enough time for what you need to accomplish (V.3)

- Note the 1260 days to complete their work!

- These men are given a specific amount of time to accomplish what must be

- This will be in keeping with the Daniel 9 prophecy regarding the amount of time that the Lord would give to Israel to bring in everlasting righteousness.
- Still, it speaks to us about the wise use of time.
 - a) do I procrastinate
 - b) is there simply too much on my plate

- Who were these two?

- The act of measuring is an act of ownership ... and perhaps the measuring up of one spiritual position.
- This is a future temple; the temple can currently be built to the north of the Dome of the Rock.
- The outer court is given over to the Gentiles.
- The Lord has ordained the use of this land in the latter times - as He has ordained you as well.
- Zechariah (Chapters 3,4) uses this illustration - these men are anointed of the Spirit of God.
 - Zerubbabel and Joshua: They represent the spiritual and the political
 - Moses and Elijah also represent the spiritual and the political
 - they are like lamp stands - a source of light in the darkness

Standing For The Day Of Truth

- a) Satan is the accuser and the liar and the Lord does not listen to him (3:1-3)
 - the resistance is to the work of the Lord - the work of Joshua to stand in the gap
 - will I see myself as the person who stands in gap for those around me?
- b) Christ is our clother (verse 4)
- c) These men are symbolic (8) - Jesus is the Branch! Joshua is high priest and Zerubbabel - political leader who served the Lord
- d) Christ grants light for the world to see (4:2-3)
- e) With the power of the Holy Spirit, anything can be accomplished (6-9)
 - Zerubbabel will complete the temple - no matter how feeble his efforts seemed
- f) Bless the Lord of the small things (10)

- The Two Witnesses:

- Thinking for Elijah and Moses

- 1) Fire from heaven - a sign from Elijah (on several occasions)
 - 2) Stop the rain - a sign from Elijah
 - 3) Water to blood - a sign of Moses
 - 4) Plagues - a sign of Moses
 - 5) Elijah ministered during apostasy, Moses ministered to set people free
 - 6) Satan disputes for the body of Moses – why (Jude 9)?
 - 7) These two appeared at the Mount of Transfiguration
 - 8) Malachi said that Elijah would come - Jesus indicates that the coming is yet future (Matthew 17:11)
- They will minister for 3 ½ years and then be overcome (same place as Jesus, for the same length of time dead, then resurrected!)
 - It appears that their ministry will be in the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period
 - As to the fire from their mouth, see Jer. 5:11-14
 - Note that after their death, many will rejoice and view the bodies for three days!
 - Could this be possible without the use of satellite television and the Internet?
 - Instead of the world commemorating the birth of the Savior, they will celebrate the death of the saints!
 - It will be at this time, that the Abomination of Desolation occurs (Matthew 24, Daniel 9).
 - Perhaps the Antichrist will demand worship here too (2 Thess. 2:4).

1) How will YOU be a source of light?

- Recognize that what you do can be a job ... or if done unto the Lord, a ministry!

2) How will the Spirit of God feed you this year (the witnesses were fed, as it were by tubes)

3) Since YOU are protected by the Spirit of God, what risks for the Kingdom will you take (fire proceeds from their mouths!)

- 4) How are you toughening up to protect yourself from the onslaught of the enemy this month?
 5) Is your hope in the things that are temporal ... or upon the Finished Work on the Cross?
 - What real hope drives you forward that would allow these men to lay down their lives?
- God always makes a way of escape (v. 4-5)
 - The Bible makes it clear that the Lord always protects His people.
 - He makes ways that are not in my control.
 - He grants His Word that lights the path; He provides others with wisdom to give to me.
 - He provides examples of others that I might know.
 - His Spirit will move me in the right direction as I respond.
 - What is moving your heart this year - what invokes an emotion of joy?
 - God's Word is a truth that protects me (5-6)

Jer 5:14 Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty says: "Because the people have spoken these words, I will make my words in your mouth a fire and these people the wood it consumes."

- How is God's Word an offensive weapon?
 - It is quoted to the true enemies of our souls. it is quoted back to ourselves.
 - it is my marching orders to be obeyed without question.
 - Satan's trick is to dull the mind; to attack the thoughts; to make us believe a lie.
- God's Apparent Failures Never Are (7-9)
 - We often look at the things that we don't like as failures.
 - in the plan of God, there are no failures.
 - Joseph did not fail in jail
 - Moses did not fail wandering for 40 years
 - David did not fail when chased by Saul
 - Elijah did not fail when the brook in the Kidron Valley dried up
 - Paul did not fail when waiting for 10 years before preaching
 - John did not fail on the Island of Patmos
 - Jesus did not fail at Calvary
 - Stop letting failure prevent you from the greatest blessings of the Lord.
 - Have you sinned - repent and accept the forgiveness of the Lord.
 - Have you failed? - learn from your mistake and move on.
 - It is often in the wake of the apparent failures that God does His best work
 - WATCH for Christ to enter your life in unexpected ways this week - but don't miss Him!
- Popular Traditions Never Support (9-11)
 - The entire world will celebrate the death of these souls.
 - This is what would have happened at the crucifixion had there been television
 - How many man-made traditions do you feel compelled to keep right now?
 - Why don't we have the courage to boldly and lovingly say NO
- Let the revenge come from the Lord (12- 13)
 - Often times, the route of revenge gets the original hurt party in more trouble than the original offense ever did.

Revelation 11:14-19

- Every time that we see judgment fall, we are transported back to heaven to see a glimpse of the Glorified Savior. He is still the focus of these events!!
- Note verse 15 ... it is the "kingdom" (singular) of this world. Satan has been attempting to build a single human kingdom since the Tower of Babel ... He has succeeded, but it still falls before the Kingdom Of The Lord!

Revelation 12:1-17

- Sometimes it is necessary to take a step back from the hustles of this world and look at the big picture – that is what the Lord continues to do during this parenthetical passage
- How about us? Are we looking at the big picture of life, or are we attempting only to solve those issues that bring us pain? It is important to find the will of the Lord in all of this. What does He want me to see?
- Maybe blessings have been poured into your life lately - WHY?

- The Woman: Israel

- This description comes from Joseph's dream (Genesis 37)
- The twelve stars refer to the 12 tribes
- She gives birth to the Lord Jesus Christ,. Note she travails in birth ... spoken first in Gen. 3!

- The Dragon: Satan himself

- Seven heads and 10 horns, seven crowns (Revelation 13, 17).
 - This is a symbol of worldly power (Ephesians 2:2, John 12:31)
- It is ironic that the Bible begins with the story of a woman, a Serpent and the Seed ... and it ends with the same!
- The tail represents his drawing power to deceive a third of the angels .
- We can read about this in both Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.
- He is like a lion (Peter tells us this in 1 Peter 5:8).
- Satan tries to "devour" the child.
- We see the picture of Bethlehem here - the massacre of innocent babies.

- The woman will be kept in hiding for one half of the tribulation period (V. 6)

- Note that we have moved from history to future: This is the tribulation period now.
- This is a link back to Matthew 24 - when you see the abomination that causes desolation.
 - This will not be all of Israel - yet a remnant.
- This battle will come about because the Lord will lock Satan out of the throne of heaven.
- This will silence the accusations from Satan, but he will be filled with wrath.
- We know not the tactics or the weapons; it is of little value to guess.
- That which God loves most dearly, Satan hates more passionately.
- A flood is also a common symbol of overwhelming evil as shown in Psalms 18:4; 32:6; 69:1 2; 124:2 5; Nahum 1:8). "This is a flood of lies and deceit in an attempt to drown the woman in sin" (The Life Application Commentary, p. 145).

1) There is no way to lose for the believer!

- The simplest child of God has the authority to stand against the wiles of the enemy!
- But the point made here is the care of God over this believing remnant. They are "borne on eagle's wings." That is the very phrase God employs when the nation, led by Moses, comes out of Egypt. God says, "Have I not borne you on eagle's wings and taken care of you in the wilderness?" So it is a picture of God's loving protection and care of the remnant of his people in that day.
- Are you standing on principle today? Not all battles are on the field.
- Show yourself strong - choose to do what is right because it is WITHIN you to do!

2) Israel may be blind and disobedient today, but the Lord has not forgotten.

- Perhaps you feel abandoned by the Lord here.
- Rest assured that He has not left you!

3) You had better respect the fact that we face a very real enemy.

- you must battle them, not in the flesh but by the authority of Christ
- they overcame by the:
 - a) Blood of the Lamb - I need that work to defeat the enemy
 - b) Word of their testimony

- 4) Remember that it is the characteristic of the Enemy to be an accuser
 - in this case, those accusations may be correct!
 - refuse to take on the mantle of our enemy
- 5) When God promises to do something, He will complete it.
 - No matter how long it takes Him, He will complete it.

Revelation 13

- In the last chapter, we read of the overall picture of the plan of humanity.
- Here, we focus on the two main “evil characters”.
- Stalin, Hitler, Edi Amin, Pol Pot, Saddam Hussein are all names we have come to know and not respect.
- this evil one is called Anti-Christ, Man of Perdition (lawlessness), the Little Horn is what Daniel calls him.
- When the world is at its most chaotic moment, he will be revealed.
- Paul says that he cannot be revealed until “that which restrains” is removed.
- As per the discussion of chapter 10, verse 11, we see a picture of the entire period of the tribulation, starting with the political dealings of the Antichrist. In this chapter, we are introduced to him, and the false prophet. See an “unholy trinity” here (verse 1, 11).
- The Dragon here is Satan. He stands on the edge of humanity (Compare Dan. 7:2 and 7:17 for thoughts on rising from the ‘sea’) and he watches as his ‘puppet’ arises. The ten horns and crowns, according to Daniel, represent 10 kingdoms over which he will rule. Remember that according to Daniel 7:8, 24, he eliminates three rulers in his rise to power. The seven heads will be described further on in our study.
- Note that there are ten crowns here spoken of (verse 1) and yet only seven in 12:3.
- Remember that Jesus Himself is spoken of having seven horns (see Rev. 5:6).
- The “sea” is consider the lands of the Gentiles.

Da 7:2 Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea.

Da 7:3 Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

Daniel 7:7 "After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.

8 "While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

- Some thoughts regarding the actions of this Anti-Christ (verses 1-10)
 - A) He will rule over all nations (Rev. 13:8)
 - B) He is a Gentile, as he rises from the sea (Rev. 13:1)
 - C) He is like a leopard, bear and lion - like the empires before him (Rev. 13:2). Therefore he is a political leader as well
 - D) One of the kingdoms (or leader) over which he has authority will have been revived (Rev. 17:10)
 - E) His rise will have come through a peace program (Dan. 8:25)
 - F) He will receive power from Satan (Rev. 13:4)
 - note that the quote here is from Exodus 15:11, where it is attributed to God
 - now it will be used of a man!
 - G) He will be empowered by Satan for 42 months (Rev. 13: 5)
 - H) He will be elevated to his position through the actions of the “harlot”, a corrupted religious system (Rev. 17). It will attempt to dominate and control him, but he will destroy it (Rev. 17:16-17)
 - I) He will make war with the saints (7-9)

Practical Thoughts:

- a) Stop looking for the anti-Christ - he will not be revealed until the tribulation.
- b) Watch about the persuasive leadership you align yourself with.

- not all leadership is bad - however, you must exercise WISDOM
- what is the message being presented; what promises be made
- how easy and alluring is the word being presented?
- satanic wonders are always impressive but always misleading
- c) What the people of the world love, should make you question deeply!
- d) Beware of those that speak blasphemy - the tongue and the heart are intimately connected; Yet often we laugh this off?? Don't deaden yourself to this.
- e) We are not called to resist (verse 10).
 - the thought is simple; we are not going to retaliate

1Peter 2:21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

- we are called to passively accept the outcome
- With the death of Stephen, God raises up a Paul to evangelize. Through the martyrdom of so many during the Tribulation, how many will He raise to reach the world?

False Leaders:

- Perhaps nothing worse than a domineering religious leader; nor more damaging.
- Whether it be lust, the lure of money, the issues of control ...
- Issues of control:
 - we need to feel that we are in control of life, the people around us
 - a) tongues (sarcasm, back biting)
 - b) actions (violence, anger, withdraw of relationship, silence)
 - c) manipulate circumstances
 - we deceive ourselves to think that we are really in control
 - It is amazing to me that in the Lord of the Rings books, the number of times that Tolkien relates that people "happened to come to this place" ... his philosophy was that we are led by Providence.
 - it is ironic that we desire to be led by the Lord, yet still want to manipulate situations that make us uncomfortable such that our pain is eased.
- Don't be surprised when you come across spiritual charlatans.
- Watch the message being preached (verse 4) - the message from the Lord is not always easy!
- Be ready to defend your faith in Christ (4) - putting up with it starts the eroding process.
- Be careful that it is not the messenger and his slick ways that you follow! (verse 6).
- Make sure that it is not for love of money that he leads (verse 9).
- Make sure that leader loves you and has your best interest at heart (verse 11).

Some thoughts regarding the actions of this False Prophet (Verses 11-18)

- A) He is called the second beast (Rev. 13:11)
 - he is as violent as a beast!
 - men and women of God are not violent; they learn to control these emotions.
 - that is not to say that they don't get angry - but their passion is not to control nor to overpower
- B) He appears to be a Jew, as he arises out of the earth (not sea) (Rev. 13:11)
- C) He appears to be religious - two horns like a lamb (Rev. 13:11)
 - he is as gentle as a lamb; but with a "beast like" nature
- D) He derives his power also from Satan (Rev. 13:12)
- E) He promotes and compels the people to worship the first beast (Rev. 13: 12)
- F) He will do signs and wonders (verse 13), like Elijah. He may try to convince people that he is Elijah returned. Remember that Jannes and Jambres (2Tim 3:8), the Egyptian magicians were able to do some signs and wonders (see Exodus 7:11, 7:22, 8:6, 8:18)

- note that the fire here does not seem to harm anyone - it is for show only! This seems different than that of the Two Witnesses.

G) He will have power in the economic realm to control commerce (Rev. 13:16-17)

- how many times have ration cards been used in regimes?

- how this will shut down black markets, gangs?

- note that John speaks that wisdom is required to understand the name or the number; discernment in that day is required - don't seek for an answer to 666.

- My thought here has always been that the number 3 is the number commonly referenced for God and the number 6 is the number associated with man. In other Words, this is man elevating himself to god-hood.

H) Later, he is called the false prophet (Rev. 16:13, 19:20 etc.) .

I) He will create a literal image.

- The statue is interesting - it is not unlike the one built by Nebuchadnezzar; one perhaps similar to the one he saw in his dream (Daniel 2); one that he later had built and made the law that all who heard music would fall down and worship him.

Practical thoughts on this section:

A) The false prophet will somehow create a new, alluring, appealing religion.

- it will move the masses to tears or whip them to frenzy.

- he will be the master of every publicity device, but distorting it.

- he will mold world thought and shape public opinion.

- it will sound so right; and the unregenerated will eat it up - it will be exactly what they want to hear.

- BEWARE! It will not align with the Word of God.

- There will be an ever increasing desire to "amalgamate" all faiths into some bland, powerless, non-confrontational religion.

Do you remember the Russian exhibit at the last great World's Fair? Where, in the interest of world peace, the Russians put a lion and a lamb in the same cage...and the people oohed and aahed, until someone finally said to the keeper: "Tell me, how do you do it? How do you manage to have a lion and a lamb share the same cage?" "Oh, it's very simple," said the keeper. "We change the lamb every morning."

B) Remember that commerce controls

- Verse 18: This will be a literal mark (see Gen 4:15), somehow indicating an allegiance to the Antichrist. Six is the number of man, three the number of God - man attempting to be worshiped as God.

- We must see this for what it really means.

- How much does the commerce of today control you? Is there value in learning to live more simply? What will happen if we are forced to make financial decisions that fly in the face of the world system?

Associated Press By MALIN RISING | Associated Press – Sat, Mar 17, 2012

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Sweden was the first European country to introduce bank notes in 1661. Now it's come farther than most on the path toward getting rid of them. "I can't see why we should be printing bank notes at all anymore," says Bjoern Ulvaeus, former member of 1970's pop group ABBA, and a vocal proponent for a world without cash. The contours of such a society are starting to take shape in this high-tech nation, frustrating those who prefer coins and bills over digital money. In most Swedish cities, public buses don't accept cash; tickets are prepaid or purchased with a cell phone text message. A small but growing number of businesses only take cards, and some bank offices — which make money on electronic transactions — have stopped handling cash altogether. "There are towns where it isn't at all possible anymore to enter a bank and use cash," complains Curt Persson, chairman of Sweden's National Pensioners' Organization. He says that's a problem for elderly people in rural areas who don't have credit cards or don't know how to use them to withdraw cash. The decline of cash is noticeable even in houses of worship, like the Carl Gustaf Church in Karlshamn, southern Sweden, where Vicar Johan Tyrberg recently installed a card reader to make it easier for worshippers to make offerings. "People came up to me several times and said they didn't have cash but would still like to donate money," Tyrberg says. Bills and coins represent only 3 percent of Sweden's economy, compared to an average of 9 percent in the eurozone and 7 percent in the U.S., according to the Bank for International Settlements, an umbrella organization for the world's central banks. Three percent is still too much if you ask Ulvaeus. A cashless society may seem like an

odd cause for someone who made a fortune on "Money, Money, Money" and other ABBA hits, but for Ulvaeus it's a matter of security. After his son was robbed for the third time he started advocating a faster transition to a fully digital economy, if only to make life harder for thieves. "If there were no cash, what would they do?" says Ulvaeus, 66. The Swedish Bankers' Association says the shrinkage of the cash economy is already making an impact in crime statistics. The number of bank robberies in Sweden plunged from 110 in 2008 to 16 in 2011 — the lowest level since it started keeping records 30 years ago. It says robberies of security transports are also down. "Less cash in circulation makes things safer, both for the staff that handle cash, but also of course for the public," says Par Karlsson, a security expert at the organization. The prevalence of electronic transactions — and the digital trail they generate — also helps explain why Sweden has less of a problem with graft than countries with a stronger cash culture, such as Italy or Greece, says economics professor Friedrich Schneider of the Johannes Kepler University in Austria. "If people use more cards, they are less involved in shadow economy activities," says Schneider, an expert on underground economies. In Italy — where cash has been a common means of avoiding value-added tax and hiding profits from the taxman — Prime Minister Mario Monti in December put forward measures to limit cash transactions to payments under €1,000 (\$1,300), down from €2,500 before. The flip side is the risk of cybercrimes. According to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention the number of computerized fraud cases, including skimming, surged to nearly 20,000 in 2011 from 3,304 in 2000. Oscar Swartz, the founder of Sweden's first Internet provider, Bahnhof, says a digital economy also raises privacy issues because of the electronic trail of transactions. He supports the idea of phasing out cash, but says other anonymous payment methods need to be introduced instead. "One should be able to send money and donate money to different organizations without being traced every time," he says. It's no surprise that Sweden and other Nordic countries are at the forefront of this development, given their emphasis on technology and innovation. For the second year in a row, Sweden ranked first in the Global Information Technology Report released at the World Economic Forum in January. The Economist Intelligence Unit also put Sweden top of its latest digital economy rankings, in 2010. Both rankings measure how far countries have come in integrating information and communication technologies in their economies. Internet startups in Sweden and elsewhere are now hard at work developing payment and banking services for smartphones. Swedish company iZettel has developed a device for small traders, similar to Square in the U.S., that plugs into the back of an iPhone to make it work like a credit card terminal. Sweden's biggest banks are expected to launch a joint service later this year that allows customers to transfer money between each other's accounts in real-time with their cell phones. Most experts don't expect cash to disappear anytime soon, but that its proportion of the economy will continue to decline as such payment options become available. Before retiring as deputy governor of Sweden's central bank, Lars Nyberg said last year that cash will survive "like the crocodile, even though it may be forced to see its habitat gradually cut back." Andrea Wramfelt, whose bowling alley in the southern city of Landskrona stopped accepting cash in 2010, makes a bolder prediction: She believes coins and notes will cease to exist in Sweden within 20 years. "Personally I think this is what people should expect in the future," she says. But there are pockets of resistance. Hanna Celik, whose family owns a newspaper kiosk in a Stockholm shopping mall, says the digital economy is all about banks seeking bigger earnings. Celik says he gets charged about 5 Swedish kronor (\$0.80) for every credit card transaction, and a law passed by the Swedish Parliament prevents him from passing on that charge to consumers. "That stinks," he says. "For them (the banks), this is a very good way to earn a lot of money, that's what it's all about. They make huge profits."

C) There is a clear line of demarcation between disciples and those not.

- The mark is the LINE drawn
- It is no different today - are you sure?
- Please note that there is no concept here of people being forced to take the mark. This will be a willing choice that people will make as they believe that it is the right thing to do. It will be violently opposed by the 144,000 Jews and 2 witnesses, as well as the many, many martyrs that will lay down their lives for the sake of Christ. Many will no doubt call them "too radical" or too religious. The Media will blast them and hate them.

D) Discernment:

- Listens and identifies truth and error - we exercise to learn this
- Listens to what is NOT being said!
- Practice identifying the lies of the culture - listen!!!

Hebrews 5:13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.
14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Revelation 14:1-20

- After our last glance at the book of Revelation, we are left struggling.
- Yet, again God reminds us that He triumphs.
- Verses 1-5 A description of the 144 000 is given in this passage. From it, we can discern the following:
 - 1) They represent men (verse 4) - the same group as Revelation 7
 - 2) They represent a first-fruits (verse 4), meaning they were the first redeemed from the Tribulation period

- 3) They are distinct from the church (verse 3), called the Elders.
- 4) They are blameless and pure (verses 4-5) - the issue of “not defiled with women” picture a moral defilement - i.e. have not committed adultery with the Harlot
- 5) The scene seems to take place on earth, in Jerusalem, immediately after the Battle of Armageddon

- they seem to stand in the Holy City.
- the music seems to come from above
- they have been protected en masse, through the 7 years

- Verses 6-7
 - If taken literally, there will be a super-natural proclamation of the Gospel by an angelic being. No one will be without excuse as to know why this is all happening.
 - Virtually all of the major characters of the Bible have had at least one encounter with the angelic realm.
 - the supernatural will become commonplace
 - is this not what happened in the wanderings of Israel?
 - people will not debate whether God exists - they will be deceived as to who to worship
 - pure intellectuals will no longer be heard when they debate the existence of the supernatural
 - Verse 8 The second angelic being announces the woe upon the political and ecclesiastical Babylon (seen more in Chapters 17 and 18).

- Verses 9-12
 - The third angel guarantees that no one will take the Mark of The Beast without knowledge of the effects of it - i.e. giving allegiance to the Kingdom of Darkness.
 - The wrath of God is spoken of as unmixed - without grace and forgiveness.
 - The cup is no doubt the same one as Jesus wrestled with in His Gethsemane

- Practically:

- a) Be ready and flexible for change.
 - God does something new here that He has not done before.
 - What will be new in our church this year?
 - People are jarred from their comfort zones; they must remain flexible.
- b) Be open to receive His message, no matter what the source
 - Listen and be aware of His desire to communicate.
 - How quiet will you become ... or will you block out His word in your heart?
- c) Remember that in tribulation, Christ truly is with you (verse 12).
 - Some of our tribulations are designed to lead us to Christ; or deepen our walk.
 - Note the call again for patient endurance - this is not the first time that we have seen this call when faced with the thought of taking the mark.
 - there will be a constant bombardment against the elect to reduce their will; get them to buy into the message.

*Matthew 24:22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.
 23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it.
 24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.
 25 See, I have told you ahead of time.
 26 "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.
 27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*

- Part of the work of Christ is to fortify us to resist the lies bombarding us

- d) There truly is a choice and a Kingdom to serve.

- choose to live in and be a member of God's kingdom

- The Final Harvest.
 - Compare the issue of rest (verses 11 and 13b). God remembers all of our deeds.
 - Note that rest here is contrasted with lack of rest in verse 11.
 - Why the phrase "from now on"?
 - this is needed to remind the people in the Tribulation Period that they have not missed the blessings of God; they may not be Jewish, they may have missed the rapture, but they are still redeemed and God has not abandoned them to a Christ-less eternity.
- The Divine Judgment
 - o Verses 14-20
 - The cloud here is the Messianic cloud of Christ's return.
 - Christ wields a sickle - a tool used to harvest crops.
 - o He harvests the unrighteous (separates the tares from the wheat).

"The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear." {Matt 13:41-43 NIV}

- Note that the point here is a separation of the wheat from the tares.
- Early in the growing cycle, it was not possible to tell the wheat from the tares.
- The second description is that of final destruction; it is geared towards Israel.
- Joel 3:9-16 sets the time of this as the Battle of Armageddon.

*Joel 3:11 Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD!
12 "Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side.
13 Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow— so great is their wickedness!"
14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.
15 The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.
16 The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the LORD will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.
17 "Then you will know that I, the LORD your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her.*

- There is a separation, as spoken of in Matthew 25.
- The time of these events are seen at the Battle of Armageddon.
- The Battle takes place outside of the city of Jerusalem and blood will flow for 200 miles (from the battle and perhaps from that which shall rain down); the length of Israel.
- Note that when we celebrate communion, the blood of Jesus is represented by the fruit of the Vine.
- Practical:
 - a) It may be fire and brimstone preaching, but the reality is still here - Christ will return
 - let's live like we will see Him eye-to-eye.
 - let's make choices in life that will indicate that this is what we believe.
 - b) Every wrong will be made right!

Revelation 15:1-8 And Revelation 16:1-21

- Consider the curse that the Lord called upon the people who disobeyed the covenant:

Deut. 28:64 68: Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other... there the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say, "If only it were evening!" and in the evening, "If only it were morning!" because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see. The LORD will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.

Hebrews 11:13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.

15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.

16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

- These admitted that they were aliens and strangers here.
- This is not our country.
- God has prepared ... a city for them.

Hebrews 12:18 ¶ You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm;

19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them,

20 because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned."

21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,

23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,

24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

- Our new "mountain" is not of the earth, it is not terrible, it is not untouchable.
- This world can be likened in many ways to the Egyptian bondage of the OT.
- We work for others, sons are killed (in war, on drugs, in gangs); we ache for redemption.
- In verses 1-4, the scene shifts to heaven again as it did prior to the seals (Revelation 4 5) and the trumpets (8:2 6). This is a "celestial interlude" before judgment breaks loose in the next chapter. What has been anticipated in the cup of wine (14:10), the harvest (14:14 16) and the vintage (14:17 20) is now about to happen. But before it does, we are again reminded that God is still in control. The throne of heaven still overrules the events on earth.
- Note that God's judgment does have an end! (15:1).
- Here we have a picture of the martyrs for Christ that have come out of the tribulation period. They sing the song of Moses "A song of deliverance". We triumph along with Moses and Jesus!
- The Song Of Moses was sung by the Red Sea, the Song Of The Lamb is sung by the crystal sea!
- Note that the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb mention nothing about the achievements of the saints - only about the work of the Lord!
 - the song speaks of:
 - a) God's greatness
 - Think of this plan; matchless, unimaginable
 - b) God's justice - He is right in what He does!
 - c) God's revelation
- In verses 5-8, the angels are given the seven vials or bowls as the last of the judgments of God. These must take place at the end of the Tribulation period; quickly poured out.
- The Tabernacle of the Testimony - is a reference to the location of the 10 Commandments - the Holy of Holies - God's covenants.
- No one can enter the place of mercy (verse 8) until this is done.
- There seems to be no place for mercy by this time - every soul has made their decision either for or against the Lord.
- This set of judgments seem to be specifically aimed at the unbelievers and the kingdom of the Antichrist.

Remember the 10 plagues that struck Egypt:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Water to blood | 6) Boils upon people |
| 2) Frogs | 7) Hail |
| 3) Gnats | 8) Locusts |
| 4) Flies | 9) Darkness upon all |
| 5) Death of livestock | 10) Death of the first born son |

- There is such a repeat in the Book of Revelation, that one cannot miss the correlation.
- This is especially true during this last set of seven plagues .

- The parallels to the Exodus motif are seen in:

a) The "song of Moses" (15:3).

b) The revelation of God's glory in the "smoke" of Sinai (15:8)

- As the angels receive their goblets of divine retribution, the "smoke" fills the temple with the Shekinah glory of God, as it did in the tabernacle (Exodus 19:18; 40:34) and the first temple (1 Kings 8:10 11; 2 Chronicles 5:11 14; 7:1 3). Throughout the Revelation, the prophetic seer observes that all is functioning properly in the heavenly temple. Unlike the earthly tabernacle and temples, this one is indestructible.

c) Erection of the "tabernacle of the testimony" (15:5).

d) Remember that with Pharaoh, each plague hardened his heart more and more until ultimately he was without recourse - this is true of this time as well.

e) The people of the Exodus (Jews and Gentiles) left their place of bondage for a Promised Land!

f) Note that the NIV states that they stood by a sea ... like glass ... the true Greek rendering actually says that they stood upon it - another clear allusion to the Israelites crossing the Red Sea.

g) Note that over and over, the Scriptures say that people will harden their hearts (like Pharaoh) and will refuse to repent. Neither miracles nor persecution will draw hearts to God - only His Spirit and our willingness to respond to the truth.

h) Many of the actual plagues:

- Note that the intensity of these plagues is greater than that of the trumpet judgments.

- Here the judgments are poured upon the Anti-Christ's kingdom

- There is no sign of $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$... these judgments are complete.

Verses 1-2 Terrible sores appear upon those in the kingdom of the Antichrist.

Verse 3 The seas die (as they turn to blood).

Verses 4-7 The fresh waters die, but are not poisonous.

Verses 8-9 An intense heat will be upon the earth; perhaps a solar flare?

Verses 10-11 Upon the kingdom of the Antichrist, there will be a period of darkness (See Exodus 10:23, Joel 2:1-2. Who will be the light of the world ... literally?)

Verses 12-16 The river Euphrates is dried up. This allows easy troop movement from the east - possibly India or China or Russia or the Arabs. The river is 1800 miles long, 300 - 1200 yards wide and 20 - 60 feet deep. (By the way, it has also been dammed). How similar and yet different from the story of the Exodus? Demonic forces are released that will allow the armies of the world to make plans to attack Israel. Why? We don't know yet. Read 1Kings 22:19-23. Why like frogs? Perhaps because they are critters associated with the night, with dark, damp places. The nations once again come together, repeating the error they showed at Babel.

Verses 17-21 The Great Earthquake that splits Jerusalem into thirds. Many of the nation's cities will collapse. Islands are destroyed (probably tidal wave activity!) and large (100lbs) hail stones (or ice) fall.

- The Battle of Armageddon
- In biblical times, several significant battles were fought at Megiddo. Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites there in the days of the judges (Judges 5:19). Gideon was victorious there over the Midianites and Amalekites (Judges 6). King Saul was defeated and slain by the Philistines at Mount Gilboa overlooking the region (1 Samuel 31). Pharaoh Neco of Egypt mortally wounded King Josiah of Judah there in the days of the kings (cf. 2 Kings 23:29-30; 2 Chronicles 35:22-24). The prophet Zechariah (12:11) predicts a great mourning there on the plain of Megiddo. The long history of this location as a strategic battlefield makes it an appropriate place for a modern army of the future to engage in a strategic invasion of Israel in the last days. There in the broad valley that separates Galilee from the hills of Samaria, the greatest war of all time will be fought.
- The prophet Zechariah describes this day in vivid terms:

The Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day men will be stricken by the Lord with great panic. Each man will seize the hand of another, and they will attack each other (Zechariah 14:12-13 NW).

- Gleanings Worth Reaching For:

- 1) In the pains of life, will I turn towards the Lord or away from Him?
 - How prone am I to blame the Lord ... or other people for that matter, when my life is squeezed?
 - It is the time to run to Him, to say, "Okay".
 - Refuse to cut relationship, to run, to hide, to "drop out"; to procrastinate.
- 2) Wars and rumors of wars are now upon us; Shine Brighter

Matthew 24:6 You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.

9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,

11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.

12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

- Note that these things will come to pass.
- Note that it is a time of hatred and deception.
- The command is to continue to preach in that darkness!

3) Again, be warned about deception

- The deception of the day will include:
 - a) Hatred towards Israel and other cultures; anything of the true God.
 - b) Focus on self, on comfort, on pain-free life.
 - c) Reduced desire to help others.
 - d) A false, easy religion that never offends, never convicts, is godless.

4) Remember that there really is a better culture coming

- You may feel that this world is perfectly great; but you are really in a cage.
- Please don't believe the utopian messages that are coming so strongly these days.

- These similarities point to a similar purpose of both judgment and deliverance. In the Exodus, the children of Israel are delivered into the Promised Land. In Revelation 15, the redeemed are delivered into heaven where they sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb in anticipation of their final victory over the beast.

Revelation 17:1-18

- Political power can change things ... but seldom for the ultimate better.
- Political power can be used to bring about short term changes ... however,
- Political power will always be over-ruled by the majority - and the majority is often wrong.
- Christ sought for ... and gave power which changes people's hearts - and the ultimate way we view life - the change is a willing one, never a coerced one.
- The Great Prostitute is described in these two chapters. Often in Scripture, when religion goes bad (i.e. a false cult), it is spoken of as committing an act of adultery (See Isa. 23:17, 57:3-7 etc.). She can be thought of as an anti-bride. She is depicted as a great "harlot" involved in fornication, which is the equivalent to spiritual adultery. The Old Testament prophets brought similar charges against Nineveh (Nahum 3:1 4), Tyre (Isaiah 23:15 17), Babylon (Ezekiel 23:17), and even Jerusalem (Isaiah 1:21; Jeremiah 3:8 9). In the symbolism John uses in the Revelation, the great harlot represents apostate religion and its interdependence on and with political power.
- "She sits on many waters" would indicate that she is Gentile in nature and universal in scope (see verse 15 for the interpretation)
- She will be powerful and in control over many peoples.

First, we are told that this woman is a "prostitute." She is a harlot, or, to put it bluntly, a whore. The use of a sexual symbol indicates that physical wrongdoing, which is bad in itself in the sight of God, is a picture of an even greater evil, that is, worship of God gone wrong! It pictures unfaithfulness to God by someone who claims to honor him. A harlot is one who offers sexual satisfaction, as a wife would, but does not otherwise fulfill that role. This clue points to some organization or group that claims to worship God but is actually unfaithful to him.

- She causes people to be drawn into idolatrous acts of worship. There may carry a thought here of a state-controlled religion.
 - a mixing of politics and faith; a forced experience
- She "rides" the Beast ... for a time she will control the Beast or at least believe that she controls the Beast. This beast is the amalgamation of a group of kings who will one day form an empire.
- Verse 4 - This woman will be wealthy.
 - She holds a cup - meant to contrast the communion cup.
 - it looks beautiful on the outside but filled with death.
- The name Babylon means "confusion" (see Gen. 11).
- Remember The Tower of Babel:
 - it was a city that was built in direct violation of God's word (Compare Gen 9:1 & 11:4) - Rebellion
 - it was built on a false "unity"
 - it was a city given to paganism
 - lead by one man - Nimrod (Gen 10:10)
 - the name was changed from Bab-El (gate of God) to Babylon
 - it was built on imitation (bricks for stones and slime for mortar)
- She wars with the true saints of God
- The Beast ... was, is not, and will be again (verse 8). Here, he is seen as both the Antichrist and the kingdom he will control. He (Satan, the power behind it all) comes from the abyss and goes to his destruction.

Three times we are told that the beast once was, is not and yet will come vs. 8, 9, 11. Since we are told this three times this must be very important. Remember the beast represents political power throughout history, in its various forms. And in its development it becomes a unified political power were all are of one mind. Hoeksema gives a reasonable explanation. He says that there was only one time that the peoples of the earth were unified. And at that time they were challenging God. That happened at Babel when they built a tower which they thought would reach to heaven. This joint effort was a manifestation of the Anti-Christ or antichristian power (the beast). But God stopped this by giving them different languages and by scattering them. And so in its ultimate or highest form, the beast was and no longer is. At the time of John writing this, there was the Roman Empire, but that was an empire formed by power not by all being of one mind. And yet this unified political power will come again at the end. When the nations of the world are unified together under the reign of the beast whose image they worship. And of course, the woman, or false church, directs people to worship the beast.

- Again, we remind ourselves of the ability of this “woman” to deceive.
- What facets of faith could the enemy deceive you and I about?
- As Paul would write ... “having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof ...”.
- John, according to the Greek, seems almost to fall into the temptation of admiring this sight; the power, the wealth and the magnificence of the sight.
- Verse 8 is a parody of the description of God: “Who was and is and is yet to come”!
- The seven heads ... seven hills (verse 9) ... seven kings (verse 10)
- The reference here is to the previous world kingdoms: Egypt, Assyrians, Babylonian, Medes-Persians, Greek (Five have fallen) ... Rome (One is) ... and a revived empire (One is yet to come). Seven hills ... has always referred to the city of Rome.
- The beast ... an eighth king (verse 11) who belongs to (belongs with) the seven.
- The ten horns ... ten kings to receive a kingdom (verse 12)
- The waters ... the gentile peoples (verse 15)
- The Beast will hate this prostitute and will eventually destroy her.
- Power cannot be shared .
- This is the ultimate problem with power - I WANT IT and in order for me.
- But you can't have it - this is the antithesis to the message of Jesus - servant hood can always be shared!

Chapter 18:1-24

- The city is named as Babylon.
- This city seems to represent the best that man can do. Here it seems that there is a religious Babylon spoken of (Destroyed by the Antichrist) and a political Babylon, destroyed by God Himself. In regards to this city:
 - The splendor of one angel will out-weigh the splendor of this world.
 - Note that the demonic inhabit this city!
- It is a place of great commerce - many have grown rich through it.
- God's people were also present there.
- Destruction will be swift
 - Whereas the Anti-Christ will destroy the “church” Babylon, here God destroys the city
 - As He did for Sodom ... another type.
- Who mourns?
 - a) The merchants (11)
 - note even a revival of slavery! ... at least bondage (verse 13)
 - b) The sea captains
 - c) The entertainers (verse 22)
 - d) The builders (22)
 - e) The Honeymooners (23)
- In terms of the boulder thrown into the water, see Jeremiah 51:60-61, 63-64

Revelation 19:1-21

- This chapter can logically be broken into two different suppers - the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and the Supper Of The Great God .
- Jesus promised His disciples in the upper room that He was going to heaven to prepare a place for them. Then He said,

If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:3)

- Even though the early disciples eventually died, the Bible promised,

Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed [resurrected or raptured], in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible, and we [the living] shall be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

- Let us remember that the return of Christ is always spoken of in two parts; one in which we are caught up to meet the Lord in the clouds ... and the second in which every eye shall see Him as His feet descent upon the Mount of Olives.
- The first ascension was private ... only the disciples saw; so shall the first part of the second coming:
- Zechariah 14:5 makes the claim that Christ returns with His holy ones ... us (it is a Hebrew word never translated as angels). What will happen between the time we are raptured and the time we return with Christ?
 - 1) The Bema Seat Judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10)

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2) The Marriage Supper Of the Lamb

- There are two basic commands to remember w.r.t. to the Marriage:

a) Be Prepared (Matt 22:2-14)

Four Invitation Busters:

- i) Some show indifference; other things are more important to me right now.
- ii) Some showed stubbornness; no matter what God says, it will be my way.
- iii) Some showed hatred.
- iv) Some tried to come on their own merits - their own righteousness.

b) Be Expecting (Matt 25:1-13)

- We cannot rely on another for our spiritual preparedness.
- We are foolish to be involved in secular activities when spiritual need is high.
- Expecting carries with it:
 - i) Desiring the consummation; remember that I am a pilgrim; a stranger in a strange land.
 - ii) Looking and watching; understanding the times I am in and the flow of culture around me.
 - iii) Keeping prepared; ready for the meeting.
- One out of every 30 verses in the NT speak of the second coming of Christ. Out of 216 chapters in the NT ... there are 300 references to this event. Only 4 out of 27 NT books fail to mention the second coming.

- The Marriage Supper (Rev. 19:1-10)

- It is interesting that the emphasis shifts here from the harlot woman to the Bride of Christ!
- Many passages in the New Testament deal with the fact that we are the Bride Of Christ and He is returning as a consummation of the wedding (John 3:29, 14, Rom. 7:4, 2Corinth. 11:2 etc.)
- Why praise here?
 - the expression of praise here (Hallelujah) is not found elsewhere in the New Testament
 - a) God's nature (true and just) are exhibited
 - Can I fundamentally agree with God regarding His ways?
 - b) Evil, in its human form, is finally dealt with
 - Understand that death and judgment is as necessary as the cross.
 - Sin cannot forever go unpunished - it must be atoned for.
 - The result of this final destruction is that those that desire it, need never again be tainted by the wickedness of a sin nature.
 - Remember that each person must take a personal responsibility for their lives.

- There is no value in the “blame game”.
- When? This act is accomplished by the second advent of Christ. Rev. 19:7, the words “is come” mean a “completed act”. Since we have “received” (Rev. 19:8), it must be placed after the Bema seat judgment (2Corinth 5:10)
- Where? This passage must take place in heaven (19:1)
- Who? This passage seems to indicate that it is people who have been involved with Jesus and the church. According to Dan. 12:1-3 and Isa. 26:19-21 Israel and the OT Saints are not resurrected until after the Tribulation period.
- Why the symbolism of marriage:
 - The marriage is symbolic of the increased intimacy we will experience with Christ. That includes an intimate union of nature, of life and of love.
 - a. Christ imparts His nature to the church. We are conformed to His image as we are sanctified and when we are perfected in heaven we will be holy as he is holy.
 - b. And we will share an intimate union of life. Christ imparts His own incorruptible, eternal, heavenly, glorious and resurrected life to the entire church.
 - c. And we will love Him perfectly when in our relationship in heaven. We may profess to love Him now but our love often falls short as we continue to struggle with sin.

1 Corinthians 13:9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

- we shall see (have knowledge)
- we shall know and be known (relational intimacy)
- true love will exist between all - no holds barred (faith and hope will no longer be needed)
- Verse 6 ... the “reign” spoken of here in Greek, carries the idea of a “new” reign on earth, unlike anything before!
- Supper Of The Great God (Revelation 19:11-21)
 - Who is the Rider of the White Horse? verses 11 - 16 leave little doubt!
 - a) named “Faithful and True”
 - Remember Re 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.
 - this was clearly Christ!
 - b) He is just and makes war.
 - c) His name is the Word of God (John 1:1).
 - d) Armies of heaven follow Him.
 - e) The Word of God flows through Him!
 - f) King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
 - This is none other than Jesus!
 - Christ is set to return to earth; on a white horse; to make war
 - With all power & authority(i.e. many crowns ... as opposed to the Antichrist, with 10 crowns)
 - The robe dipped with blood makes reference to a conquering hero.
 - Returning with the saints (see Jude 14, Zech. 14:5).
 - There is a picture here of the animals eating the flesh of the wicked (Matt. 24:28).
 - the Antichrist and the False Prophet are cast first into the Lake Of Fire (distinct from hell)
 - See also Ezekiel 39:17-20
 - The Battle Of Armageddon (probably in the valley of Megiddo)
 - The details of Christ’s return include the following aspects:

- He will return personally. The Bible promises that the Lord himself shall descend from heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
- He will appear as the Son of man. Since Pentecost, Christ has ministered through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16 23; 16:7 20). But when He returns, He will appear as the Son of man in His glorified human form (Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Daniel 7:13 14).
- He will return literally and visibly. In Acts 1:11, the angels promised, This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner.
- He will come suddenly and dramatically. Paul warned, The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2). Jesus said, For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matthew 24:27).
- He will come on the clouds of heaven. Jesus said, They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven (Matthew 24:30).
- He will come in a display of glory. Matthew 16:27 promises, The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father. Matthew 24:30 adds, They shall see the Son of man coming...with power and great glory.
- He will come with all His angels. Jesus promises, And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet (Matthew 24:31).
- He will come with His bride the church. That, of course, is the whole point of Revelation 19. Colossians 3:4 adds, When Christ...shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.
- He will return to the Mount of Olives. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4).
- He will return in triumph and victory. Zechariah 14:9 promises, And the Lord shall be king over all the earth. Revelation 19:16 depicts him as King of kings and Lord of lords.
- The city in which Jesus was judged and condemned will become the place that He judges the world!
- The nations of the earth will gather against Israel (Rev. 16:14).
- They are gathered supernaturally (Rev. 16:14).
- It will be in a place called Armageddon (Rev. 16:16).
- God will judge the nations for their dealings with Israel (Joel 3:2) and their sin (Rev. 19:15) and because of their godlessness (Rev. 16:9).
- This event is both a battle (at the end of the tribulation period) and a campaign through-out the last half of the tribulation period, since this is the Greek word used in Rev. 16:14.
- The hill of Megiddo is west of the Jordan, in North Central Palestine, ten miles south of Nazareth, fifteen miles from the coast of the Mediterranean. Here the troops of the earth will gather. However, Joel speaks of the battle also raging in the Valley Of Jehoshaphat (an area just east of Jerusalem) and in the streets of Jerusalem (Zech 14). Also, the battle is spoken of as taking place south of Jerusalem (Isa. 34 and 63) from the direction of Edom or Idumea. When the Revelation says that the blood will flow for 1600 furlongs, this is indeed the length of the nation of Israel.
- There seems to be four powers that will fight during this campaign: The ten nation confederacy, the northern federation (see in Ezek. 38 and 39), the Kings of the East (Rev. 16:12) and the kings of the south (Ezek. 38 and 39). There will be an invasion from the South (Dan 11:40) and North (See also Ezek. 38 and 39). God moves supernaturally to end this first skirmish (as can be seen from our study in Ezek. 38 and 39).
- After this, it seems that the Antichrist will invade Israel (Dan 11:40-43). This passage draws a distinction between the Kings of the North and South and the "He" spoken. This "He" is the willful King of verse 36. After the northern and southern coalitions are destroyed, tiding from the East will cause the Antichrist to attack. Perhaps this is the drying up of the Euphrates. This battle will end his reign. Something happens here to cause the armies gathering to stop fighting each other and focus on fighting with the Lord (see Rev. 19:19) and Israel. The battle is quickly over as Christ returns:
 - 1) He destroys with the brightness of His coming (Zech. 14:12, 2Thess. 2:8).
 - 2) The armies will be destroyed as they battle with one another.

3) The false prophet and beast are cast into the Lake of Fire.

4) The goat and sheep nations are separated (Matt. 25).

5) Satan is bound (Rev. 20)

- No one will be able to challenge the rule and reign of Jesus Christ!

- Revelation 20:1-15

- It is helpful at this juncture, to remind ourselves of the basic teachings regarding the various resurrections the Bible speaks of:

1) The resurrection of Christ (1Cor. 15:23).

2) The resurrection of the church (1Thess. 4:16).

3) The resurrection of the tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4-6).

4) Along with the resurrection of Israel (Dan. 12:1-4, Isa. 26:19).

5) The resurrection of the unsaved (after the Millennium) (Rev. 20:5, 11-14).

- It is helpful to define a "resurrection".

- We understand that the soul and spirit are immortal and we do not cease to lose conscience just because we have died.

- Since death is just separation, it is clear that the physical body and the eternal soul and spirit are separated.

- A resurrection is a recreation of a physical body; making us fit for life here in this universe.

- We will use the term "glorified" to describe this process; it is a remaking, but not in the same state as before; this is not unlike that of a caterpillar to a butterfly.

- A Millennium is a thousand year period of time: What happens now?

1) Christ bodily reigns (Matt 25:31-41)

- Unglorified saints of God will enter into the Millennial Kingdom.

- Who stood with God's people during the tribulation? It seems that some nations will remain loyal to the Lord.

- The reason will be what is inside a person - what spirit motivates them

- Christians will always be known for what they do!

- How important is it for you to be identified with the Kingdom of God?

2) Life in the New Kingdom

Isa 65:17 ¶ "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

18 But be glad and rejoice for ever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.

19 I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

20 "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

21 They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22 No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands.

23 They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them.

24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

Isa 11:6-9 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them.

Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together,

And the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra,

And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

- Verse 17 sets the time of the events - the Millennium.

- No more tears; extended life again; build, plant and harvest for themselves.

- Chaotic life of pain seems to be removed (23).

- God immediately responds to their call.
- The nature of animals is reverted to the pre-Fall days.
- Herbivore nature will return - perhaps God authorized people to eat meat because the ground would no longer produce the way that it did before the Curse ... and before the flood.
- According to Revelation 20:4, we will rule and reign for this 1000 years.
- The Israelite people will finally acknowledge Jesus as Christ.
- Sin and death will still occur!

3) No More Deceiver

- Satan is bound for the length of the Millennium.
- Note exactly how many angels are required to bind him??
- He is not only bound but he is thrown into the Abyss, which pictures a total removal from the earth. Remember that, in Chapter 9, we saw an angel come with a key to the Abyss, open it, and out of it came a horde of demonic beings who poured onto the earth. The Abyss is there seen as separate from earth. For Satan to be thrown into it speaks of a total removal from the earth.
- The angel shuts the door and locks it, which means it is rendered impossible to be opened from within.
- The angel seals it over so that it is impossible to open from without.
- This appears almost as to what was done with our Lord at His death
- "What about the demons?"

Isa 24:21 In that day the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished [the margin says "released"] after many days. The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the Lord Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously.

- We have already seen the punishment of the kings because that is what the Lord did when he came.
- Here it appears that the demons too will be bound.
- Why called bottomless? Perhaps this implies no place to get a footing; to push from or to attack from.
- The first resurrection will include everything from Jesus through the tribulation saints.
- Note also that the Great White Throne Judgment will not impact those that have received the First Resurrection.
- Rev. 20:4-6 Note the two groups of people spoken of here
- This passage deals with the Tribulation saints and their bodily resurrection
- Purposes of this time:
 - To visually show the reign of Christ - He is Lord of all; to vindicate Him.
 - To show what life could be under His rule.
 - To remove the influences of the devil to show once for all; it was not because of Satan but because of our own hearts! Satan does not initiate sin; he reveals it.
 - Note that even the length of the Millennium speaks of God's mercy; the oldest man lived 969 years ... this is longer such that no one can say, "Not enough time was given" .
- Other Points:

a) An increase in light

Isaiah 30:26 The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted.

b) Unified Language

Zephaniah 3:8 ¶ Therefore wait for me," declares the LORD, "for the day I will stand up to testify. I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them—all my fierce anger. The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger.

9 "Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder.

Gleanings Worth Reaching For:

1) If we will judge angels and those of this world ... how good are we at it now?

- Can we confront in love; forgive quickly; exhort strongly; act wisely?
- It makes no sense to believe that the life lessons that we learn here will not impact our ability to discern and judge then.
- On what basis today do you "judge"?

2) Is there value in considering that "Satan made me do it?"

- Satan can only reveal sin ... he cannot create it, nor force it.
- Nothing that happens can occur without positive input from us.
- We are called to be deliberate in our actions instead of believing that all things will simply fall into place.
- Revelation 20: 7 -15 The Last Judgment Of All

1 Corinthians 15:24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

27 For he "has put everything under his feet". Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.

28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

- the final purpose of the Millennium will be that God is found to be "ALL IN ALL"
- verses 7 – 9: note that Satan has not changed at all; he has learned nothing from the fact that he was bound up by just one angel - he cannot win
- Rev. 20:7-10 The final demise of Satan and the demonic
 - The armies here are called Gog and Magog because they will be motivated and created by the same satanic source as the first one was.
- Gog and Magog ... we read of in Ezekiel 38 and it makes reference there to those nations that will attack Israel during the Tribulation

Ezekiel 38:2 "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him 3 and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.

- Magog was the 2nd son of Japheth (Gen 10:1,2), one of the three sons of Noah
- Gog is normally associated with Russia (modern)
 - The battle is over quickly
 - The purpose here is to remind us that even in the best of situations, men will still turn from the Lord - without Satan's influence
 - What will sow seeds of such discord with people? what hatred?
- It is appropriate to include 2Peter 3:10-13 at this point. The earth is remade by the fire of God - the old is passed away and all is made as new. This would seem be to the appropriate time for this event as it marks God's final judgment against sinful men (see Rev. 21:1)

2Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

11 ¶ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives

12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

- Rev. 20:11-15 The Great White Throne Judgment
 - Here the lost are judged according to their works and the Word of God.

- It may be deduced from Luke 12:46-49 that the Lake Of Fire has “varying degrees of punishment”.
- Who will perform this judgment? Christ:

John 5:22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,

- understand that the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ will determine the loss or gaining of reward in heaven ... the Great White Throne Judgment determines only position in the darkness of eternity - it is not an issue of saved or unsaved ... rather “degree of separation”
- note that the dead are judged from the books:
 - a) The Book of Life
 - b) The Word of God
 - c) The Records of One’s Life
- Remember that even God ordains that “in the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses”.
- Nothing is forgotten ... Jesus said that “every idle word ...”
- Hell should be FEARED - it is not a state of mind; it is a reality
- The picture of “death and hell” refer to both the physical resurrection (death of the body in the Greek) and the Soul/Spirit
- Some reminders about hell:
 - four words in Scripture used to describe this:
 - a) Sheol (OT)
 - Translated either as hell (31 times), the grave (31 time) or the pit (3).
 - Two compartments; Abraham’s Bosom and hell.
 - Waiting tanks
 - b) Hades (NT)
 - Translated as hell; very similar to Sheol
 - Typically, this represents the place of the unsaved as they wait
 - The word is never connected with life ... always with death
 - c) Tartaros
 - See 2Peter 2:4, Jude 6
 - Only associated with fallen angels
 - d) Gehenna
 - A physical location; the valley of Hinnom
 - This is the fire pits of Jerusalem, used a symbol for hell

Gleanings Worth Reaching For:

- 1) We are all bent towards evil
 - The most obvious point of the Millennium is to show that the devil did not make me do it.
 - This must be remembered even in the context of children.
- 2) To serve God only for the miracles He provides, is never enough
 - Note that these people will have the best the Christ can offer.
 - Their obedience will be but an external one.
 - They will have the best, but still hate, still remain unregenerate.
 - This challenges me to ask whether I will serve my God only in the good times.
 - It challenges me to ask “How much am I really willing to ask for God’s presence in me”.
- 3) It is clear that those that have children in the Millennium will not completely pass on their faith to the children around them
 - This speaks to us today - what methods are we REALLY using to reach, encourage, show truth to children?
 - How will we ensure that this is taught?
 - According to Josh McDowell, it comes from modeling and relationship

Revelation 21:1-27

- Rev. 21:1-8

- The New Jerusalem comes from heaven to settle on (or near) the earth.
- This is the place (the insula) that Christ promised to the church (John 14:2).
- It is spoken of in Heb. 11:10, 12:22, Gal. 4:26, Rev. 3:12
- ALL redeemed men and women will inhabit this city (see verse 12,14).

- Rev. 21:9-27

- The city dimensions are given as approximately 1500 miles wide, long and high.
- The city is most likely a square shape
- The walls of the city are described as approximately 200 feet high.
- The building materials are all precious in nature
- The Scriptures teach that it will light the world; through God's brightness
- The sun and stars will NOT be destroyed (Gen. 8:22) but will be un-needed within the city

Gen 8:22 "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

- No longer any sea - the sea causes division among people, restricting traffic
- Further, the sea was viewed as a form of the abyss.

- it is clear that its removal is like that of the Garden of Eden, where the oceans and bodies of water were apparently much less than they are today

Note that the New Jerusalem has:

a) Gates with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel

- gates allow entrance - the Jewish people have held the Word of God for centuries

b) Foundations with the names of the Apostles

- foundations are those things in which something is built
- we are founded upon the testimony of the apostles - their witness of Christ

c) The combined land on our planet is about 57 million square miles

- the New Jerusalem will be about 60 times that amount!

d) No sin - see verses 8 and 27 - there will be nothing abominable there

e) Why a city?

- what value is there dwelling together?

f) Comparisons with Eden

- if you want to know what life should be like in the church, look at the Garden of Eden
- as much as possible, this is the life that God calls us to model today!

| Eden | New Earth | Why |
|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Seas | No Seas | No division |
| No Clothes | Robes | Christ's work |
| Night | No Night | No division |
| Garden | City | Fellowship |
| Temp. with God | Forever with God | |

Revelation 22:1-21

- Water: (1)

In Psalm 46:4, it states, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High."

- In the book of Amos, water is compared with justice:

"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream." Amos 5:24

- Jesus has a conversation with the woman at the well, how he can give her living water. He says to her:

"Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." John 4:14

- Water is the key to life and to the people of the middle east, it is utterly essential!
- There was a river flowing out of the Garden of Eden - now we see it again.
- This is not unlike the vision of Ezekiel 47, where the water represents the Holy Spirit.
- Every single need will be met; there will be no lack of any good thing.
- No conservation is required; like the Israelites wandering in the desert fed by a Rock!

- The Tree Of Life (2-3)

- What once was lost in Genesis 3 is now restored!
- The tree of life is presented in Genesis 2:9 as a single tree. In both accounts, this tree is a singular tree. Here in 22:2, it bears 12 types of fruit - one for each month of the year. Thus, it is perpetually in bloom. There is no winter season in the eternal state.
- There is no need of healing from sickness or disease since the consequences of sin have been removed and the former things are passed away (21:4). Thus, the tree and its leaves are seen as a source of life and health in the eternal state.

- Light (4-5)

- It illuminates, it uncovers, it reveals.
- No evil hides in the light, no truth goes buried.

- Relational

- Note that the Trinity is again mentioned (see verse 3 and 17) along with the Bride.
- At least 12 times, is the Lord mentioned here.
- The finality of all things will be a relationship with Him forever.

- Timing (5)

- See verse 5; this is not reigning with Christ for 1000 years - this is forever
- This is clearly not Millennial - this is eternity.

- Very little in Scripture relates to life in the Eternal Kingdom. Here are some thoughts:

- 1) A fellowship with God (1Cor. 13:12, John 14:3, Rev. 22:4)
- 2) A life of rest (Rev. 14:13)
- 3) A life of knowledge (1Cor. 13:12)
- 4) A life of holiness (Rev. 21:27)
- 5) A life of joy (Rev. 21:4)
- 6) A life of service (Rev. 22:3)
- 7) A life of abundance (Rev. 21:6)
- 8) A life of worship (Rev. 19:1)

Gleanings Worth Reaching For:

1) Worship nothing but God (verses 8-9)

- John's reaction shows us the power of misguided emotions.
- There is no question that John knew theology - however, who could not be overwhelmed with the visions he had just been privy to.

2) We start in a garden and end in a city:

L. David Mech described how a seven member pack of arctic wolves had targeted several musk oxen calves who were guarded by eleven adults. As the wolves approached their quarry, the musk oxen bunched in an impenetrable semicircle, their deadly rear hooves facing out, and the calves remained safe during a long standoff with the enemy. But then a single ox broke rank and the herd scattered into nervous little groups. A skirmish ensued, and the adults finally fled in panic, leaving the calves to the mercy of the predators. Not a single calf survived. Paul warned the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 that after his departure wolves would come, not sparing the flock. Wolves continue to attack the church today but cannot penetrate and destroy when unity is maintained. When believers break ranks, however, they provide easy prey. L. David Mech, National Geographic May 1987

- note that the Spirit and the Bride speak the same language - they are of the same heart
- this needs to be something that characterizes us everyday
- untied in purpose, understanding the calling and passionately fulfilling it

3) If we are serious about our belief in the return of Jesus, how should we live????

- note how important this message is
- do YOU want to alter a word of this prophecy? Remember that this command is given specifically for the Book of Revelation - how important is this to Jesus???
- did you see the beatitude in verse 7; we are happy if we keep the words of this book
- who, really, are you looking for your happiness from?
- have we lost the wonder of it all?
- see verse 16 - these words are for the churches!

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

C.S. Lewis, "Christian Behavior," 1943

Now, we don't need to feel guilty for having a strong desire to enjoy life. Marriage, a family, a fulfilling job, travel, recreation these all have a legitimate appeal. But if the delights of our earthly home are so attractive that we lose sight of God's purpose for putting us here, something's wrong.

The apostle Paul had mixed feelings too. Although he believed he would be released from prison, he knew that he could possibly fall victim to Nero's sword. This created a conflict. He longed to be with Christ, for that would be "far better" (Phil. 1:23). He also wanted to live not merely to enjoy life but because he was needed by his fellow believers (v.24).

Paul was pulled in two directions, and in both cases it was for the highest reason. What about us?

4) The coming of Jesus "quickly" is not in relationship to time ... but rather the fact that He will come while people are unprepared!

- see verse 11; the state we are found in Christ is the state that we will forever be